

A photograph of a mountain landscape with dense green forest and thick white fog or mist rising from the trees, partially obscuring the peaks.

ICIMOD

FOR MOUNTAINS AND PEOPLE

STRATEGY AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK 2017



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1. WHAT ICIMOD STANDS FOR

1.1 Vision

ICIMOD believes in a future where the region’s mountain people can experience enhanced livelihoods, equity, and social and environmental security; where they can adapt to climate, environmental, and socioeconomic change; and where future generations of mountain and downstream populations can enjoy the benefits and opportunities afforded by the region’s natural endowment. ICIMOD foresees a future in which the role of the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) as the water tower for more than a billion people, as a cultural and spiritual hub, as the home of global biodiversity hotspots, as a significant ecological buffer zone, and as a source of resources and services for mountain and lowland people is upheld, valued, and recognized globally and regionally.

Vision

Men, women, and children of the Hindu Kush Himalaya enjoy improved wellbeing in a healthy mountain environment.

1.2 Mission

ICIMOD is an intergovernmental knowledge and learning centre that develops and shares research, information, and innovations to empower people in the eight regional member countries of the HKH – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.

ICIMOD aims to serve the region through information and knowledge generation and sharing to find innovative solutions to critical mountain problems. ICIMOD bridges science with policies and on-the-ground practices. It provides a regional platform where experts, planners, policy makers, and practitioners can exchange ideas and perspectives towards the achievement of sustainable mountain development. ICIMOD facilitates knowledge exchange across the region, helps customize international knowledge and tailors it to the region’s needs, and brings regional issues to the global stage.

Mission

To enable sustainable and resilient mountain development for improved and equitable livelihoods through knowledge and regional cooperation.



Lamayuru, India

ICIMOD sees knowledge-sharing initiatives as a source of inspiration, innovation, and questioning, helping in the design of future strategies.

ICIMOD occupies a unique niche within the development community. First, we specialize in mountain people and mountain environments in the HKH, an area with high poverty and environmental degradation, that bears the brunt of climate change. Second, while there are other institutions that address mountain issues, ICIMOD is the only mountain organization that is a regional intergovernmental organization with global outreach.

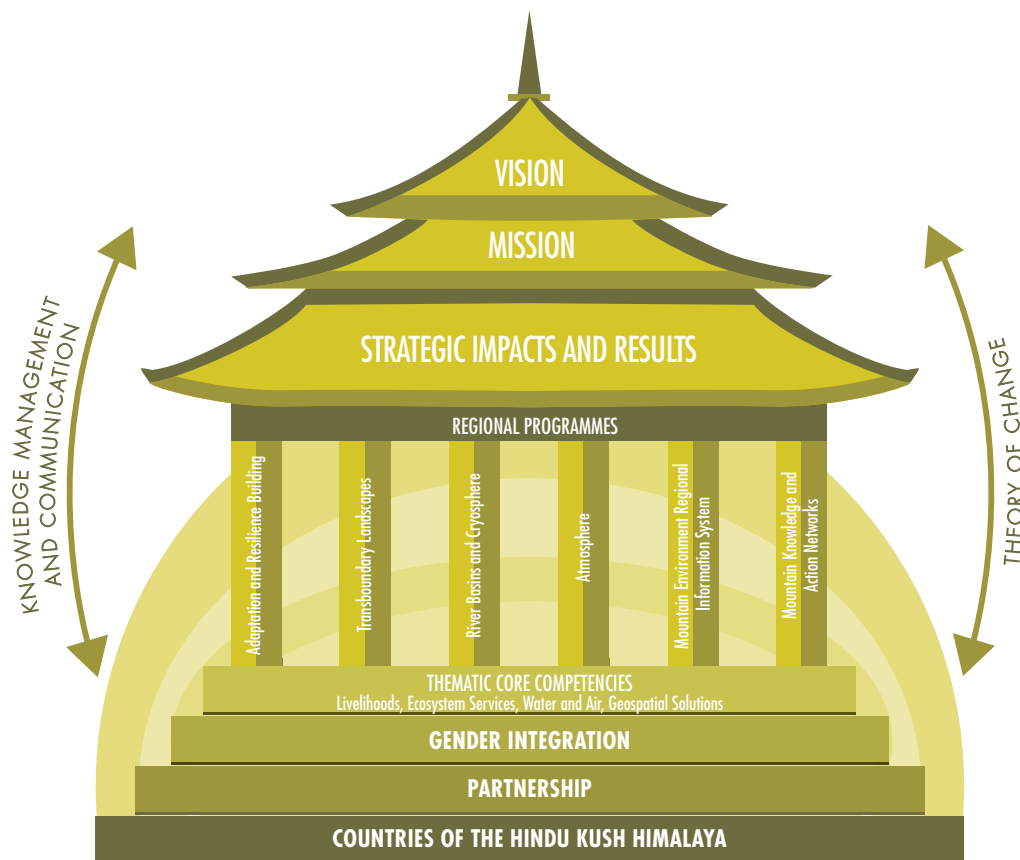
ICIMOD works with people and communities living in the region's mountain ecosystems who face common challenges and have solutions to share. Therefore ICIMOD's mandate spans community experience and intervention, national plans and policy, regional knowledge sharing and transboundary cooperation, and engagement at the global level. ICIMOD's work is thus relevant and useful for mountain people; development workers engaged with those people; environment and natural resource managers; local, national, and regional policy makers and planners; students and teachers; and the general public.

As a regional centre, ICIMOD facilitates knowledge exchange in its core competencies of livelihoods, ecosystem services, water and air, and geospatial solutions to address issues of common concern such as adaptation to global change and the state of the cryosphere. ICIMOD addresses transboundary issues such as changing availability of water resources and its implications; conservation of flora and fauna in transboundary landscapes with a changing climate; and high-value niche products that are marketed across borders. ICIMOD integrates its thematic work with a set of regional programmes to put knowledge into use for change and impact (Figure 1).

1.3 Strategic Impacts

ICIMOD has three strategic impact areas namely, i) reduced poverty; ii) enhanced resilience by reducing physical and social vulnerabilities; and iii) enhanced ecosystem services. All ICIMOD initiatives, outcomes and strategic results contribute to one or more of these strategic impacts. Thematic core competencies of ICIMOD are built to achieve these impacts.

Figure 1: How ICIMOD works to uphold its vision and mission for sustainable and resilient mountain development in the Hindu Kush Himalaya



Jangothang, Bhutan

2. THE MOUNTAIN CONTEXT IN A CHANGING WORLD

Mountains occupy 22% of the world's land surface area and are home to 915 million people¹. Half of all humankind directly depends on mountain resources, particularly for water and biodiversity. In the mountains, generally speaking, ethnic diversity tends to be higher than other regions of the world, and yet poverty and vulnerability remain, with roughly 39% of mountain populations in developing countries considered vulnerable to food insecurity.

Sustainable mountain development itself can be a primary driver of change that builds resilience upstream and downstream, and generates ideas for creating a more sustainable world



Mountain ecosystems are exceptionally fragile, subject to both natural and anthropogenic impacts. Mountain cultures and communities have been recognized as being particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change and other drivers such as rising migration, land use and cover change, and globalization. However, these changes present opportunities and a paradigm shift: Sustainable mountain development itself can be a primary driver of change that builds resilience upstream and downstream, and generates ideas for creating a more sustainable world. ICIMOD and its regional member countries are committed to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for contributing to global efforts from this region.

2.1 Changes in the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region, Challenges for People

The HKH (Figure 2)² is the source of ten large Asian river systems (the Amu Darya, Indus, Tarim, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Salween, Mekong, Yangtze, and Yellow) and provides water, ecosystem services, and the basis for livelihoods to a population of more than 240 million people. The basins of these rivers supply water to more than 1.9 billion people, a fourth of the world's population. About 18% of the total HKH area (760,000 km²) is covered by snow, and glaciers cover 60,000 km². Overall, its 6,000 km³ of ice reserves mean that it truly constitutes a 'third pole' of the earth, with the largest ice reserves outside the North and South Poles. The mountains act as an ecological buffer, influencing the temperature, monsoon, and rainfall patterns of South Asia, and create favourable



Gilgit, Pakistan

6 ¹ FAO. 2015. *Mapping the vulnerability of mountain peoples to food insecurity*. Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome, Italy.
² The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) is ICIMOD's target area and includes the Karakoram and Pamir ranges, as well as the Tibetan Plateau. Some of ICIMOD's geographical impact areas include the rivers and watersheds that originate from these ranges.



Figure 2: The Hindu Kush Himalaya and downstream river basins

conditions for agriculture. The HKH is home to immense cultural and ethnic diversity; more than 1,000 different languages are spoken in this region³. It is a treasury of genetic resources and home to four of the 36 global biodiversity hotspots. The region is truly a global asset.

Adaptation and resilience have always been hallmarks of mountain people and landscapes, especially in the HKH. The people of the HKH have a rich cultural identity and have maintained food security and abundant biodiversity within the parameters of their own traditions. These mountain ranges served as routes for traders, scientists, and the religious leaders who brought Buddhism to Central Asia and Islam to the Indian subcontinent. For thousands of years trade and change have been sources of wealth and diversity, of which the Kathmandu Valley, home to ICIMOD's headquarters, is a most impressive witness.

During recent years, rapid population growth, urbanization, migration, feminization of rural labour, economic development, and climate change have begun to pose a challenge to traditional livelihood strategies and coping mechanisms. Once self-sufficient people now face dire economic poverty. Mountain populations are, on the whole, poorer than the national average in the HKH (Figure 3).

The ecological stability of the HKH faces multiple threats: Vast ice reserves are shrinking and accelerated glacial melting puts at risk the role of the HKH as a water reservoir. The frequency of floods and droughts has increased. Degradation of forests, wetlands, and rangelands imperil livelihoods and biodiversity.

Five out of eight HKH countries are categorized as Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which require special development opportunities and investments.

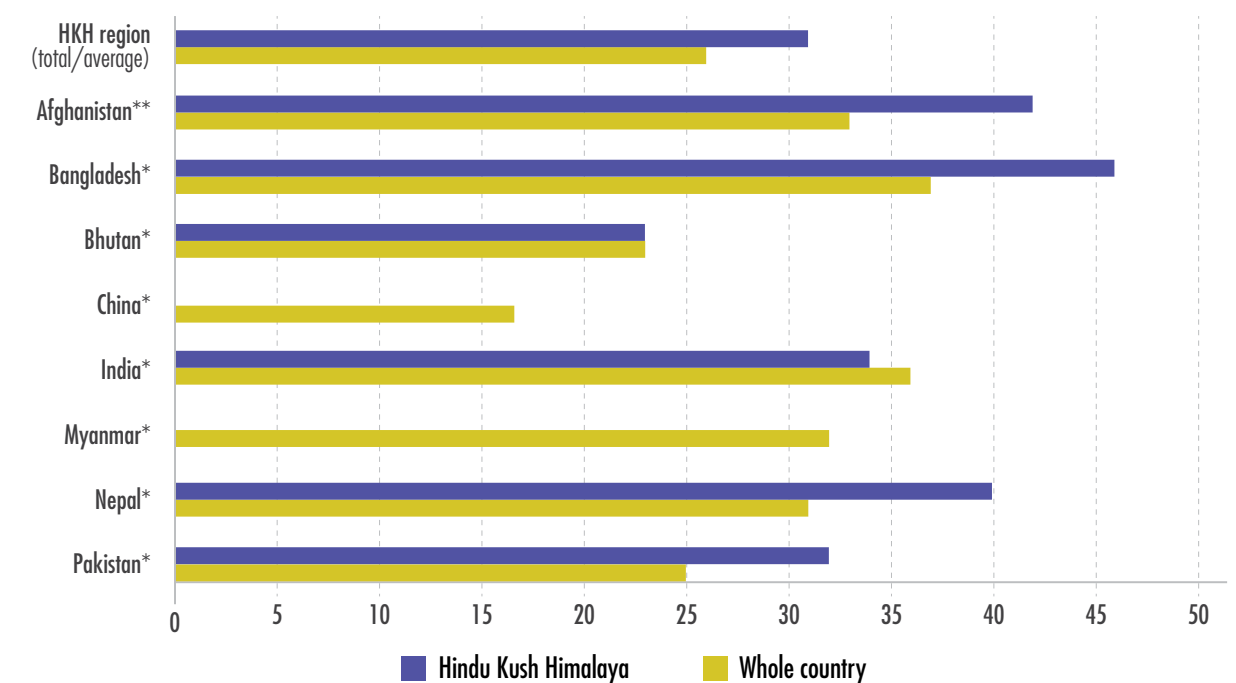
But opportunities arise with change, even with climate change. Countries recognize that cooperation is required to deal with glacier melt and the increased threat of floods that cross borders. Likewise, they increasingly recognize the need for transboundary cooperation for biodiversity conservation and management. With increased urbanization comes a greater demand for niche, organic, and high-value products, many of which can only be grown in mountain and hill areas. Warming at higher elevations could potentially be a boon for producers living there.

Against this backdrop, ICIMOD must adapt to meet new challenges. It must respond to local needs, yet foster regional cooperation, and represent mountain issues globally. The institutional capacities of the regional member countries (RMCs) differ and evolve, requiring ICIMOD to continually evaluate its partnership

arrangements. ICIMOD must align itself to respond to global processes such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Externally, ICIMOD must adapt its strategies on partnership with its RMCs to meet new challenges. Internally, ICIMOD needs to reassess its structure and priorities to serve its stakeholders more effectively.

The 2017 Strategy and Results Framework is a continuation of the 2012 edition with a fresh look, and sets a long-term vision for ICIMOD. Then, as now, this framework was developed through broad consultation with the RMCs, ICIMOD staff, our partner organizations, the ICIMOD Support Group, and the ICIMOD Board of Governors, who ultimately have approved it.

Figure 3: Population below the poverty line in countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayan region (%)⁴



Note: * data from 2009; ** data from 2010

3. DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORY

In 2012, ICIMOD’s Strategy and Results Framework provided long-term direction that is still valid today. Over the past five years, the Centre has made considerable progress in achieving this strategic vision. It has matured as an institution, its financial resources have grown, it is filling its regional niche, and it is delivering impact. However, this strategy and results framework must be periodically refined to respond to changing contexts in the HKH and around the world.

3.1 Mountains on the Global Agenda

Rising awareness of the impacts of climate change on mountain ecosystems and communities – and the consequences for the rest of the world – has helped draw attention to mountains in international development discourse.

ICIMOD’s ‘observer’ status in most global processes and conventions allows it to play an important role as a knowledge provider and broker for the mountain perspective in designing, formulating, and programming global agendas. ICIMOD should leverage its knowledge on mountains to convince others of the important role mountains play globally, and to draw investment to resilient and sustainable mountain development solutions.

As the global development agenda evolves, ICIMOD responds to ensure that the needs of the mountains and people of the HKH are clearly reflected



3.1.1 Mountains in the Sustainable Development Goals

All eight of ICIMOD’s regional member countries (RMCs) are committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Most of the 17 SDGs align with ICIMOD’s priorities, and mountains are specifically mentioned in two: ‘Clean Water’ and ‘Life on Land’. ICIMOD’s impact areas – poverty reduction, reduced physical and social vulnerability, and improved ecosystem services – are enshrined in these SDGs, and the balance drawn among economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development across the SDG agenda fits well with ICIMOD’s strategy and approach.



Panjshir Valley, Afghanistan

Box 1: Evolution of the Mountain Agenda

The Mountain Agenda has expanded from its beginnings at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and evolved through the International Year of Mountains (2002) and the Mountain Biodiversity Programme of Work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2004), to include mountain-specific goals from the Nagoya Protocol (2010), the Rio+20 conference (2012), the Sendai Framework (2015), and, most recently, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the UNFCCC Paris Agreement, and the Green Climate Fund. All of these present emerging opportunities to attract investment in sustainable and resilient mountain development.

The priority placed on poverty, gender, indigenous people, and migrants in the SDGs resonates with the needs ICIMOD and its partners have identified in the HKH, as well as the specific challenges facing landlocked, conflict or post-conflict, and least developed countries.

ICIMOD has set 'Priorities for Mountains' consistent with the SDGs and linked with ICIMOD's strategy and results framework, so as to monitor progress within the HKH. In support of achieving the SDGs, ICIMOD through its HKH Monitoring and Assessment Programme (HIMAP) shall provide robust and repeatable evidence on a number of social and environmental matters critical to mountain communities and mountain ecosystems. This work would direct specific attention within RMC national reports on mountains, and HIMAP shall be repeated every four to five years.

3.2 Building on Past Success

The Quinquennial Review (QQR) of 2006 and our Medium Term Review of 2010, helped institute a set of reforms that were consequently reflected in the 2008 and 2012 ICIMOD Strategy and Results Frameworks, and are now implicit in the way we function. ICIMOD sharpened its strategic focus and made significant strides in areas relevant to the poverty reduction agendas of our RMCs. In turn, ICIMOD's knowledge role, science quality, and evidence-based policy inputs have been increasingly recognized and its innovations put to use. RMCs have

increased their ownership through enhanced financial contributions and engagement in programmes. Some significant achievements include:

- Addressing data gaps in the HKH, including enhanced science quality, by developing and sharing knowledge in refereed publications and at global fora;
- Building expertise to address issues related to climate and regional change, including adaptation to change, persistent poverty, gender inequality, water scarcity, forest carbon sequestration, biodiversity loss, the water-food-energy nexus, and resilience building for mountain and downstream communities;
- Promoting regional collaboration and responding to rising demands for information by serving as a regional platform for learning and information exchange; and
- Attracting global attention to resources of the HKH, including biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as the impacts of change on these resources.

The 2012 Strategy and Results Framework identified the following priority actions:

- Increased emphasis on the outcome, impact, and learning phases of programmes;
- Further efforts to engage RMCs with issues of regional importance;
- Ensuring high-quality, solution-oriented research and knowledge products;

- Significant improvement of communication and knowledge exchange; and
- Collaboration with a range of partners in the RMCs to deliver programmes.

To achieve these objectives, ICIMOD undertook key change management actions. Regarding engagement with RMCs, ICIMOD developed a more strategic partnership orientation, enhanced work with partners, planned activities by country aligned with our regional programmes, and more carefully targeted communications for each country. To better plan results, ICIMOD employed Theory of Change ideas and impact pathways for its regional programmes. For science quality, ICIMOD engaged key staff and prioritized science outputs to enhance the quantity and quality of science produced. During ICIMOD's last Medium Term Action Plan (MTAP III), the organization was reoriented through a set of regional programmes complemented by thematic core competence and more strategic staffing. From 2012 to 2017, ICIMOD made significant progress in each of these areas, and they will remain focus areas.

The change management process at ICIMOD has contributed to greater professionalism and efficiency and to improved organizational management systems and tools, notably:

- Global standard internal financial management system, appropriate for receiving direct financial support;
- Systematic partnership strategy for developing and implementing programmes with regional and international partners;
- Active strategic planning and monitoring systems; and
- Upgraded systems for internal and external knowledge management, dissemination, and communication.



Yuanyang, China

3.3 Quinquennial Review 2016

In 2016, an independent five-year, or quinquennial, review (QQR) was commissioned by the ICIMOD Support Group (ISG). The purpose of the review was to provide accountability to the Board, ISG, and other stakeholders, and to strengthen ICIMOD's operations based on the conclusions and recommendations of the review. The review generated ten major recommendations which were approved by the Board. In response, ICIMOD resolved to take the following key actions:

- Strengthen its country engagement through detailed partnership and communication strategies;
- Work closely with its member country focal ministries to further strengthen its alignment with national priorities through continuous consultation and engagement;
- Develop a framework for scaling up our regional programmes, which would include internalization of these ideas by staff and operationalization through joint planning with country partners;
- Strengthen ICIMOD's programmatic cooperation through strategic alliances with multinational organizations for leveraging knowledge, developing capacity, and integrating innovations into development processes in the HKH;

Box 2: Building resilience as a core concept

As climate change continues to impact mountain communities, focus on resilience is necessary for building appropriate programmes to support mountain livelihoods. We seek these resilience outcomes:

- i) enhanced adaptation capacities;
- ii) recovery from shocks and stresses; and
- iii) transformative change or bouncing forward.

ICIMOD's approach will be guided by a social-ecological systems (SES) perspective, which acknowledges the 'nature-people' relationship. Based on this perspective, we are developing an operational framework that emphasizes identifying and acting upon context-specific factors for building community resilience.

Interventions addressing cross-sector linkages will be a key demand from partners and stakeholders in the SDG-era. ICIMOD's existing competencies allow us to think in terms of 'packages' for building resilience across a range of SES contexts. We see it as a strategic advantage for ICIMOD to take the lead through pilots and field demonstrations of possible resilience solution packages in the region.

Building resilience as an operational objective has the potential to overcome thematic boundaries and sectoral silos and requires transdisciplinarity. Building resilience should be discussed along with adaptation, vulnerability reduction, and disaster risk reduction.

- Monitor the status and trends in regional mountain conditions and link these observations to SDGs and policy making processes in the HKH;
- Foster effective private and public sector engagement with relevant actors to address challenges to mountain people in various sectors;
- Work closely with the ICIMOD Support Group (ISG) to develop a business plan for attracting more flexible core funding.

3.4 Strategic Results

ICIMOD's performance will be measured by the results it delivers. The following strategic results provide indicators to guide and measure ICIMOD's progress toward realizing this strategy and results framework:

1. Widespread adoption of innovations and practices developed by ICIMOD and partners to adapt to change, leading to positive impacts for women, men, and children

ICIMOD and partners will develop and test new innovations and practices to address change and build resilience (Box 2). These will be based on reliable and well-documented analyses. Examples include value chain development, income generating strategies, flood early warning systems, renewable energy, and community water management strategies, considered with emphasis on poor and marginalized groups. Success will be measured when innovations are scaled out beyond the programme boundaries.

2. Significant advances in the generation and use of relevant data, knowledge, and analysis.

Large data gaps exist in the region. Filling these gaps is a core part of ICIMOD's mission. Success will be measured by the extent to which communities, government agencies, practitioners, and scientists use the data and information generated and shared by ICIMOD and its partners.



Zoige wetland, China

3. Significant advances made in approaches and knowledge that promote gender equality and inclusive development.

Promoting gender equality and inclusive development across ICIMOD's programmes and within the institution will help ensure we develop effective development solutions. Success will be measured by the level of integration of gender activities in the Centre's programmes, quality of gender analysis, number and level of involvement of women from various social groups, number and types of benefits to women and men, and availability of evidence to advance individual gender-equitable behaviour, gender transformative change, and more equitable relationships. These will be done using a rights-based approach for equitable human development and gender equality. All of these will contribute to closing structural inequalities by promoting social inclusion and gender justice across all sections of society.

4. Significantly developed human and institutional capacity.

Greater human and institutional capacity are needed to upscale positive change in the region. Success will be measured by the number of individuals and organizations whose capacity is enhanced, as well as the relevance and results of their work.

5. Policies considerably influenced by the work of ICIMOD and its partners.

ICIMOD plays a key role in enhancing the interface between science-based evidence and policy. Success will

be measured by the policies and practices influenced by ICIMOD's work.

6. Enhanced regional cooperation related to sustainable mountain development.

ICIMOD will foster regional cooperation by contributing to cross-border technical collaboration and by promoting policies and plans that bring countries together, for example, on regional flood warning systems or biodiversity corridors. Success will be measured by the establishment and continuation of collaborative programmes among the countries. ICIMOD will also strive to promote greater awareness among downstream populations of the services they receive from mountain areas, and the need to value and compensate for these services.

7. Global recognition of the importance of mountains to ensure improved and resilient livelihoods and ecosystems.

Greater global attention will bring needed resources to mountain areas already experiencing the impacts of climate change and globalization. Success will be measured by recognition of mountains as reflected in global policy arenas and by bodies such as the CBD, IPCC, UNFCCC, the Ramsar Convention, and other UN organizations and processes.

4. ICIMOD'S STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

The functions and approaches outlined below demonstrate ICIMOD's strategic advantages for creating positive impacts in the HKH.

Mountain focus: First and foremost is the orientation on mountain livelihoods and environment. However, the mountain environment in the HKH also provides an opportunity to address key regional issues, as many countries meet in the mountains.

Regional niche: ICIMOD has a unique niche as a regional organization serving the countries sharing the HKH. This allows ICIMOD to bring together countries from across South, Southeast, Central and East Asia to promote regional knowledge sharing and facilitate the development of common solutions to shared challenges, with a focus on livelihoods and mountain ecosystems.

Country ownership: ICIMOD is owned by its regional member countries, with direct accountability to these countries through our Board of Governors. ICIMOD positions itself to focus on common priorities and demands from our regional member countries.

On-the-ground realities: ICIMOD's presence on the ground with local communities is critical to understand the changing situation, to develop relevant solutions, and to link the needs of people in the region with policy processes.

Partnership: ICIMOD chooses to work closely with a variety of partners. The advantages of working with and through a strong network of partners include joint learning, mutual ownership, and the leveraging of partners' strengths in improving engagement on the ground and at the policy level. Working with partners also increases overall capacity for sustainable mountain development in the region.

Engagement with global agenda: More attention and investment in mountain areas is needed to support mountain people and ecosystems in adapting and mitigating change. ICIMOD is well placed to take key messages and priorities from the HKH to the global stage and to promote the Mountain Agenda in global fora.

ICIMOD's strategic orientation uniquely positions the Centre to create positive impacts in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region



Rangamati, Bangladesh

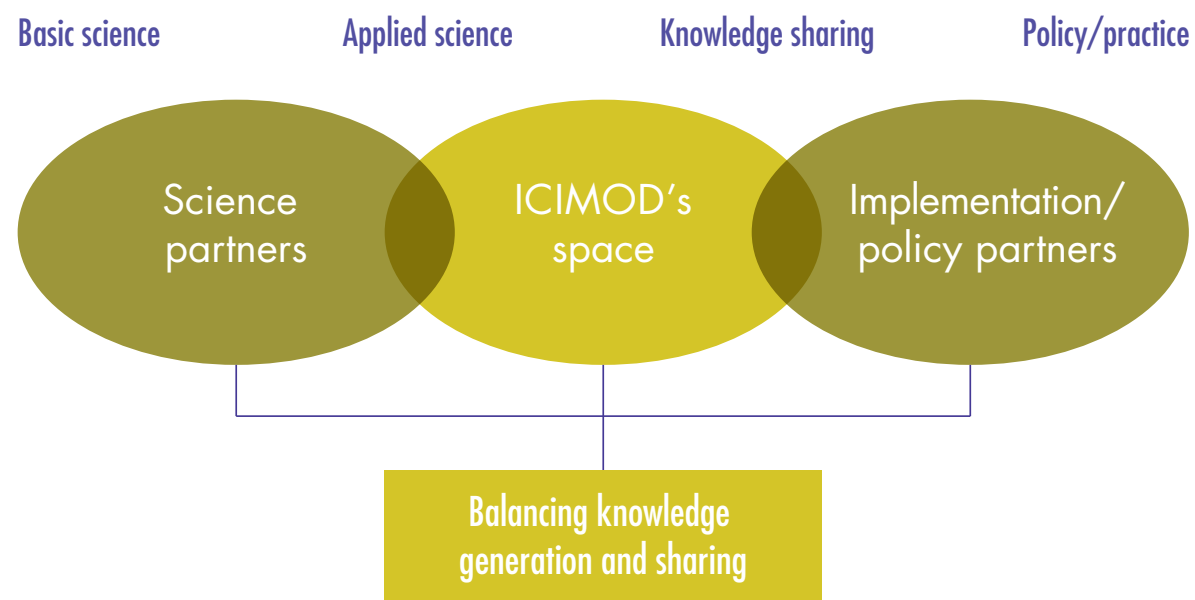


Figure 4: ICIMOD's role in linking knowledge generation with policy and implementation

Integrated programmatic approach: Together with our countries and partners we have defined long-term regional programmes that support the long-term sustainability of our work. Through these programmes, ICIMOD synergizes different funding streams to optimize the benefits of project activities and sustain impacts beyond a single project funding life cycle. ICIMOD programmes foster a transdisciplinary approach, integrating approaches across disciplines, across scales, across borders, and from science to policy and practice.

Impact and uptake orientation: ICIMOD's role is to develop and test ideas and innovations, and to promote the uptake of promising solutions. To assure uptake, the Centre must rigorously test solutions and influence policy and practice. For this we use impact pathways and theories of change to design an uptake strategy from the onset of an activity.

Gender transformative change and inclusive development: To achieve its mission, ICIMOD must cultivate equitable solutions that consider the needs of

people from different backgrounds, genders, and positions in society. Understanding and respecting the diverse and deep-rooted cultures and practices across the region is a starting point for transformative change, including within the Centre and in the way we work.

Policy engagement backed by quality transdisciplinary science: With strong country ownership, regional positioning, and quality science, ICIMOD is in an ideal position to engage with a broad range of policy and decision makers and processes at different levels: from village to national to regional. This requires an understanding of needs and constraints within each country, and the ability to develop workable solutions. Our policy and practice solutions are based on strong scientific evidence. Recently ICIMOD has boosted its science output in order to strengthen the science-policy-practice interface, and to ensure that our research is put to use. All of our research is based on the principle of transdisciplinarity, which ensures that we engage across disciplines and with stakeholders and other knowledge seekers.

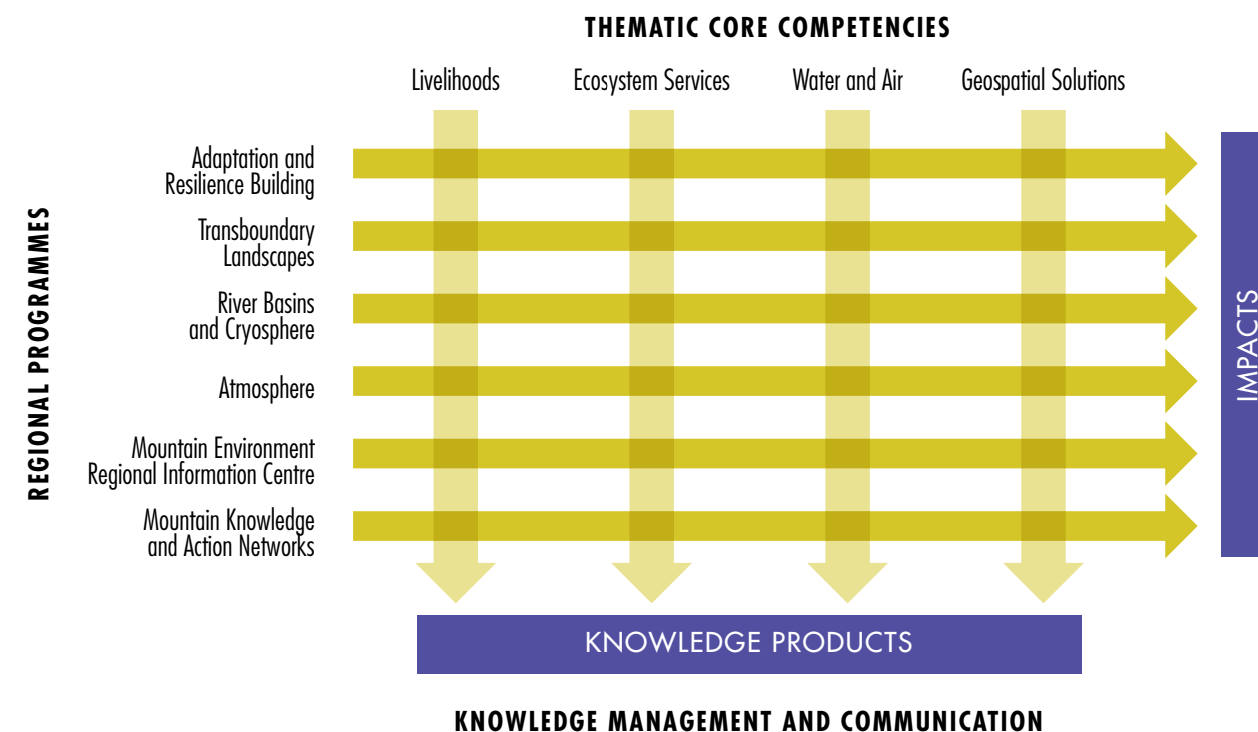


Figure 5: Integration of ICIMOD's Thematic Core Competencies in its Regional Programmes

4.1 Regional Learning, Knowledge, and Enabling Centre for Mountains

As a regional knowledge hub on mountains, ICIMOD will continue its role in:

- Developing methodologies, strategies, standards, and policy-relevant information through applied research, transdisciplinary research, and technology transfer;
- Synthesizing results and scaling them up and out to other contexts and realities of the HKH;
- Providing an accessible, participatory, and inclusive regional platform for dialogue and exchange; and
- Making regional knowledge available to promote the global mountain agenda.

To ensure that knowledge is used for development and impact, ICIMOD will expand its role in sharing knowledge and good practices for capacity building, training, and networking both regionally and globally.

4.2 Linking Science, Policy Making, and Development Work

ICIMOD's role is to generate and package science-supported results that have real impact on the lives of mountain people (Figure 4). ICIMOD intends to strike a balance among basic science, applied research, transdisciplinary research, knowledge sharing, implementation, and policy-relevant advice covering social, technical, institutional, and environmental issues using a transdisciplinary approach. With its unique knowledge sharing experience, ICIMOD provides a crucial link among science partners who generate primary knowledge, implementation partners who bring practical aspects of this research to mountain communities, and policy makers. To be an effective link, ICIMOD must contribute to regional development on a par with the most up-to-date international knowledge.

ICIMOD will increase its interface with international research centres, providing an entry point for their work

in mountain areas and helping to link their research to policy and implementation. This collaboration will help ICIMOD work with basic and applied science in areas outside the Centre's competencies. ICIMOD will carry out applied research in its regional programmes, enhance knowledge exchange and sharing, standardize methodologies, promote gender disaggregation of data, and effectively package and disseminate the results.

ICIMOD will conduct action research to develop replicable innovations and will test and upscale these with implementation partners such as governments, development agencies, and non-governmental organizations. The Centre will continue to strengthen its core competencies in integrated and interdisciplinary research and collaboration, balancing both quantitative and qualitative research in the context of sustainable and equitable mountain development.

4.3 Core Competencies

4.3.1 Thematic Core Competencies

ICIMOD maintains core competencies in four main thematic areas – Livelihoods, Ecosystem Services, Water and Air, and Geospatial Solutions – all relevant to meeting the challenges of today's mountain agenda. Knowledge Management and Communication provides cross-cutting support to facilitate information flow among these areas and communicates the results to the RMCs and the greater global arena. Themes and KMC host individuals vested in our core competencies, but the individuals work mainly in our programmes.

Our themes and regional programmes maintain an integrated and reciprocal relationship. Themes house our core competencies, advance knowledge on key topics, and provide this information to the programmes. Regional programmes, in turn, provide the learning space necessary to advance that knowledge by

addressing key thematic questions through research. In other words, themes contain the ideas, approaches, and knowledge that are common across regional programmes, and the programmes develop those elements through research, and thus inform our themes, and so on. This integrated model and feedback loop ensure that our core competencies remain cutting edge and robust (Figure 5).

4.3.1.1 Livelihoods



The Livelihoods theme aims to build resilient and prosperous mountain communities. To address existing conditions of widespread poverty, vulnerabilities, and inequality in the region, the Livelihoods theme

focuses on developing strategies and policy instruments consistent with SDG priorities for making mountain communities stronger.

The Livelihoods theme also focuses on social, gender, economic, and governance policy issues to explore alternative pathways for combating poverty and vulnerability among mountain people.

Livelihood theme experts support our regional programmes in the following ways:

1. Enhancing ability to harness unique opportunities that mountain regions offer for improved adaptation and resilience building;
2. Analyzing engagement with communities, the private sector, government, and non-government agencies regarding poverty, gender, and livelihood issues;
3. Developing strategies for entrepreneurship, branding mountain products, promoting renewable energy, improving food and nutrition, and promoting non-farm livelihood options such as ecotourism towards poverty reduction;

4. Generating solutions on access to clean energy, productive use of remittances, financial inclusion, and risk management; and
5. Cultivating mechanisms for engaging with policy makers to promote mountain issues in national and global agendas, including the SDGs.

4.3.1.2 Ecosystem Services



The Ecosystem Services theme focuses on ecosystem structures and functions related to goods and services in upstream and downstream communities. To do this, ecosystem services examines drivers of change in the HKH and

explores sustainable management options for strengthening ecosystem resilience, improving the livelihoods of poor people, and promoting ecosystem-based adaptation to global change. This theme has the capacity to establish networks with institutions to develop and design strategies for the long-term monitoring, assessment, and valuation of ecosystem services, and the management, conservation, and restoration of various ecosystems.

Ecosystem Services theme experts support our regional programmes in the following ways:

1. Engaging with partner institutions to develop, design, and conduct multidisciplinary research for landscape management and ecosystem assessments;
2. Conducting participatory action research for improved understanding of ecological and socioeconomic change in terms of biodiversity and various biomes (e.g., grasslands, wetlands), soil properties, and for adding value to provisioning services for ecosystem resilience and improved livelihoods;

3. Deploying multidisciplinary collaborative research to monitor environmental changes, to enhance ecological functions for better adaptation, access to resources to poor people and to fill related data gaps in transboundary landscapes;
4. Addressing, together with partners, areas of economic valuation of ecosystem services, and innovative financing mechanisms for natural resource management including REDD+, incentives for ecosystem services (IES), and access and benefit sharing (ABS), among others; and
5. Implementing programmes from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) for science and policy, among others, to strengthen biodiversity and cultural databases for enhanced regional and global access.

4.3.1.3 Water and Air



The Water and Air thematic staff has skills to understand Himalayan glaciers, rivers, springs, and the atmosphere as impacted by climate and other change. Water and Air has the expertise to study impact

mitigation of change, and how to build people's adaptive capacity to these changes.

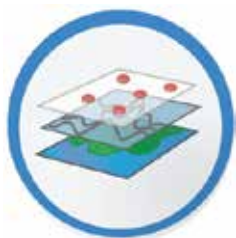
Water and Air possesses the skills to foster transboundary dialogues to promote integrated water and land management, and serve as a resource centre for information on water resources and atmospheric pollution.

Water and Air experts support our regional programmes in the following ways:

1. Analyzing the future availability of water in the mountains in the face of future climatic and anthropogenic change;

2. Mapping springs and developing rejuvenation approaches for restoring drying springs for poor people in the mid-hill regions;
3. Analyzing hydrological processes, and considering soil, water, land, social, and ecosystem dimensions;
4. Addressing issues of benefit-sharing between upstream and downstream poor and vulnerable communities;
5. Developing adaptive water management solutions from community to river basin scales in the framework of integrated water resource management;
6. Enhancing scientific knowledge on cryosphere dynamics and possible downstream impacts in the region through an integrative research approach that includes in situ measurements, remote sensing analysis, and modelling; and
7. Improving quantitative understanding of atmospheric transport, of chemical and microphysical processes, of emission sources within and up-wind of the region, and of the impacts of atmospheric change on the health of poor people and the cryosphere.

4.3.1.4 Geospatial Solutions



The Geospatial Solutions thematic staff has skills on the frontiers of geospatial science and earth observation technology for enhancing our understanding of biophysical and geophysical processes, including changes across land, water, and

ecosystems. Geospatial Solutions develops user demand-driven information systems and services to enable improved evidence-based decision making for managing changes in support of sustainable mountain development.

Among many topics, Geospatial Solutions has expertise in land use and land cover change monitoring, crop and

vegetation monitoring, climate services for agriculture and disaster management, artificial intelligence and machine learning for ecosystem services, systems for vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning, data assimilation and land surface modelling, and cloud-based analysis of big data.

Geospatial Solutions experts support our regional programmes in the following ways:

1. Providing innovative approaches through spatial analytical frameworks, spatial modelling, and decision support systems;
2. Supporting integrated data management through preparation of data management plans, implementation of data and metadata standards, and development of data sharing platforms;
3. Customizing state of the art remote sensing and geospatial technologies for monitoring natural, environmental, and social changes in the region;
4. Integrating geospatial information technologies to develop technically, and economically feasible and socially acceptable information services and integrated solutions for interventions; and
5. Developing training curricula and materials to build capacity of regional member countries to use and share geospatial information.

4.3.2 Gender Integration



ICIMOD believes that interventions are most successful when they account for all points of view, regardless of gender, caste, or ethnicity. Therefore, gender equity and social inclusiveness will continue to be a

hallmark of ICIMOD's work. In order to achieve ICIMOD's vision and mission, it is essential to ensure the full and meaningful participation of mountain women,

men and children, with attention to the persistent inequalities that have hindered programmes in the past.

ICIMOD has skills in addressing inequality across the region in terms of gender disparities related to work and livelihood responsibilities. ICIMOD experts will promote processes, practices and programmes that try to neutralize harmful gender norms and promote an equitable environment.

ICIMOD staff, in particular our gender team, are committed to rigorous gender analysis and organizational change – internally and externally – to ensure gender-positive impacts. Our gender team is responsible for implementing gender transformative change through: 1) integrating gender into research; 2) capacity strengthening and women's leadership; 3) gender inclusive policy and partnerships; and 4) gender positive organizational change.

4.3.3 Knowledge Management and Communication



Efficient knowledge management and effective communication are fundamental to achieving ICIMOD's objectives. Evidence-based policy and purposive impact are predicated on generating high quality

knowledge and disseminating it to appropriate audiences at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner. Central to accomplishing this is a results-oriented, streamlined and up-to-date internal system within KMC that supports and integrates knowledge production and knowledge sharing as mutually reinforcing processes. This involves co-ordinating different components of the knowledge production process to align motives and results within the larger institutional vision and mission. KMC will participate actively in ICIMOD's knowledge production process, co-ordinating with the various regional programmes for internal information sharing

and to ensure consistency of data collection, processing and storage, in accordance with standard international protocols.

KMC is also a key component of ICIMOD's public interface, managing its external communication and converting its knowledge into value-added knowledge products accessible to a range of target audiences belonging to different demographics. This activity links knowledge management with knowledge communication, the point at which the output of programmes are customized for specific purposes, using different media platforms to reach different constituencies for different purposes, cumulatively enlarging the influence of ICIMOD's science among a larger public. KMC will create high quality knowledge products to disseminate ICIMOD's programme outcomes. Apart from routine publishing activity, KMC will also focus on using the entire spectrum of traditional and new media to deliver customized messages in appropriate formats and styles to consolidate ICIMOD's position among its existing audiences and to cultivate a presence among new audiences.

KMC priorities will include:

- Contribution of knowledge products, including scientific papers and policy briefs, to regional and global coverage, policy decisions and behaviour change;
- Effective documentation and communication of impact stories;
- More attention of mountain issues in the public domain and international processes; and
- Emergence of new actors, including networks, engaged in promoting sustainable mountain development.

Box 3: Policy Engagement

ICIMOD's engagement with policy processes will be guided by the theory of change and impact pathways approach, duly supported by policy analysis. We will build on the strengths of ICIMOD, cultivate policy champions, develop networks of partners, proactively seek representation of ICIMOD on key committees and task forces in RMCs, and generate improved information systems for policy windows. Sound scientific evidence backed up by results from pilots will be used to draw out key messages and communicated to concerned stakeholders in a manner that they can relate to. Policy engagement work within ICIMOD will be further institutionalized by recognizing policy-related work in the staff appraisal system, process documentation of key policy outcomes, institutional mapping for networking, policy-related databases, and capacity building training modules on policy engagement.

Policy engagement is important at all programmatic levels: local, sub-national, national, regional, and international. Prioritized issues for policy influencing which have regional implications and have potential for proactively influencing policy in RMCs will be identified and pursued on a long-term basis with full engagement of key stakeholders in the RMCs.

4.4 Priority Actions for Medium Term Action Plan-IV

The following are key actions needed over the next five years to progress toward the priorities discussed earlier:

- Increasing emphasis on policy engagement (Box 3);
- Further efforts to promote regional cooperation, emphasizing the transboundary nature of ICIMOD's work;
- Greater emphasis on the uptake of innovations and promising ideas; and
- Continued and enhanced engagement with RMCs for regional outcomes.

To accomplish this, ICIMOD will:

- Align activities with country priorities of regional importance, engage strategically with policy makers, and use networks and targeted communications;
- Link practitioners, researchers, and policy makers across countries by sharing knowledge and seeking opportunities for transboundary cooperation, always using research and science as a means to promote cooperation;
- Develop and apply theories of change and impact pathways in our activities to ensure we engage the appropriate people with appropriate messages and communication tools; and
- Strengthen our partnerships with regional partners and the private sector, keeping in mind the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement.



Passu, Pakistan

5. THE STRUCTURE OF WORK: REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

In continuation of the last five years, Regional Programmes are set up for long-term engagement, promoting integration, and delivering impacts. Programmes work with Thematic Core Competencies to develop knowledge products and to promote integration on specific topics across regional programmes. Knowledge Management and Communication and Gender Integration cut across and support ICIMOD’s work. Most of ICIMOD’s staff are housed in the themes and KMC, but work in the Regional Programmes and Initiatives to deliver strategic results.

ICIMOD is known for its integrated approaches to meeting the multifaceted challenges of development. The Regional Programmes (RPs) are formulated with a view to long-term testing, piloting, and monitoring of innovative approaches; promoting transboundary cooperation; meeting capacity building needs in the region; and delivering seven strategic results. ICIMOD focuses on six RPs and acknowledges the potential to readjust as needed in evolving contexts. While the Thematic Areas will focus on developing knowledge, RPs are oriented towards integrating knowledge, orientating research into use, and delivering impacts.

ICIMOD’s Regional Programmes are set up for long-term engagement, promoting integration, and delivering impacts



5.1 Adaptation and Resilience Building

OUTCOME
Enhanced resilience of HKH women and men to socioeconomic and environmental changes, including climate change.

Adaptation and Resilience Building (ARB) strives to enhance the resilience of mountain communities to risks and vulnerabilities and strengthen their ability to harness opportunities arising from socioeconomic and environmental changes. Drawing on past experience, this programme will focus on improving access to knowledge and resources, building skills for harnessing emerging opportunities to diversify livelihoods and incomes for poverty reduction, and developing institutional capacities to manage changes at different scales. Particular attention will be given to strengthening linkages between communities, markets,



Myitkyina, Myanmar

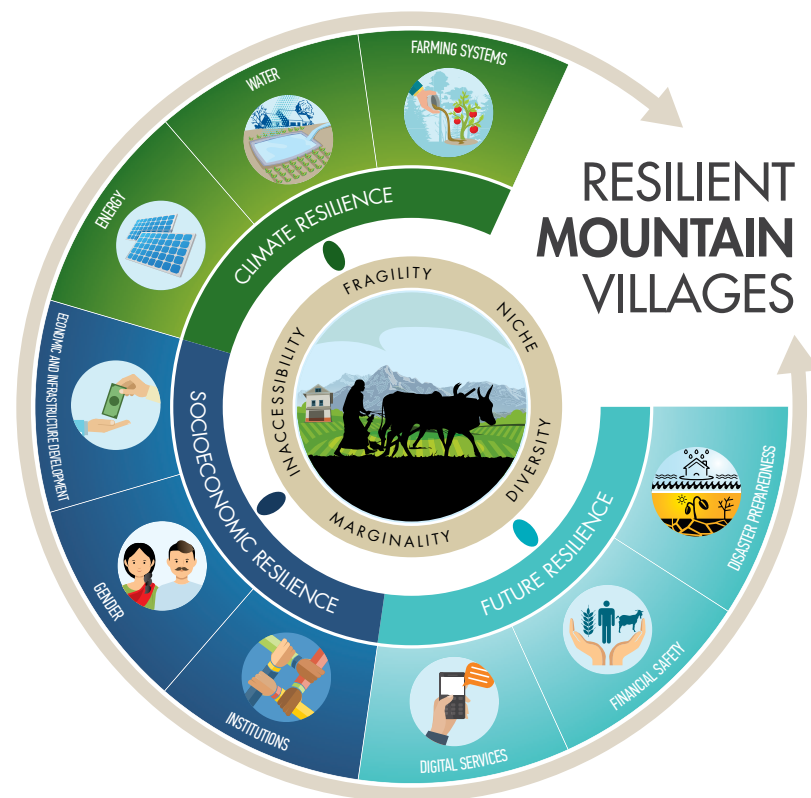


Figure 6: ICIMOD's Resilient Mountain Solutions Approach

and local agencies in order to facilitate efforts for stimulating transformative change and enhancing the resilience of vulnerable mountain communities in the HKH with a particular focus on women and marginalized groups. We will draw from lessons and experience in our present work, in particular from the Resilient Mountain Villages programme (Figure 5), which applies an integrated approach to mountain village development. We will promote participatory approaches to facilitate sustainable management of farm and off-farm resources for equitable rights and benefits.

The Adaptation and Resilience Building programme operates on three fundamental pillars:

- Generating scientific knowledge for understanding the contours and drivers of change in the HKH, as well as the responses required to support mountain communities in managing change;
- Promoting innovative action research, pilots, and outscaling strategies that draw on approaches for

value chain development of mountain niche products and services, climate services, access to clean energy, and community disaster risk reduction (DRR), in order to develop effective adaptive strategies for poverty impacts; and

- Fostering the refinement and formulation of pro-poor, mountain-specific enabling policies through effective policy engagement and institutional capacity development.

5.2 Transboundary Landscapes

OUTCOME

Improved transboundary cooperation among member countries demonstrated through regional policies and strategic partnerships leading to sustenance of mountain ecosystem services and equitable livelihood benefits at regional landscape levels.

Landscape management has earned global attention as vital for sustainable and equitable development. HKH landscapes are well-known for their aesthetic, cultural, material, biological, and geo-hydrological values, which have an upstream-downstream context. The HKH hosts a wide range of ecosystems, which provide numerous services in terms of food, water, energy, biodiversity, and climate regulation – all of which are subject to climatic and non-climatic changes that affect the livelihoods and resilience of poor and vulnerable communities living within the region as well as in downstream areas.

ICIMOD's transboundary landscape approach visualizes four north-south transects for the HKH and six identified transboundary landscapes (Figure 7): Kailash, Kangchenjunga, Far Eastern Himalaya, Hindu Kush Karakoram-Pamir, Everest, and Cherrapunjee-Chittagong. ICIMOD's Regional REDD+ Initiative is embedded in this programme to incorporate incentive-based mechanisms related to greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration including soil reserves, and biodiversity conservation at landscape and regional scales.

The Transboundary Landscapes programme operates on four fundamental pillars:

- Promoting integrated and participatory approaches in ecosystem management to mountain development throughout the RMCs, starting from the premise that ecosystem services flow beyond administrative boundaries and thus require regional and multi-lateral cooperation in transboundary landscapes;
- Adopting approaches that integrate multi-stakeholder priorities with scientific data in such a way that trade-offs between conservation and development can be properly assessed;
- Promoting regional acceptance of common frameworks, long-term research and monitoring, common methodologies, information sharing, and collaborative management for the purpose of

converting science into conservation and development policy and practice; and

- Contributing scientific input to global policy processes such as the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and UNFCCC—Global Landscape Forum.

5.3 River Basins and Cryosphere

OUTCOME

RMC policies, strategies, and development programmes highly critical to water resources management and disaster risk reduction in HKH region influenced through robust evidence from scientific research, gender responsive practices and capacity building in the areas of river basins and cryosphere.

Water resources development and management in the HKH is essential for the sustainable development of RMCs and downstream countries. It requires sound governance for promoting a sensible balance of competing demands on the environment from different sectors of society. To this end, ICIMOD's River Basins and Cryosphere (RB&C) programme works at the river basin level on cryosphere and water resources issues, which include a wide range of concerns such as monitoring and assessment, water-induced risk management, climate change adaptation and resilience of poor people, and water demand, availability, and conservation.

The River Basins and Cryosphere programme operates on four fundamental pillars:

- Adopting an integrated water resource management approach to improve our understanding of upstream-downstream linkages and the links between natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods of poor people;

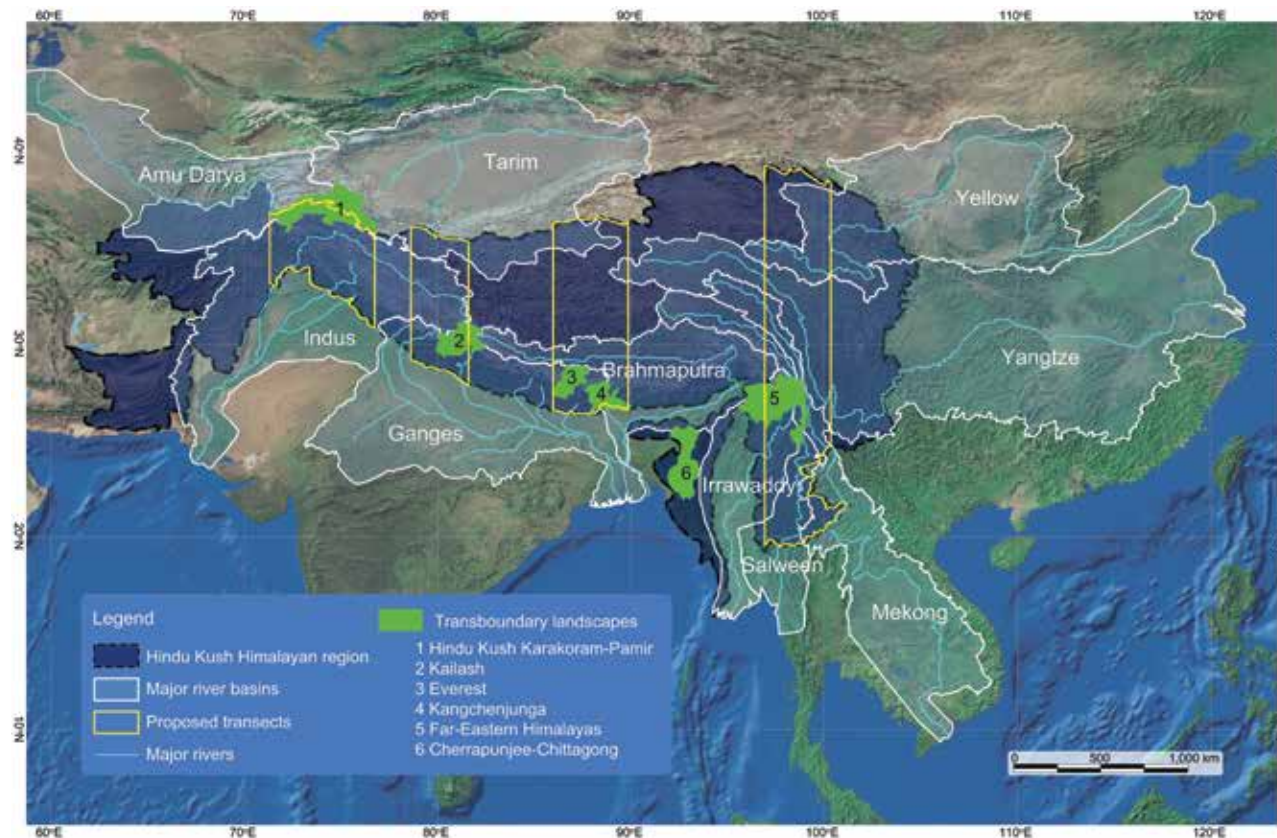


Figure 6: Transboundary landscape and river basin approaches for regional cooperation in the Hindu Kush Himalaya

- Developing resiliency and climate change adaptation in the water sector, including mountain community water management benefit sharing, climate services (e.g., flood information sharing), and disaster risk reduction (e.g., floods, droughts, landslides) for poor and vulnerable communities;
- Supporting the implementation of important water and livelihood global agreements such as the Sendai Framework, the Paris Climate Agreement, and water-related SDGs; and
- Building a regional cryosphere knowledge hub to collate and share information throughout the region regarding snow, glaciers, permafrost, glacial hazards, glacial lakes, and the potential for glacial lake outburst floods, or GLOFs.

5.4 Atmosphere

OUTCOME

RMCs use science-based knowledge on air quality, atmospheric processes, and climate to shape policies and actions leading to air pollution mitigation for improved environmental and human health.

The Atmosphere Regional Programme will build on five years of experience at ICIMOD, renewing its focus on improving the well-being of HKH populations through better air quality and an improved understanding of atmospheric issues.

The HKH has experienced a rapid increase in air pollution in recent decades, with far-reaching and hazardous consequences on environmental health and

the health of poor people. In many places, both urban and rural, pollutants have reached alarming levels, threatening the health of millions of people in the region, particularly women, children, the elderly, and the poor. The socioeconomic impact of this slow onset disaster on society, the environment, and human health is immense. The pollution sources are primarily household pollution from cook stoves, diesel engines, brick kilns, open burning of agricultural waste and solid waste, and fossil fuel-based energy production. During much of the dry season, large parts of the HKH experience a thick regional haze that reduces visibility and sunlight, and contributes to the formation of winter fog, affecting aviation, tourism, and agricultural production.

The Atmosphere programme operates on four fundamental pillars:

- Promoting reductions in fossil energy use and development of clean energy sources through better engagement with engineers, entrepreneurs, and social scientists to bring effective and sustainable solutions into practice for mitigating air pollution;
- Generating data and new knowledge on atmospheric processes linked to climate change, emission sources, and mitigation options for improved air quality;
- Using evidence-based research to provide policy recommendations to decision makers throughout the HKH in a collaborative manner; and
- Increasing the scope of ICIMOD's current efforts (focused primarily in Bhutan and Nepal) to include all eight RMCs of the HKH.



Manaslu, Nepal

5.5 Mountain Environment Regional Information System (MENRIS)

OUTCOME

Contributed significantly to effective evidence-based decision making processes by governments, communities, and individuals using scientific data, earth observation information, and geospatial technologies in the areas of agriculture, the environment, natural resources, and climate change.

The synergistic convergence of geospatial technologies with mainstream information technology in recent years has enabled widespread penetration of smart applications into everyday lives, changing the possibilities for using, generating, and disseminating information. These advances have emerged at a time with great demand for more timely and accurate hydro-climate information to help societies, especially the poor and vulnerable, to prepare for and mitigate the effects of disasters and extreme events. In a short time, the Mountain Environment Regional Information System (MENRIS) at ICIMOD has established itself as an

internationally recognized regional resource centre for providing geo-based and remote sensing data to produce integrated and innovative solutions on the ground.

The MENRIS programme operates on three fundamental pillars:

- Improving environmental management and resilience to climate change through improved evidence-based decision making processes supported by information services using earth observation and geospatial technologies;
- Developing databases and customized information systems and service through innovative approaches in the fields of livelihoods, land use, weather and climate, water and disaster, and food security and agriculture; and
- Operationalizing and leveraging the use of information products, climate services, and data sharing platforms with a strong focus on user engagement and capacity building of our partners to foster improved networking and regional collaboration.

5.6 Mountain Knowledge and Action Networks

OUTCOME

Enhanced capacity and collaboration among universities, research alliances, policy makers, and youth for sustainable development in the HKH and adjoining regions.

Knowledge development, use, and networking have great significance for sustainable development in the HKH, and academia and researchers will play a critical role. Throughout ICIMOD's eight RMCs, institutions and universities produce quality research and graduates. In the coming years, enabling these institutions to come together and network among each other to achieve strategic results will be indispensable for realizing sustainable development in the HKH.

Mountain Knowledge and Action Networks encapsulates ICIMOD's capacity to draw on the strength of existing alliances in knowledge production and sharing such as the South Asian Network for Development and

Environmental Economics (SANDEE), the Himalayan University Consortium (HUC), and the Hindu Kush Himalayan Monitoring and Assessment Programme (HIMAP). The programme promotes cross-fertilisation among these alliances, aiming for evidence-based policies and practical solutions and actions to benefit upstream and downstream communities.

The Mountain Knowledge and Action Networks programme operates on five fundamental pillars:

- Fostering regional collaborative mountain-focused research and training, generating cohorts of HUC fellows – researchers and scholars – who will produce advanced mountain-specific studies, work toward practical solutions for transboundary issues, and champion environmental leadership;
- Strengthening the capacity of environmental economists (SANDEE) through grants and mentoring at workshops and training courses, and strengthening their linkages with the private and public sectors;
- Engaging scientists, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers (HIMAP) in a regularized system of comprehensive and thematic assessments
- Fostering the uptake of science for policy action through a series of HKH science-policy dialogues (HIMAP); and
- Supporting young women and men in scholarly pursuits, entrepreneurship (HUC, SANDEE, and HIMAP), and skill development and leadership enhancement to promote sustainable mountain development.



Bandarban, Bangladesh

6. PARTNERSHIPS STRATEGY

6.1 Partnerships for Transformative Change

ICIMOD works with and through a diversified network of local, national, regional, and international partner organizations. ICIMOD has developed a Strategic Cooperation Unit (SCU) that provides ‘partnership services’, a systematic approach to partnerships that also meets ICIMOD’s requirements in terms of governance and financial accountability. Our partnering approach is grounded in five key principles: diversity, equity, transparency, synergy, and mutual benefit. Based on past knowledge and established track-records, each partnership will be carefully chosen with appropriate due diligence procedures, partner relation management, and closeout procedures to ensure increased regional engagement and ownership.

ICIMOD maintains four types of strategic partnerships.

- 1. **Strategic and policy partners:** These partnerships support the development and formulation of mountain-specific strategies, policies, and legislation. They help facilitate and conduct policy reviews and assessments, catalyze the upscaling of solutions to the policy level, and shape policy agendas.
- 2. **Implementation partners:** These partners include operational and research partners who support regional programme implementation either individually in the RMCs or through the consortium of partners.
- 3. **Development partners:** Development partners include bilateral and multilateral international development funding partners in the frame of both financial and technical cooperation as well as foundations and philanthropic organizations.
- 4. **Knowledge partners and networks:** These partnerships are comprised of universities and academic institutions; regional and global network organizations; science partners and thematic networks; and institutions engaged in advocacy, outreach, knowledge sharing and exchange and dissemination, including media organizations and publication houses.

ICIMOD has adopted
a partnering approach
grounded in the principles
of diversity, equity,
transparency, synergy,
and mutual benefit



Yuanmou, China



Kala Patthar, Nepal

The apex level of partnership for ICIMOD is represented by the RMCs and the nodal ministries on the Board of Governors. This group provides strategic direction to ICIMOD within countries and the region, and requires continuous attention to meet demands.

In the context of the UN's SDGs and Paris Climate Agreement, ICIMOD will need to need to strengthen existing and develop new regional partnerships addressing HKH issues, such as the Partnership for Sustainable Development of the Hindu Kush Himalaya and support processes that will lead to a regional body like a 'Himalayan Council' for promoting sustainable HKH development. ICIMOD will collaborate with various government ministries and departments at the national level and with regional and international organizations like SAARC, the UN, and the IPCC.

ICIMOD strives to improve its work with implementation partners to yield higher developmental impacts and synergy. This requires an integrated approach including

partnership brokering, impact pathways, effective communication, outreach, and financial management for the effective implementation of the regional programmes.

6.2 Private Sector Engagement

The private sector is poised to play an increasing role in the HKH, which could change mountain environments and livelihoods in both positive and negative ways. ICIMOD would like to intensify its engagement with the private sector to work together to tackle issues of mountain poverty alleviation, natural resource management, and environmental sustainability recognizing the considerable resources, interest, and influence of the private sector.

Many different types of private sector actors have relevance for ICIMOD including companies and corporations based in agriculture, water and irrigation, finance, tourism, manufacturing, and infrastructure

development. Utilizing innovations from these business opportunities could yield novel insights through collaboration with ICIMOD, resulting in viable business solutions for increased developmental impact, upscaling potentials, and long-term sustainability. ICIMOD builds on the positive experience of promoting livelihood opportunities and market access for mountain communities by developing value-chains and market linkages for mountain products and services. Identifying bottlenecks and policy constraints for effective private sector engagement in its approaches for addressing mountain livelihoods and poverty issues is crucial. While ICIMOD maintains a positive view on private sector partnerships, the critical analysis of interventions for benefits to mountain people is necessary.

ICIMOD will seek to initiate and/or strengthen strategic collaborations with development organizations to foster mountain entrepreneurship focusing on mountain youth. ICIMOD will work through regional partnerships to reach out to relevant private sectors throughout the region.

Through its unique mandate for sustainable mountain development, ICIMOD will promote businesses as an opportunity to invest in the mountain agenda through CSR, philanthropy, foundations, and transformative partnerships.

ICIMOD is mindful that a successful engagement with the private sector will require appropriate institutional positioning and innovation within the institution. To this end, ICIMOD is developing a comprehensive private sector engagement strategy to strengthen collaboration with the private sector.

7. FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Strong financial management and administrative practices are the backbone of ICIMOD’s programmatic interventions. ICIMOD will continue to strengthen its practices to strive for more effectiveness and efficiency. While the last five years were a period of tremendous financial growth, ICIMOD intends to moderate its pace of growth in line with near-term funding expectations, and use this period to consolidate.

Strong financial management and administrative practices are the backbone of ICIMOD’s programmatic interventions



7.1 Funding Planning

At the 42nd meeting of the Board of Governors in Bhutan, the RMCs agreed to substantially increase their financial commitment to ICIMOD per the revised Funding Strategy. The annual Core contribution from the RMCs is based on the Funding Strategy of ICIMOD where RMC contribution has been agreed until 2020. In the middle of this Strategy Period, ICIMOD will conduct an exercise to calculate the core contributions from the RMCs for future years.

7.2 Core Funds and Their Use

Core funds will be financed by contributions from regional and non-regional countries and by indirect cost recovery from projects. These core funds are necessary:

- To fund those activities that contribute directly to fulfilling ICIMOD’s mission and include programmatic areas that are not adequately funded through programme and project funds.
- To finance development of new and innovative ideas, scaling up of activities, to provide bridge funding for essential activities until new funding is sourced, as well as essential leadership functions (Board and Directorate).
- To be more effective at institutional functions such as developing new partnerships and strengthening existing ones, strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, and enhancing institutional information, knowledge management, and communication functions.



Bamiyan, Afghanistan

- To build and maintain relationships at the highest level with the RMCs of ICIMOD and with the non-regional funding countries and other international agencies across the globe.

7.3 In-Kind Contributions from RMCs

ICIMOD has been receiving in-kind contributions from its RMCs under different initiatives and programmes. The Centre will work with all RMC governments and national partners to secure in-kind co-financing contributions to fund the upscaling of programmes in their respective countries. This will be in addition to the annual core contribution by the RMCs.

7.4 From Project to Long-Term Programme Funding

In the coming strategic period, ICIMOD will make the utmost effort to generate funds for its activities through long-term programme funding as a strong foundation for long-term operation and sustainability. ICIMOD will encourage funding from regional and non-regional financial partners that share its strategic objectives, strategies, and methodologies. Programme funding will constitute the bulk of ICIMOD's budget.

7.5 Efforts on New Streams of Funding

ICIMOD will seek to diversify its funding base by engaging with emerging development partners, foundations, and funding instruments, such as the Green Climate Fund. It will also seek to increase in-kind and other funding from RMCs.

7.6 Efficient Financial Management Systems

7.6.1 Cost Consciousness and Internal Control

ICIMOD functions in an internal control environment which is based on the principles of financial prudence, transparency in operations, proper segregation of duties, and adequate control of country and regional financial reporting. ICIMOD has implemented a very strong Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system for full automation and integration of its Finance, HR, Procurement, Partnership, and other functional management systems. This has helped to hugely enhance the efficiency of operations.

7.6.2 Value for Money

ICIMOD recognises its responsibility to achieve value for money from all its activities, however they may be funded. We ensure value for money in our operations through cost-efficient mobilization of resources while ensuring required effectiveness in output delivery. Participatory programme design, a strong budgeting process, transparency in operations, and a very strong auditing and review process ensure value for money proposition in each of our interventions.

7.6.3 Ethical practice: Zero tolerance for fraud and financial irregularity

ICIMOD maintains a zero tolerance policy towards fraud and corruption on the part of its staff members and partner organizations. It will not work in partnership with organizations found to have engaged in such practices in the execution of projects.

7.6.4 Strengthening financial management capacity in partner organizations

Partner organizations use their own policies and procedures in relation to their fund management. However, the finance function in the Centre ensures that certain standards relating to financial prudence, cost efficiency, value for money, transparent process in procurement, financial reporting and other compliance requirements are incorporated in the Letter of Agreements with the partner organizations.



Bandarban, Bangladesh

8. THEORY OF CHANGE

The far-sighted founders of ICIMOD had a rationale for setting up a regional and intergovernmental Centre focused on mountains that is arguably more relevant today than in 1983.

Ultimately the aim is to build system capacity at different levels to better address livelihoods, environment, and societal mountain issues, including the capacity to:

- Understand the changing socioecological context of the HKH;
- Develop mountain livelihood and environmental solutions; and
- Implement solutions.

ICIMOD's underlying assumption is that research and development cooperation on mountain issues will build capacity and trust to address issues of local, national, and regional importance. This capacity will have pay-offs in terms of ecosystems, livelihoods, and cooperation well beyond ICIMOD's direct programmes.

The assumption is that ICIMOD will achieve this by working in the following ways:

- ICIMOD works in a complex socio-ecological system with unpredictable outcomes.
- ICIMOD takes a learning approach to adjust its planning and implementation.

ICIMOD has developed a strategic orientation (see section 4), to position itself within the region to develop knowledge-based solutions, share knowledge, engage with policy, and foster collaboration. We believe that we best achieve results by fostering and testing ideas and innovation, by outscaling and upscaling these ideas, and by working in a transdisciplinary manner that crosses disciplinary, scalar, and national borders.

ICIMOD works to tackle issues of common interest across countries. But it is the way we work that will make sustainable differences:

- a) First we work with a variety of partners to better share knowledge and experience, to develop ideas, and jointly build capacity to address mountain issues.
- b) ICIMOD's regional approach mandates that we work across at least three or four countries on common issues. We use research and science to create a safe space for collaboration among professionals and practitioners across boundaries. ICIMOD identifies common topics that are addressed more readily by science like biodiversity



Koinga, Bhutan

conservation or adaptation strategies, or those where countries are open to work together such as climate change issues or disasters.

- c) ICIMOD uses its regional programmes as platforms for research and development activities. Here the Centre works across countries, develops and shares knowledge, engages with policy makers, and builds human and institutional capacity, all of which help to strengthen the innovation processes. Moreover, the regional programmes build a set of results on a range of topics – for example, community adaptation, ecosystem management, disaster risk reduction, and glaciers change – that are immediately relevant and applicable.

The way ICIMOD engages produces more than these results. By working in this manner, ICIMOD will generate long lasting results to continuously build human and institutional capacity that will generate required changes in policies and practices. This will lead to more poverty reduction, more gender equitable and inclusive development, more regional cooperation for better outcomes, more investment in mountains, and overall greater resilience of communities, ecosystems and governments.

ICIMOD believes that it best achieves results by fostering and testing ideas and innovation, by outscaling and upscaling these ideas, and by working in a transdisciplinary manner that crosses disciplinary, scalar, and national borders



9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

ICIMOD will further strengthen its results-based planning and monitoring and evaluation at the institutional, programmatic, and partner levels. Our Strategic Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (SPM&E) Unit aims to support and advise the Centre to become results-oriented and enhance its focus on outcomes and impacts.

SPM&E uses Theory of Change and Impact Pathways as approaches for strategic planning, and measuring and tracking results and impacts. This impact-oriented approach will help us drive more effective application of results-based management in programming, implementation, partnerships, and performance management at ICIMOD (Figure 8). SPM&E will also support programmes to develop and apply research-into-use and to upscale strategies that influence policies, programmes and global processes that promote the sustainable mountain development agenda.



Jiaju Zangzhai, China

Figure 8: ICIMOD Results Framework



Regional Programme Outcomes and Indicators

Regional Programme 3: River Basins and Cryosphere

RMC policies, strategies, and development programmes highly critical to water resources management and disaster risk reduction in HKH region influenced through robust evidence from scientific research, gender responsive practices, and capacity building in the areas of river basins and cryosphere.

Indicators

1. Number of policies and strategies using ICIMOD outputs related to integrative and inclusive water resource development and management, and equitable benefit sharing that leads to reduced physical vulnerabilities and reduced poverty.
2. Number of organizations effectively using and adopting innovative, gender sensitive, and context-specific water resource management practices at different scales using a water-energy-food nexus approach.
3. Number of organizations from RMCs engaged in regional cooperation on cryosphere, climate services, and DRR contributing to reduced physical and social vulnerabilities.
4. Number of selected RMCs with substantial amounts of cryosphere in their territory having long-term and scientifically-robust monitoring programmes on these resources.

Regional Programme 4: Atmosphere

RMCs use science-based knowledge on air quality, atmospheric processes, and climate to shape policies and actions leading to air pollution mitigation for improved environment and human health.

Indicators

1. Number of effective local, national, and regional policies, processes, and strategies using inputs and analyses from the programme in the areas of air quality, and environmental and human health to foster air pollution mitigation.
2. Number of instances showing global policy processes (UNFCCC, CCAC, IPCC) influenced by the programme.
3. Evidence of effective regional collaborations on atmosphere, clean energy, or climate in the HKH.
4. Number of women and men, and number of institutions in the RMCs, empowered effectively through capacity building to address air pollution.
5. Number of initiatives launched by governments, communities, and the private sector to take sustainable, gender-sensitive, and socially inclusive measures to improve air quality leading to reduced poverty and social vulnerabilities

Regional Programme Outcomes and Indicators

Regional Programme 5: Mountain Environment Regional Information System

Contributed significantly to effective evidence-based decision making processes by governments, communities and individuals using scientific data, earth observation information, and geospatial technologies in the areas of agriculture, the environment, natural resources, and climate change.

Indicators

1. Number of institutions and programmes effectively using high-quality information services and climate services for gender-sensitive and inclusive decision making on natural and social systems at different levels (community, national, sub-national, and regional) leading to reduced poverty, vulnerabilities, and improved ecosystem services.
2. Number of women and men using ICIMOD's databases within and beyond the region through innovative platforms.
3. Increased number of organizations and people (women and men) using earth observation and geospatial solutions as a result of capacity development.
4. Effective mechanisms in place at national and regional levels that promote open access to scientific and geospatial data.
5. Number of instances ICIMOD is recognized in global geospatial networks, forums, and exchanges.

Regional Programme 6: Mountain Knowledge and Action Networks

Enhanced capacity and collaboration among universities, research alliances, policy makers and youth for sustainable development in the HKH and adjoining regions.

Indicators

1. Increased number of universities employing high quality relevant curricula related to mountains and environmental economics influenced by the programme.
2. Number of instances where collaborative research and gender inclusive training programmes have been organized by network members with their own resources.
3. Increased number and quality of peer-reviewed publications by network members.
4. Number of HUC fellows, both women and men, demonstrating effective sustainable mountain development work following the completion of an HUC scholarship and leadership programme with priority given to women.
5. An effective regional platform that uses science-policy dialogues for regional cooperation leading to poverty reduction, improved ecosystem services, and reduced vulnerabilities.
6. Number of national and sub-national policies influenced by the programme that contributes to poverty reduction and reducing social vulnerabilities.
7. Number of instances where youth acquire new skills and leadership for promoting sustainable mountain development.

10. GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

ICIMOD is governed by a Board comprised of members representing each of the eight RMCs as well as seven independent board members. The Board is supported by the ICIMOD Support Group comprised of development partners, a Programme Advisory Committee comprised of the seven independent board members, and a Finance Committee, which includes representative board members.

ICIMOD’s regional member countries and non-regional financial partners who support ICIMOD’s objectives through core and long-term programme funding, which act as a strong foundation for long-term operation and sustainability, fund ICIMOD. ICIMOD encourages core funding and recognizes the contribution of all funding partners.

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ICIMOD’s Regional Member Countries

			
Afghanistan	Bangladesh	Bhutan	China
			
India	Myanmar	Nepal	Pakistan



Khumbu, Nepal

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing	NDC	Nationally Determined Commitment
ARB	Adaptation and Resilience Building	PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	QQR	Quinquennial Review
CCAC	Climate and Clean Air Coalition	RB&C	River Basins and Cryosphere
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility	REDD	Reduced Emission from Deforestation and Degradation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	RMCs	Regional Member Countries
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning	SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	SANDEE	South Asian Network for Development and Environmental Economics
GLOFs	Glacial Lake Outburst Floods	SCU	Strategic Cooperation Unit
HIMAP	Hindu Kush Himalaya Monitoring and Assessment Programme	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
HKH	Hindu Kush Himalaya	SES	Social-Ecological Systems
HR	Human Resource	SPM&E	Strategic Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Unit
HUC	Himalayan University Consortium	UN	United Nations
IPBES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework on Climate Change Convention
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development	VfM	Value for Money
IES	Incentives for Ecosystem Services		
IPBES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services		
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change		
ISG	ICIMOD Support Group		
KMC	Knowledge Management and Communication		
LDC	Least Developed Countries		
MENRIS	Mountain Environment Regional Information System		
MTAP	Medium Term Action Plan		

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