



Support to Rural Livelihoods and Climate Change Adaptation (Himalica) in Bhutan

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), together with national partners, has developed and promoted mountain-specific resilient solutions for the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) by combining economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The European Union-funded Support to Rural Livelihoods and Climate Change Adaptation in the Himalayas (Himalica) programme has worked in five countries, aiming to enhance the capacity of national and regional stakeholders to deal with livelihood development and environmental protection in the HKH, and to reduce poverty by increasing resilience and unlocking new livelihood opportunities.

Himalica in Bhutan has been implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF) in i) developing climate-resilient value chains for fresh vegetables and goat; ii) reappraising the country's approach to organic agriculture; iii) assessing poverty and vulnerability; iv) assessing ecosystems in Barshong along multiple dimensions; and v) promoting beekeeping and other enterprises. Best practices, tools, and approaches applied in Himalica are being considered in Bhutan's twelfth Five Year Plan.

ICIMOD



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FOR MOUNTAINS AND PEOPLE

Pilot project on climate resilient value chain

development: A pilot project in five communities of Barshong Gewog in Tsirang focused on import substitution along value chains – goat and vegetables (beans, cabbage, onion, and ginger) – was selected through a consultative process. Himalica promoted climate-resilient practices, community-based microplanning, and sustainable land management to empower more than 200 rural households. The project also arranged exposure trips on goat farming and vegetable production for farmers and held trainings on value chain analysis, enterprise development, beekeeping management, and spring water protection. According to an endline impact assessment, the average income of beneficiary households increased by Nu. 42,936.4 [\$692], out of which vegetable farming accounted for Nu. 14,142.8 [\$229].

Organic agriculture development strategies:

Himalica helped assess the potential and challenges for organic agriculture in Bhutan, building on the work of the National Organic Programme, Department of Agriculture, MoAF, as well as on pilots conducted by Himalica in Tsirang district. The process included inception meetings; a literature review; fieldwork across agroecological zones of Bhutan, including organic farms and farmers' fields as well as research centres and research sub-stations; discussions and analyses; and report generation.

A multi-dimensional assessment of ecosystems and ecosystem services in Barshong:

Under the Himalica Initiative, the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN), with technical support from ICIMOD, carried out a study to understand the state and dynamics of ecosystems and their services in Barshong Gewog in Tsirang, Bhutan, and their nexus with human wellbeing.

Multi-Dimensional poverty and livelihood

vulnerability assessment: This assessment was conducted to understand and document various dimensions of poverty and livelihood vulnerability, which in turn is expected to provide clues about

differences in the intensity and composition across six selected districts (Bumthang, Paro, Samdrup Jongkhar, Samtse, Tashiyangtse and Tsirang). This information will also be useful to decision makers to identify intervention areas and guide measures to reduce vulnerability.

Promoting beekeeping and honey value chain

analysis: Bhutan is rich in bee flora necessary for honeybees to survive and produce honey. Because honeybees improve agricultural productivity, Himalica supported integrating beekeeping as a livelihood diversification option in Tsirang, where nearly one-fifth of households keep native bees in traditional hives. After assessing the feasibility and potential for beekeeping development in the area, Himalica identified enterprising youth and farmers, including women, who were interested in taking up beekeeping. Trainings and exposure-cum-learning visits were arranged to encourage improved beekeeping management.

Awareness raising and sensitization on climate change adaptation:

ICIMOD partnered with the College of Natural Resources (CNR) to raise awareness and strengthen local capacities to assess the effects of climate change and to design adaptation measures. It conducted in-house capacity building workshops for CNR faculty on climate change adaptation and trained sector heads in Wangduephodrang and Dagana Dzongkhags in participatory action research. Four gewogs in each dzongkhag were selected as action research sites, where a number of trainings on climate-resilient livelihoods and climate change adaptation were conducted. ICIMOD also partnered with the Bhutan Media and Communication Institute (BMCI) to package and disseminate knowledge on climate change in Bhutan. By assessing the local context and with input from ICIMOD, BMCI developed a Resource Book on Climate plus Change, leaflets and posters in Dzongkha and English on climate change issues, and conducted media workshops and awareness campaigns on climate change adaptation.