

Pakistan Meeting Summary  
leading to

# Upper Indus Basin Network Workshop for Enhancing Science-Based Regional Cooperation



# 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 (HKH) – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan – based in Kathmandu, Nepal. Globalization 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 and downstream issues. ICIMOD supports regional transboundary programmes through partnerships with regional partner institutions, facilitates the exchange of experiences, and serves as a regional knowledge hub. We strengthen networking among regional and global centres of excellence. Overall, we are working to develop economically and environmentally-sound mountain ecosystems to improve the living standards of mountain populations and to sustain vital ecosystem services for the billions of people living downstream – now and in the future.



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**Upper Indus Basin Network Workshop for  
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# Meeting Summary

The Upper Indus Basin Network (UIB-N) was established in Pakistan in 2014. Through six Technical Working Groups (TWG), the Network has leveraged national and international expertise to generate and present science-based knowledge on various facets of the Upper Indus Basin. Following successful integration and outputs in Pakistan, the team deliberated on expanding the Network to span the Upper Indus Basin across Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, and China. This was presented as a possible agenda item in the two-day UIB-Network Workshop for Enhancing Science-Based Regional Cooperation in Kathmandu on May 24-25, 2018.

In the lead-up to that event, ICIMOD organized a half-day meeting focused on Pakistan on 23 April 2018 with the UIB-N Pakistan delegation, followed by a field visit to the ICIMOD Knowledge Park. The meeting objectives were to identify how Pakistan could benefit by regionalizing the UIB-N to all Basin-sharing countries, while retaining the focus on Pakistan. Of the 30 participants in the UIB-N main event, 16 were UIB-N members from Pakistan. The members deliberated how best to transition the current Pakistan-based Network into a regional one, and possible frameworks for the country-to-regional approach. The meeting concluded that the better approach would be to establish Country Chapters that can function independently and contribute balanced representation on a regional Strategic Committee.

The existing UIB-N will therefore continue as the UIB-N Pakistan Chapter, and some of the members of the Pakistan Strategic Committee will represent it in the Regional Strategic Committee.

The workshop began with a session to ascertain partner expectations and roles to further strengthen the UIB-N. This was followed up with a Group Work session to establish three key aspects of the Network: the role and importance of UIB-N in generating and sharing knowledge related to UIB in Pakistan; bringing regional perspectives to the UIB-N, with a major focus on Pakistan; and potential opportunities and challenges in collaboration between Afghanistan and Pakistan in the UIB. The meeting objectives were to identify how Pakistan can benefit by regionalizing the UIB-N to all Basin-sharing countries, while retaining the Pakistan focus.

## Conclusion Points: UIB-N Workshop

### Importance of UIB-N

- UIB-N is a voluntary and neutral platform to share science-based knowledge through a gathering of diversified stakeholders like scientists, practitioners, and policy makers.
- UIB-N created synergies and avoided duplication of research work being carried out in the UIB.

### Role of members

- Promote coordination among all stakeholder working in UIB
- Sharing of science-based information/knowledge

### Prospects for Regionalizing of UIB-N in Pakistan

- Replicate UIB-N chapters in the other Basin countries first, then regionalize it
- Sharing information and knowledge largely depends on political agreements between regional countries
- Regional cooperation is a great opportunity for Pakistan to learn best practices from other basin countries.

### Opportunities for Bilateral Collaboration between Pakistan and Afghanistan

- Both countries have the same objectives, so mutual collaboration would be useful for sharing information and for academic exchange.

### Challenges of Bilateral Collaboration between Pakistan and Afghanistan

- Geopolitical situations. Follow-up and government ownership.
- The differences in technical capacities or skills.

# UIB-N Background

Dr Arun Shrestha stated that UIB-N was an informal group at its inception, but with time, the Technical Working Groups and Strategic Committee were established. UIB-N highlights key thematic areas related to climate, water, and hazards.

- Promoting coordination and collaboration: UIB-N will not conduct research as a group but will promote it by putting forward some important scientific priorities charted through 10 research questions.
- Outlining overviews in priority thematic areas by charting the work being done by each organization to present a holistic understanding of what is happening at Basin-level.
- Organizing a common platform to share information, research outcomes, and knowledge such as the Indus Basin Knowledge Platform.





# The Meeting

## Opening Session

In his opening remarks, Dr David Molden, Director General of ICIMOD, welcomed the participants and commended the UIB-N for its progress and integration of diverse stakeholders. He suggested retaining the group as the UIB-N Pakistan chapter based on the ongoing progress and requested inputs on how best to take the UIB-N to a regional level. He outlined the potential cross-learning between the four countries in terms of adaptation and climate change through science-based research to benefit mountain peoples. Mr Khalid Mohtadullah, Chair of UIB-N, explained that the UIB-N is a voluntary and neutral platform of scientists for building on each other's work. He outlined the need to recognize challenges such as coordination among Technical Working Groups, resource generation, and cryosphere-related knowledge. He expressed the importance of retaining a focus on Pakistan without diminishing the wider UIB for better knowledge sharing and understanding of water resources.

Dr Arun Shrestha, the Regional Program Manager of the River Basin and Cryosphere Programmes at ICIMOD, outlined the inception of the UIB-N as a Technical Working Group at a meeting organized by the Pakistan Meteorological Department in 2010. The primary objective of the Technical Working Group was to establish a network to coordinate monitoring stations in the UIB. The main agenda was to visit the UIB and experience the challenges with the focus on cryosphere, climate change, and water resources. A field visit in April 2014 resulted in a broader understanding of the context and issues in the area. He emphasized the science-based knowledge sharing nature of the Network. While initiated from Pakistan, many research organizations working on climate change and related issues in the UIB are engaged, and together they have coordinated to minimize the possible duplication of research and to address critical knowledge gaps. One to two Technical Working Group meetings took place per year, through which the Leads and Co-Leads shared learnings and gradually helped these organizations coordinate and share learnings on climate change, water resources, natural hazards, and impacts on communities. Participation was a major challenge, with unavailability of key individuals and mostly intuitional participation. Four years on, it is now a critical time to think about the way forward in strengthening the Network.

## Session I: Expectations and Role of Partners

Prior to deliberations at the UIB-N Workshop planned for April 24-25, meeting participants articulated their expectations and what they deemed to be the necessary role of partners to strengthen the UIB-N at the regional level.

### Expectations largely aligned around the need for

- Clear partnerships with concrete plans and outcomes in information, experience, and data sharing to carry forward the UIB-N mission.
- Sound structures and mechanisms of interaction between multiple countries, and coordination of a Basin-wide network.
- Country-based fund mobilization for UIB-related science research.
- Improved coordination among all stakeholders, including with Afghanistan to assess their perspectives on benefits from the Basin.

## Expected role of partners spanned

- Define organizations to specify relevant roles and define roles for different tasks.
- Provide inputs based on roles, experiences, and mandate to devise a strategic plan for the UIB-N.
- Ensure a mechanism to take knowledge to policy makers and incorporate UIB-N's agenda in institutional objectives.
- Communicate proposals with UIB-N to avoid duplication of projects.
- Ministries of climate change and water resources to be part of UIB-N.

## Session II: Group Work

A group work session brainstormed on the three key thematic areas of the UIB-N:

### Role and importance of the UIB-N to generate and share knowledge related to the UIB in Pakistan

- Institutionalized technical advisory body to member organizations, scientists, policy makers, and practitioners, and shares best practices
- Provides a neutral platform, operates by consensus, and coordinates between public and private sector practitioners and academia in Pakistan
- Shares science-based knowledge, pools common resources, and works in synergy with all partners
- Glacier monitoring for adaptation and mitigation
- Catalogues mechanisms/database of member organizations to avoid duplication
- Builds awareness of the Network beyond member organizations (mainly policy makers)
- Functioning as a self-sustaining system with a sound legal structure
- Provides a platform and opportunity for implementing joint projects



### **Bringing a regional perspective to the UIB-N, with a focus on Pakistan**

- Bringing together regional partners within a neutral platform
- Transboundary approach to understanding entire UIB resources, including an assessment of glaciers (climate change, flows, water quality)
- Problems with lack of consensus on sharing of information based on past experiences; political agreements among regional countries to share information and knowledge is likely to be a major issue.
- Replicate the UIB-N as Chapters in other countries as per thematic areas of collaboration, retain focus on Pakistan for knowledge sharing. Regional cooperation should be at strategy level with respect for Pakistan.
- Regionalization is a good opportunity for Pakistan to learn best practices from other Basin countries.
- Opportunities for joint projects at Chapter level, with the prospect of learning and sharing knowledge among countries. New avenues of collaboration may emerge.

### **Opportunities and challenges of collaboration between Afghanistan and Pakistan on the UIB**

- Mutual collaboration on a shared water resource is useful, but there are geo-political challenges. There has to be agreement at the political level, otherwise even assessment of resources seems difficult.
- Both countries to work together for the same ecosystem being shared by communities, with scientific approach and the same objectives.
- Difference in capacities would be a great challenge, affecting joint studies or projects.
- Initial challenges in sharing information and knowledge.
- Great opportunities to leverage funding and academic exchange.
- Resource constraints especially for organizing meetings.
- Follow up and government ownership is a challenge.





## Conclusion: **Summary of UIB-N Key Points**

### **Importance of UIB-N**

- UIB-N is a voluntary and neutral platform to share scientific based knowledge through a gathering of diversified stakeholders like scientists, practitioners, and policy makers.
- UIB-N created synergies and avoided duplication of research work being carried out in the UIB.

### **Role of members**

- Promote coordination among all stakeholders working in the UIB
- Sharing of science-based information/knowledge

### **Prospects for Regionalizing of UIB-N in Pakistan Replicate UIB-N chapters in the other Basin countries first, then regionalize it**

- Sharing information and knowledge largely depends on political agreements between regional countries.
- Regional cooperation is a great opportunity for Pakistan to learn best practices from other basin countries.

### **Opportunities of Bilateral Collaboration between Pakistan and Afghanistan**

- Both countries have the same objectives, so mutual collaboration would be useful for sharing information and for academic exchange.

### **Challenges of Bilateral Collaboration between Pakistan and Afghanistan**

- Geopolitical situations. Follow-up and government ownership.
- The differences in technical capacities or skills.

## Closing Session: **Closing Remarks**

Mr Khalid Mohtadullah summarized that regionalizing the UIB-N would be a great opportunity to learn best practices across the borders; however, for this the Country Chapters would be the building blocks. Bilateral collaboration can bring Pakistan and Afghanistan together toward sharing common benefits from resources, such as for hydropower generation.

In wrapping up, Dr David Molden emphasized that this meeting has highlighted the maturity of UIB-N members and that the proposed inclusion of new members has evolved new ideas. The idea of sharing knowledge, best practices, and benefits would be the fundamental foundation of regional cooperation.



# Annexes

## Annex I: Workshop Agenda

Time	Tentative Programme	Facilitator
9:00–13:00	Field Visit to ICIMOD's Knowledge Park in Godavari	Abdul W. Jasra
13:00–14:00	Lunch at ICIMOD Office	
14:00–14:40	<b>Opening session</b> Welcome remarks: <i>David Molden</i> , DG, ICIMOD (10 min) Welcome remarks: <i>Khalid Mohtadullah</i> , Chair, UIB-N (10 min) Introduction of participants (5 min) Objectives of the meeting: <i>Arun Shrestha</i> (15 min)	Arun Shrestha
14:40–15:10	Expectations and role of partners to strengthen the UIB-N	Neera Shrestha
15:10–16:40	<b>Group Work and Presentations</b> (Working Tea/Coffee) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role and importance of UIB-N to generate and share knowledge related to UIB in Pakistan</li> <li>• Bringing regional perspective to the UIB-N with major focus on Pakistan</li> <li>• Opportunities and challenges of collaboration between Afghanistan and Pakistan in UIB</li> </ul>	Arun and Neera
16:40–16:50	Closing Remarks	Khalid Mohtadullah
16:50–16:55	Summary of the day and action points	Arun Shrestha
16:55–17:00	Vote of thanks	Farid Ahmad

## Annex II: Meeting Participants

### Pakistan Delegates

Abdul Wahid Jasra  
 Adnan Shafique Rana  
 Ammara Farooq Malik  
 Arshad Pervaiz  
 Aysha Khan  
 Bahadar Nawab Khattak  
 Carmel Pollino  
 Faizan ul Hasan  
 Hina Lotia  
 Khalid Mohtadullah  
 Muhammad Mudassar Maqsood  
 Muhammad Riaz  
 Muhammad Zafar Khan  
 Mureed Hussain  
 Nisar Memon  
 Nusrat Nasab  
 Saeed Abbas

### ICIMOD

David Molden  
 Eklabya Sharma  
 Farid Ahmad  
 Arun Bhakta Shrestha  
 Madhav Prasad Dhakal  
 Anna Sinisalo  
 Ajaz Ali  
 Mona Sharma  
 Neera Shrestha Pradhan  
 Ashmita Shakya  
 Chanda Gurung Goodrich  
 Mandira Shrestha  
 Aditi Mukherji  
 Indu Chitrakar  
 Smita Ghimire



## Annex III: Expectations and Role of Partners (Examples)

Meeting participants articulated their expectations from the UIBN Workshop planned for May 24 and 25, and what they deemed to be the necessary role of partners to strengthen the UIB-N at regional level. The facilitator chose randomly four persons for their answers.

	Nisar Memon	Hina Lotia	Zafar Khan	Adnan Shafique Rana
Expectations	There should be some concrete and plausible plan to carry forward the UIB-N mission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How will this network look after involving other countries? There should be a clear direction with outcomes.</li> <li>2. What will be the mechanism of interaction and coordination of the Basin-wide network?</li> <li>3. Learning from Afghanistan: for example, what they see as benefits from the Basin</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There should be open participation, with information and data from all countries.</li> <li>2. Commit as partners with clarity</li> <li>3. Perusing the funding for the projects</li> </ol>	<p>Scientists from all countries should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bring more work/ research in their own countries related to UIB</li> <li>2. Share experiences with their issues which were faced in different thematic areas</li> <li>3. Improve the coordination among all stakeholders</li> <li>4. Share and look into the solutions to the hazards they face</li> </ol>
Role of partners	1. Provide their inputs based on their role, experiences, and mandate to devise a strategic plan for the UIB-N.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ministries of climate change and water resources should be part of the UIB-N.</li> <li>2. There should be a mechanism for taking knowledge to the policy makers.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incorporate UIB-N's agenda of their institutional objectives</li> <li>2. Communicate or share their proposals with UIB-N to avoid any duplication of projects</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define organizations to specify the relevant role</li> <li>2. Define role for different tasks to be undertaken</li> </ol>

## Annex IV: Group Work Session

### Question 1: Role and importance of the UIB-N to generate and share knowledge related to the UIB in Pakistan

<p><b>Group 1</b></p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Faizan ul Hassan</p> <p><i>Members:</i> Khalid Mohtadullah, M. Riaz, Saeed Abbas, Carmel Pollino</p>	<p><i>Importance:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide a neutral platform and agree by consensus</li> <li>2. Willingness to share knowledge</li> <li>3. Meet collectively and broaden to others, such as local organizations</li> <li>4. Science (glaciers) – important for adaptation and mitigation</li> <li>5. Help pool common resources and synergize energies</li> </ol> <p><i>Role:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordination within Pakistan between institutions like public and private, practitioners, and academia</li> <li>2. Information/knowledge sharing (science)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Group 2</b></p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Nisar A. Memon</p> <p><i>Members:</i> Adnan Shafique Rana, Mureed Hussain, Ghulam Ali</p>	<p><i>Role and Importance:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Platform with science ability to share best practices</li> <li>2. Mechanism/database of member organization's projects to avoid duplication</li> <li>3. UIB-N to play a role as technical advisory body to member organizations</li> <li>4. Institutionalize UIB-N</li> </ol>
<p><b>Group 3</b></p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Ammara Farooq Malik</p> <p><i>Members:</i> Arun Shrestha, Abdul Wahid Jasra, Madhav Dhakal, Bahadur Nawab Khattak, Arshad Pervaiz</p>	<p><i>Role:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To introduce the network outside the member organizations (focus on policy makers)</li> <li>2. The members should make it self-sustained, so there should be a safe existence for ICIMOD.</li> <li>3. Developing a mechanism to have a legal structure is essential.</li> <li>4. Members should be responsible for coordination amongst different organizations.</li> <li>5. Engage policy makers on longer or regular basis</li> </ol>
<p><b>Group 4</b></p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Zafar Khan</p> <p><i>Members:</i> Muhammad Mudassar Maqsood, Muhammad Ismail, Farid Ahmad, Hina Lotia</p>	<p><i>Role and Importance:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is providing opportunities by connecting people and sharing who is what.</li> <li>2. It is a neutral platform for creating synergies.</li> <li>3. Members are diverse stakeholders, such as scientists, policy makers, and practitioners.</li> <li>4. It provides a platform and an opportunity for implementing joint projects together (joint ventures)</li> </ol>

### Question 2: Bringing a regional perspective to the UIB-N, with a focus on Pakistan

<p><b>Group 1</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bringing together regional partners within a neutral platform</li> <li>2. Transboundary approach to assessment of glaciers (climate change, flows, water quality)</li> <li>3. Lack of consensus on sharing of information based on past experiences</li> <li>4. Understanding of the whole resources. UIB-N may facilitate a transboundary approach.</li> <li>5. This all depends on the political agreements among regional countries to share information and knowledge.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Group 2</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Replicating the UIB-N in other countries</li> <li>2. Focusing on thematic areas of collaboration</li> </ol>
<p><b>Group 3</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chapter should be repeated in other countries; however, it should be focused on Pakistan, where it should promote knowledge sharing.</li> <li>3. On regional cooperation, it will be a strategy level with respect for Pakistan. Moreover, from regionalizing, Pakistan will learn best practices being carried out in the Basin countries.</li> <li>4. There are opportunities of joint projects at the chapter level</li> </ol>
<p><b>Group 4</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Greater prospect for learning and sharing knowledge among countries</li> <li>2. New avenues of collaboration may emerge.</li> </ol>

Question 3: **Opportunities and challenges of collaboration between Afghanistan and Pakistan on the UIB**

<b>Group 1</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mutual collaboration on a shared water resource is useful provided there is agreement at the political level.</li> <li>2. Unless the political consensus is developed between the two countries, even the assessment of resources seems difficult.</li> </ol>
<b>Group 2</b>	<p><i>Opportunities:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Both countries have the same objectives.</li> <li>2. There should be a scientific approach.</li> <li>3. Both countries should work together for the same ecosystem being shared by communities.</li> </ol> <p><i>Challenges:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The difference of capacities would be a great challenge.</li> <li>2. There would be great challenges in conducting joint studies or projects.</li> <li>3. It would initially be very challenging to share the information and knowledge.</li> </ol>
<b>Group 3</b>	
<b>Group 4</b>	<p><i>Opportunities:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It will provide opportunities to leverage funding opportunities.</li> <li>2. Opportunities for academic exchange</li> </ol> <p><i>Challenges:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The varying capacities would be a great challenge.</li> <li>2. Geopolitical situations are great challenges.</li> <li>3. Resource constraints, especially for organizing meetings</li> <li>4. Follow-up and government ownership</li> </ol>





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