

Workshop Report 2018



ICIMOD

FOR MOUNTAINS AND PEOPLE

# Upper Indus Basin Network Afghanistan Chapter



Australian Government



# 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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Workshop Report 2018

## Upper Indus Basin Network Afghanistan (UIBN-AC) Meeting

26–27 October 2018, Delhi, India

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**Published by**

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development  
GPO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal

**Report prepared by:**

**Contact person:** Neera Shrestha Pradhan    [neera.pradhan@icimod.org](mailto:neera.pradhan@icimod.org)

**Production team**

Rachana Chettri (Editor)  
Dharma R Maharjan (Graphic designer)

**Photos:** Arun Bhakta Shrestha, Ayub Shinwari, and Neera Shrestha Pradhan

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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMD	Afghanistan Meteorological Department
ANDMA	Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organization
DFAT	Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
KPU	Kabul Polytechnic University
KU	Kabul University
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock, Afghanistan
MEW	Ministry of Energy & Water, v
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan
NEPA	National Environment Protection Agency, Afghanistan
SC	Steering Committee
SWaRMA	Strengthening Water Resources Management in Afghanistan
ToR	Terms of Reference
UIBN	Upper Indus Basin Network
UIBNAC	Upper Indus Basin Network Afghanistan Chapter

# 1. Background

Strengthening Water Resources Management in Afghanistan (SWaRMA) aims to enhance Afghanistan's regional engagement with its HKH neighbours for the management and development of water resources that are important to Afghanistan's overall development. SWaRMA is a capacity enhancement initiative for co-creating knowledge and providing co-learning opportunities in Afghanistan, supported by the Governments of Afghanistan, Australia, and CSIRO. Preliminary assessments indicate a need to strengthen knowledge and fill critical information gaps through regular dialogue and interactions with neighbouring countries and international agencies for better understanding and management of water resources.

## Upper Indus Basin Network

The Upper Indus Basin Network (UIB-N) is an informal science-based research network of national and international researchers working in the Upper Indus Basin. The UIB-N's mission is to promote collaboration among organizations and individuals conducting research in the Upper Indus Basin to achieve improved understanding of present and future water availability, demand, and hazards and to develop gender-sensitive solutions for all stakeholders.

UIB-N also seeks to develop solutions for various stakeholders at local, national, and international levels. The network comprises members from national organizations and universities in Afghanistan, China, India, and Pakistan, along with ICIMOD and other international organizations and universities working in the UIB.

## Initiation of UIBN-AC

Afghanistan is one of the riparian countries sharing the Upper Indus Basin with China, India, and Pakistan. The UIB-N, which was established in Pakistan in 2014, is gearing up to expand into the other three UIB countries, including Afghanistan. At the third regional UIB-N workshop organized in Kathmandu on 24-25 April 2018, the participants from various government and non-government organizations in Afghanistan, China, India, Pakistan, and other international research and academic organizations, agreed to expand the UIB-N to all the riparian countries sharing Indus water and to form respective country chapters to deal with the issues at country level. A one-day UIB-N-Afghanistan Side Event was also organised on 23 April 2018 with the Afghan participants to introduce the regional UIB-N. *Please refer to the proceedings of Afghanistan Side Event during the Upper Indus Basin Network Workshop for Enhancing Science-Based Regional Cooperation, p17–27).*

A mandate was given to ICIMOD's initiative on Strengthening Water Resources Management in Afghanistan (SWaRMA), under the regional programme on River Basins and Cryosphere, supporting the establishment of the Upper Indus Basin Network–Afghanistan Chapter (UIBN-AC). UIBN-AC is envisioned as a voluntary and informal knowledge and research network for Afghanistan to work in the basin. It aims to foster coordination in research related to climate, cryosphere, water, hazards and vulnerability, and adaptation.

## Relevance of UIB-N for Afghanistan

The UIB-N will support Afghanistan in developing an understanding of present and future water availability, demand, and hazards in the context of climate and global change by:

- Providing regional and global platforms to share knowledge, identify knowledge gaps, and develop solutions on the above-mentioned topics;
- Linking Afghan experts with regional and international experts for advisory services to develop solutions to specific issues; and
- Enabling the sharing of state-of-the-art knowledge (articles, events, and news) of the Upper Indus Basin and sub-basins through interactive virtual platforms.



## The New Delhi Meeting of UIBN-AC

In continuation with previous meetings in Kathmandu, the first UIBN-AC meeting was held on 26-27 October 2018 in New Delhi (Annex 1). Participants discussed the importance of UIBN-AC for regional cooperation in the field of scientific research. The key objectives of the meeting were:

- To approve the UIBN-AC Framework
- To select the Coordinator and Co-Coordinator of UIBN-AC
- To select Advisors for UIBN-AC
- To approve a Strategic Committee ToR
- To select Leads and Co-Leads for six Technical Working Groups (TWGs)
- To present the Preliminary Findings of Capacity Self-Assessment of partner organizations
- To prepare action plans for the Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

## Participants

Delegates from Afghanistan representing the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock (MAIL), the National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA), Kabul University (KU), Kabul Polytechnic University (KPU), Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), and DFAT Australian Embassy Kabul participated in the meeting. A total of 14 participants attended the two-days meeting (Annex 2).

## Participants' Expectations

- Establishment of coordination between partners at the national and international level
- UIBN-AC will work as a base for issues related to Integrated Water Resources Management.
- UIBN as a science-based regional platform will benefit Afghanistan.
- All countries in the UIBN will work to strengthen the data-sharing mechanism.
- To exchange knowledge and gain experience from other UIBN member countries
- To have a well-established UIBN-AC team at the end of the meeting







## 2. Sessions

### Opening Session

In his welcome remarks, **Dr Arun B Shrestha**, Regional Programme Manager, River Basins and Cryosphere Programme, ICIMOD, welcomed the respected guests from different ministries and organizations of Afghanistan, representative of DFAT Australian Embassy Afghanistan, and the representative from the Australian High Commission India.

Dr Shrestha talked about ICIMOD's programmes in the regional member countries and the thematic areas in which ICIMOD is working. He also gave an overview of the River Basin and Cryosphere regional programme, which is focusing on policies, strategies, and development programmes which are critical



to water resources management and disaster risk reduction (DRR). All of this is done through research conducted by ICIMOD and partner organizations. We are also working on promoting gender-responsive practices. He also explained the programme indicators and initiatives of the River Basin and Cryosphere Programme. He discussed the shared challenges and opportunities in the form of climate change, cryosphere change, water availability, transboundary floods, and food insecurity.

He highlighted the importance and relevance of UIB-N for the regional countries and Afghanistan at the national and international level. The objectives of UIB-N are to promote regional cooperation and collaboration among organizations and collaboration with key national and international networks and forums, to strengthen the upstream-downstream linkage, and to develop context-specific and gender-sensitive solutions for sustainable water resources and the capacity building of partners through interactions, knowledge sharing, and synergies for regional cooperation.

Dr. Shrestha emphasized the importance of UIBN-AC. He expressed gratitude to the Australian Government for their support of the programme and thanked the Government of Afghanistan and all Afghan partners attending the meeting.

**Mr. Hassan Faizee**, the Deputy Director General for Security Cooperation & Border Affairs, thanked ICIMOD and the Government of Australia for supporting Water Resources Management (WRM) in Afghanistan. He appreciated the efforts of ICIMOD in initiating the idea of UIBN-AC. He spoke about the importance of UIB-N, which is a regional science-based platform where scientists and researchers can come together and coordinate their activities, share their experiences and best practices to understand the common challenges, and find ways to overcome those challenges. He emphasized the regional cooperation in finding sustainable solutions to transboundary challenges. UIB-N is the platform that can foster coordination and create synergies in the areas of research and academic work. He hoped that during the meeting the participants would come to understand what they can contribute to UIB-N and how Afghanistan can benefit from UIB-N.

**Dr. Neera Shrestha Pradhan**, Programme Coordinator, SWaRMA, introduced SWaRMA as a two-year project aimed at co-creating learning opportunities to strengthen water resources management in Afghanistan. It is supported by the Government of Afghanistan and Government of Australia and implemented through ICIMOD in collaboration with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) and relevant government organizations in Afghanistan. The project aims to enhance the capacity of Afghan government agencies and organizations in water resources assessment, cryosphere monitoring, flood risk management, integrated river basin management (IRBM), and regional cooperation. There are three major outputs for the SWaRMA project: enhanced





knowledge and skills of Afghan water professionals, enhanced water information and accounting systems, and increased and active engagement of Afghan practitioners at regional-level fora and interactions. Dr. Pradhan also discussed the thematic areas and partnership network of SWaRMA in detail. She explained the progress of the project since its inception workshop in Delhi (9-11 March 2018). In this regard, she mentioned the Upper Indus Basin Network (UIBN) and UIBN Afghanistan side event, the regional hands-on training on the Community-Based Flood Early Warning System, the SWaRMA Steering Committee and related meetings, and the development of the SWaRMA website and other publications. She also referred to the upcoming activities of SWaRMA, including recruitment of four interns for SWaRMA, HUC-IHCAP Glacier Monitoring Training, the Regional UIB Network meeting, SOURCE modeling training, and the IRBM training workshop.

**Ms. Caroline Mills**, First Secretary of the Australian High Commission New Delhi, India, welcomed the meeting participants and thanked ICIMOD for its efforts as the SWaRMA programme is moving ahead successfully. Afghanistan is taking steps to manage its water resources, and the Australian government is keen to support Afghanistan through the SWaRMA project, as this was the commitment from the head of states of both countries. Afghanistan is facing challenges in water resources management, as Australia had earlier, but now Australia has overcome such problems to a greater extent. Australia welcomes the opportunity to share its expertise and experiences with others and also to learn from their experiences in the region. This UIB-N is a fantastic opportunity and platform to collaborate on water resources management, and the Australian government look forward to engaging in it. UIB-N will be a platform for collaboration among the national institutions and also those around the region. Ms. Mills welcomed the commitment of ICIMOD, as it is playing a key role in fostering regional cooperation on water, and she is also looking forward to CSIRO, the preeminent technical institution in Australia, being a part of this programme.

**Engineer Farhad Noorzai**, Director of Water Programmes, Ministry of Energy & Water Afghanistan, in his closing remarks of the opening session, thanked the Australian government for supporting the WRM programme in Afghanistan. He addressed the importance of UIBN, which is under the regional cooperation component of the SWaRMA programme. He gave an overview of the UIBN side meeting held in Kathmandu in April, and also mentioned the upcoming Regional Meeting to be held in December 2018. He



asked ICIMOD to work with the Government of Afghanistan to help in the sustainability of UIBN-AC.

## Session 1: Governance of UIB-N Afghanistan Chapter

Dr Arun B Shrestha introduced the UIB Network and the history of its establishment. He threw light on the organic evolution of UIB Network and the idea of having country chapters for the four riparian countries including Afghanistan, China, India, and Pakistan. He shared the experiences of UIBN Pakistan chapter that how it is helping the members in knowing the issues related to climate, cryosphere, hydrology due to sharing of research through this platform.

In his presentation Dr Arun B Shrestha gave detailed information about:

- The UIB Network.
- The UIBN Afghanistan side event of April 2018 organized a day before the UIBN workshop to familiarize Afghan colleagues with UIBN.
- The Regional Upper Indus Basin Network (UIBN) Workshop in April 2018.
- UIB Network Regional Strategic Committee structure and composition: The Regional Strategic Committee will comprise 11 members – two members from each member country, two from ICIMOD, and one from the international organization. The Chair will be selected from the RSC members for three years on a rotating basis from each country.
- The Country Chapter/Country Strategic Committee will comprise one Coordinator, one Co-coordinator, three Advisors, six Technical working leads, six Co-leads, one member from ICIMOD, and one member from other relevant international agencies. The duration of the SC will be three years. After three years, a selection process will be conducted for the new committee. A strong gender balance should be followed.
- The Regional Annual UIB-N Meeting (RAUM) will consist of 51 members -- six from each member country, five from ICIMOD, and five from international organizations, 10 from the Regional Strategic Committee, six advisors, and one chair.
- The Regional Annual UIB-N Meeting will be held annually, the UIB Network Regional Strategic Committee meeting will be held biannually, advisors of UIB Networks will meet on an as-needed basis, UIB-N Country Chapters meetings can be held every six months, and members of Technical Working Groups (TWGs) can meet regularly.

Dr Shrestha also highlighted the importance of the UIB-N Afghanistan chapter, as it will support Afghanistan in understanding present and future water availability, demand, and hazards in the context of climate and global changes by:

- Providing regional and global platforms to share knowledge, identify knowledge gaps, and develop solutions on the above-mentioned topics;
- Linking Afghan experts with regional and international experts for advisory services to develop solutions to specific issues; and
- Enabling sharing of state-of-the-art knowledge (articles, events, and news) of the Upper Indus Basin and sub-basins through interactive virtual platforms.

The duties and responsibilities of the Coordinator, Co-Coordinator, and Advisors were discussed and approved by the participants. The Session chair, Er. Noorzai, thanked Dr Shrestha for his informative presentation. The

nomination process was completed and the nominations were announced by the chair of the session.

## Coordinator, Co-Coordinator and Advisors

SN	Designation	Name	Organization
1	Coordinator	<b>Engr Farhad Noorzai</b> , Director of Water Programme Department	Ministry of Energy and Water
2	Co-Coordinator	<b>M. Tayib Bromand</b> , Water Resources and Climate Change Adaptation Specialist, Water Resources Department (WRD)	Ministry of Energy and Water
1	Advisor	<b>Mohammad Rafi Qazizada</b> , DG, Natural Resource Management	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and livestock
2	Advisor	<b>Eng. Fazulhaq Bakhtari</b> , Director Water Resource	Ministry of Energy and Water
3	Advisor	<b>Muhammad Hassan Faizee</b> , Deputy Director General for Security Cooperation and Border Affairs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
1	Advisor	<b>Mohammad Rafi Qazizada</b> , DG, Natural Resource Management	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
2	Advisor		Ministry of Energy and Water
3	Advisor	<b>Muhammad Hassan Faizee</b> , Deputy Director General for Security Cooperation and Border Affairs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs





## Session 2: Nomination and Planning of TWG

There was a detailed group discussion on the selection of the Lead and Co-Lead of the six Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The members were nominated and unanimously approved by the participants. The names were announced by the session chair, Er Noorzai.

### Technical Working Groups

SN	Group	Lead/Co-lead	Name	Organization
1	<b>Group 1:</b> Framework of data collection, quality, and standardization	Lead	1. Fazlullah Durani	Ministry of Energy and Water
		Co-Lead	2. Mohammad Nasim Muradi	Afghanistan Meteorological Department
2	<b>Group 2:</b> Climate change, variability air pollution, and black carbon	Lead	1. Noor Ahmad Akhundzadah	Kabul University
		Co-Lead	2. Rohullah Amin	National Environmental Protection Agency
3	<b>Group 3:</b> Cryosphere monitoring and modeling	Lead	1. Engr. Rohullah Begi	Ministry of Energy and Water
		Co-Lead	2. Hidayatullah Aryan	Kabul University
4	<b>Group 4:</b> Surface and groundwater hydrology, water availability, and demand	Lead	1. Fayezurahaman Azizi	Ministry of Energy and Water
		Co-Lead	2. Najibullah Osmani	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
5	<b>Group 5:</b> Understanding and managing hazards and risks	Lead	1. Engr. Tariq Aziz	ANDMA
		Co-Lead	2. Shabir Ahmad Kabirzad	Kabul University
6	<b>Group 6:</b> Managing gendered socioeconomic impacts through adaptation measures	Lead	1. Fawad Ahmad Rahyab	Kabul Polytechnic University
		Co-Lead	2. Aria Gardezi	National Environmental Protection Agency

The ToRs for the Technical Working Groups Leads and Co-Leads were discussed in the groups and approved by the participants. The group explored potential members and organizations that can help the TWGs and can be added to their respective groups for better results. The group also identified potential knowledge generation topics on which they can start working, which will be a good start in the preparation for the next Regional UIBNUIB-N meeting. The groups have agreed and show great commitment to work in their respective Technical Working Groups.

The session chair, Er Noorzai, urged the team to arrange a meeting with their respective team members on returning to Kabul and to begin work on the topics selected by the Technical Working Groups. He hoped that they would have the best results before going to the regional UIBN meeting in December 2018. He also thanked the members for their active participation in the session.



### Session 3: Baseline Capacity Need Assessment

This session started with a presentation by Mr. Ayub Shinwari on the preliminary findings of the Capacity Self-Assessment. The following partner organizations took part in the Capacity Self-Assessment organized by ICIMOD.

- Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)
- Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA)
- Kabul University (KU)
- Kabul Polytechnic University (KPU)

The Capacity Self-Assessment was carried out with these partner organizations in August-September 2018. The preliminary findings will be followed by a detailed report in near future. Mr Shinwari shared his experiences and limitations while conducting the capacity assessment with the project partners.

At the end of presentation, there was a question-and-answer session. Participants suggested that the final report should have separate chapters for each organization, as the combined report and findings may lower the capacity level of other high-level capacity organizations.



### Session 4: Regional Cooperation

**Panel discussion:** Looking forward and leaping ahead for regional cooperation on WRM in Afghanistan

The session on regional cooperation was moderated by Dr Arun B Shrestha. The panelists for the session were:

- Professor Noor Ahmad Akhundzadah, Professor, Kabul University
- Er Tayib Bromand, Water Resources and Climate Change Specialist (MEW)
- Mr Samim Zamarai, Senior Programme Manager, DFAT Australian Embassy Kabul
- Dr Arun initiated the session with the question, “Can science help regional cooperation?”

In response, the panelists said that science can indeed help regional cooperation. Science and research-based cooperation is the need of the day. Policies are evolved from science and scientific publications, which provide solutions for the problems of the region. Scientific cooperation and data sharing can help to resolve the regional issues of climate change and disaster risk reduction. Science-based knowledge sharing is important for the development of the region.



The second question from the panelists was, “How does the regional cooperation help Afghanistan in water resources management?”

In response, the panelists and participants agreed that regional cooperation in water resources management is very important for Afghanistan, as four of the country’s rivers are Transboundary Rivers. There are tensions in a few river basins with the neighboring countries over these transboundary rivers. Afghanistan’s sustainable development is very much linked with water resource management system, as it is important for industry, hydropower, irrigation, and water supply. Therefore, regional cooperation is important to solve tensions with neighboring countries and to work on the improvement of water resources management, which can help the country in the long run. Researchers have shown that the whole region is facing common challenges of climate change and water resources management; without regional cooperation, it is not possible for any country to solve its water resource management issues. Afghanistan has good regional cooperation with Tajikistan on the Amo River basin, with regular meetings to discuss issues and to maintain their effective data sharing mechanism. There are issues that still need to be resolved with countries to have the full benefits of the resources. UIB-N is a good platform to facilitate future interactions with all concerned parties.

The third question from the panelists was, “How UIBN-AC can help? What is the potential?”

In response, the panelists said that the UIBN-AC can help in the validation of research and data at the national level, as well as at the regional and international levels. UIBN-AC can create trust among the national and regional organizations. UIB-N can bring all regional partners together to create and build trust among the regional countries. This is a good platform, in which academia and policy makers can contribute jointly in the development of the country. UIB-N will help Afghanistan in generating credible data and standard mechanisms of data generation.

The fourth question from the panelists was, “How can Afghanistan contribute to? How can Afghanistan benefit from the UIBN?”

Afghanistan can contribute to regional development by working closely with regional countries in different fields. Afghanistan will contribute in ways that show its presence and will cooperate with countries to overcome the challenges it is experiencing.

Through UIB-N Afghanistan can improve the quality of research, methods of generating standard data, credibility of research, and other important research-related issues. Afghanistan can work with regional countries to gain the benefit of their expertise and experience.



## Session 5: Strategic Committee Meeting of UIBN-AC

The session was chaired by **Er Farhad Noorzai**. He invited Dr Arun Shrestha to brief the participants of the meeting on the upcoming UIBN Regional meeting which will be held in December 2018. Dr. Shrestha talked about the objective of the regional UIBN meeting. The main aim of the workshop is to give UIB-N Network a regional shape and agree on governance structure proposed by Ad-hoc Strategic Committee. The major objectives of the UIBN workshop are:

- To endorse governance structure that has been finalized by ad-hoc Strategic Committee
- To form Regional Strategic Committee
- To set strategic direction of UIB-N for future
- To discuss country chapters of UIB-N

He shared the agenda of the regional UIB-N meeting with the participants and also have their views on the agenda. There will be Afghanistan Chapter meeting parallel with the meeting where we will discuss on the outcomes of the Afghanistan chapter meeting held in Delhi in October 2018. He asked for the suggestions in changes in the agenda as Afghanistan chapter is ahead in this regard. There were few adjustments made to the agenda with the participation of the participants. The participants agreed to meet in Kabul to discuss the research topics and also prepare for the Regional UIBN Meeting. Engr. Noorzai thanked the commitment of Dr Shrestha and the SWaRMA team in establishing and helping UIBN-AC.

## Closing Session

The closing session was chaired by **Mr Mohammad Hassan Faizee**, Deputy Director General for Security Cooperation and Border Affairs. Mr Faizee said that as SWaRMA focuses on water resources management and especially on the Kabul River basin, so UIB-N will be a good platform to coordinate and cooperate with regional countries. He thanked the participants for taking active part in the two-day meeting and was happy to see their enthusiasm for working for the UIBN-AC. He was also pleased with the progress of UIBN-AC, as it is well established compared to other countries' UIB-N chapters. He ended his speech by saying he hoped this UIB-N platform would benefit Afghanistan hugely in the long run.

**Mr Noor Ahmad Akhundzadah**, Assistant Professor and Dean of the Environmental Department, explained the importance of UIBN, as it will serve as a platform for the researchers to standardize their research and also learn from the expertise of the regional member countries' researchers. He expressed strong commitment to the work of the Technical Working Groups to remain productive and prominent in the regional UIBN meeting. The meeting was fruitful, as we were able to establish the structure of UIBN-AC. Through this platform we can contribute to the development of the whole region and solve the problems the region is facing.

**Mr Samim Zamarai**, Senior Programme Manager, DFAT Australian Embassy Kabul, said that expectations have been met and they have achieved the expected result of the meeting. He praised the commitment of ICIMOD in managing the SWaRMA initiative and facilitating the Afghan government partners. Partnership and ownership are both important for DFAT. The Ministry of Energy and Water has the ability to run the SWaRMA project in a sustainable manner. The fund for the project might be low, but the commitment is high. Everything cannot be fixed, but at least it is a good beginning and a platform from which we can move ahead.



**Er Farhad Noorzai**, Director of Water Programmes, Ministry of Energy and Water Afghanistan, thanked Dr Shrestha Arun and Dr Pradhan for their hard work and the effort they are making on behalf of SWaRMA. He urged the participants to continue with coordination and commitment in their work to make UIBN-AC fruitful for Afghanistan. He assured the members of all kinds of support in regard to UIBN-AC, as he was nominated the coordinator of UIBN-AC.

**Er Fazulhaq Bakhtari**, Director, Water Resources Directorate, said that is a good platform for science-based research for Afghanistan, through which Afghanistan can benefit even more. He asked the participants and members of UIBN-AC to maintain good communication and to coordinate the activities efficiently. He thanked ICIMOD for initiating UIBN-AC.



### 3. Outcomes of the Meeting

**Dr Arun B Shrestha**, Regional Programme Manager, River Basins and Cryosphere, ICIMOD, summarized the outcomes of the two-day UIBN-AC meeting.

- UIBN-AC governance framework has been approved.
- TORs for UIBN-AC strategic committee, Coordinator, Co-Coordinator, and Technical Working Groups have been approved.
- Coordinator and Co-Coordinator nominations were approved.
- Advisor nominations were approved.
- Members of Technical Working Groups (TWGs) were selected.
- Coordination is key to success in UIBN-AC.
- Academia should play a main role in UIBN-AC.
- There should be gender balance in the UIBN-AC.

At the end, he thanked all the participants for their active participation in the sessions.



#### Vote of thanks by Dr Neera Shrestha Pradhan, Programme Coordinator, SWaRMA

**Dr Neera Shrestha Pradhan** thanked the Afghan delegation and other participants. She hoped that the team would continue the momentum of the good work already done. She especially thanked Ms. Caroline Mills and Mr. Samim Zamarai for their invaluable inputs. She thanked Dr. Shrestha for prioritizing SWaRMA and also thanked the SWaRMA team for their efforts.



# Annexes

## Annex 1: UIBN-AC Meeting Agenda

Day 1 (26 October 2018)		
Time	Programme	Facilitator
09:00–09:30	<b>Registration</b>	Ayub Khan Shinwari
09:30–11:00	<b>Opening Session</b> <b>Chair:</b> Engineer Farhad Noorzai, Director of Water Programmes, MEW 1. Welcome remarks and relevance of UIB-N in the region by Dr. Arun Bhakta Shrestha, Regional Programme Manager, River Basins and Cryosphere, ICIMOD 2. Remarks by Muhammad Hassan Faizee, DDG-SCBA, MoFA, and UIBN Ad Hoc Committee Member 3. Introduction of SWaRMA and objectives of the meeting by Dr. Neera Shrestha Pradhan, Programme Coordinator, SWaRMA, ICIMOD 4. Introduction of the participants and expectations 5. Remarks from Ms. Caroline Mills, First Secretary, Australian High Commission, New Delhi 6. Remarks by the Chair, Engineer Farhad Noorzai, Director of Water Programmes, MEW	Neera
11:00–11:30	<i>Group Photo and Tea/Coffee</i>	
11:30–12:30	<b>Session 1: Governance of Afghanistan Chapter</b> 1. Introduction of -Afghanistan Chapter 2. Nomination Process 3. Afghanistan Chapter Strategic Committee (SC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisors</li> <li>• Coordinator and Co-Coordinator</li> <li>• Consent on SC ToR</li> </ul>	Noorzai/Faizee
12:30–13:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30–15:45	<b>Session 2: TWG meeting</b> 1. Afghanistan Chapter Technical Working Groups (TWGs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads and Co-Leads</li> <li>• Consent on TWG ToR</li> <li>• Remarks by Engineer Farhad Noorzai, UIBN-AC Coordinator</li> </ul> 2. Exploring potential members/member organizations to be included in the six TWGs 3. Identification of potential knowledge generation topics for TWGs	Noorzai/Faizee
15:45–16:00	Tea break	
16:00–17:00	<b>Session 3: Baseline Capacity Need Assessment</b> 1. Presentation of Capacity Need Assessment by Ayub Khan Shinwari, SWaRMA Programme Officer (15 min.) 2. Clarifications (15 min.)	Neera/Ayub

## Day 2 (27 October 2018)

Time	Programme	Facilitator
09:00–09:30	<b>Registration</b>	Ayub
09:30–11:00	<b>Session 4: Regional Cooperation</b> <b>Panel discussion:</b> Looking forward and leaping ahead for regional cooperation on WRM in Afghanistan <b>Moderator:</b> Dr. Arun Bhakta Shrestha, RPM-ICIMOD <b>Panelists:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engr. M. Tayib Bromand, Water Resources and Climate Change Adaptation Specialist, WRD, MEW</li> <li>2. Muhammad Hassan Faizee, DDG-SCBA, MoFA</li> <li>3. Noor Ahmad Akhundzadah, Assistant Professor and Dean of Environmental Faculty, Kabul University</li> <li>4. Mr Zamarai Samim, Senior Programme Manager, DFAT Australian Embassy Kabul</li> </ol> <b>Questions to the panelists:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How can UIBN-AC contribute to generating and sharing science-based knowledge in Water Resources Management and development in Afghanistan?</li> <li>2. How can UIBN-AC benefit from and contribute to the regional Network in sharing science-based knowledge?</li> </ol>	Neera
11:00–11:30	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>	
11:30–12:30	<b>Session 5: Strategic Committee meeting and way forward</b> <b>Session Chair:</b> Engineer Farhad Noorzai, UIBN-AC Coordinator <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brief about Regional UIB Network meeting in December 2018 by Dr. Arun Shrestha</li> <li>2. Strategic action and reporting by UIBN-AC at December meeting</li> <li>3. Date and venue for second UIBN-AC meeting</li> <li>4. Way forward and remarks by session chair</li> </ol>	Neera
12:30–13:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30–15:00	<b>Closing session</b> <b>Session Chair:</b> Muhammad Hassan Faizee, DDG-SCBA, MoFA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remarks by Prof. Noor Ahmad Akhundzadah</li> <li>• Remarks by Samim Zamarai, Senior Programme Manager, DFAT Australian Embassy Kabul</li> <li>• Remarks by Engineer Farhad Noorzai, - Afghanistan Chapter Coordinator</li> <li>• Remarks by Engineer Fazulhaq Bakhtari, Director WR, MEW</li> <li>• Remarks and way forward by Dr. Arun Bhakta Shrestha, RPM-ICIMOD</li> <li>• Closing remarks by the Session Chair, Muhammad Hassan Faizee</li> <li>• Vote of thanks by Dr. Neera Shrestha Pradhan</li> </ul>	Neera
15:00–5:30	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>	



## Annex 2: UIB-NAC Meeting Participant List

No	Name	Designation	Organization	Email Address
1	Farhad Noorzai	Director of Water Programme Department	Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW)	<a href="mailto:fn.1975@yahoo.com">fn.1975@yahoo.com</a>
2	Fazulhaq Bakhtari	Director of Water Resources	MEW/Water Resource Department	<a href="mailto:fazulhaq.bakhtari@gmail.com">fazulhaq.bakhtari@gmail.com</a>
3	Muhammad Hassan Faizee	Deputy Director General for Security Cooperation and Border Affairs	MoFA	<a href="mailto:mhassanfaizee@gmail.com">mhassanfaizee@gmail.com</a>
4	Mohammad Tayib Bromand	Water Resource and Climate Change Adaptation Specialist	MEW/Water Resource Department	<a href="mailto:t.bromand22@gmail.com">t.bromand22@gmail.com</a>
5	Fayezur Rahman Azizi	Hydrology and Food Specialist/ WRD Advisor Irrigation and Development Project IRDP	MEW/Water Resource Department	<a href="mailto:fayez.azizi@gmail.com">fayez.azizi@gmail.com</a>
6	Mirwais Sohrabi	Member of Transboundary Water Desk Directorate General of Security Cooperation and Border Affairs	MoFA	<a href="mailto:mirwaissohrabi09@gmail.com">mirwaissohrabi09@gmail.com</a>
7	Rohullah Amin	Manager of Adaptation to Climate Change	NEPA	<a href="mailto:amin_rohullah@yahoo.com">amin_rohullah@yahoo.com</a>
8	Noor Ahmad Akhundzadah	Assistant Professor and Dean of Environmental Faculty	Kabul University	<a href="mailto:noorahmad.akhundzadah@gmail.com">noorahmad.akhundzadah@gmail.com</a>
9	Najibullah Osmani	GIS Specialist	MAIL	<a href="mailto:najibullah.osmani10@gmail.com">najibullah.osmani10@gmail.com</a>
10	Fawad Ahmad Rahyab	Lecturer	KPU	<a href="mailto:rahyabf@gmail.com">rahyabf@gmail.com</a>
11	Mohammad Tariq Aziz	Manager of Identification Vulnerable Areas and GIS	ANDMA	<a href="mailto:aziztariq61@gmail.com">aziztariq61@gmail.com</a>
12	Caroline Mills	First Secretary, Australian High Commission, New Delhi	Australian High Commission, New Delhi	<a href="mailto:caroline.mills@dfat.gov.au">caroline.mills@dfat.gov.au</a>
14	Zamarai Samim	Senior Programme Manager (Development)	DFAT Australian Embassy	<a href="mailto:zamarai.samim@dfat.gov.au">zamarai.samim@dfat.gov.au</a>
14	Fazlullah Durrani	Hydrologist	MEW/Water Resource Department	<a href="mailto:eng.fazlullah9@gmail.com">eng.fazlullah9@gmail.com</a>
15	Arun B Shrestha	Regional Programme Manager, River Basins and Cryosphere	ICIMOD	<a href="mailto:arun.shrestha@icimod.org">arun.shrestha@icimod.org</a>
16	Neera Shrestha Pradhan	Programme Coordinator, SWaRMA	ICIMOD	<a href="mailto:neera.pradhan@icimod.org">neera.pradhan@icimod.org</a>
17	Ayub Khan Shinwari	Programme Officer, SWaRMA	ICIMOD	<a href="mailto:ayub.shinwari@icimod.org">ayub.shinwari@icimod.org</a>



Afghanistan Side Event  
during the

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

23 April, 2018, Kathmandu, Nepal

# Meeting Summary

Afghanistan is one of the riparian countries sharing the Upper Indus Basin with China, India and Pakistan. The Upper Indus Basin Network (UIB-N), which was established in Pakistan in 2014, is gearing up to expand into the other three countries, including Afghanistan. With deliberations around this scheduled at the UIB-N Workshop in Kathmandu on 24 and 25 April 2018, ICIMOD's SWaRMA initiative held a side event with delegates from Afghanistan on 23 April 2018. The objective of the side event was to introduce the principles behind UIB-N, and share research experiences related to climate change and its impact on water resources.

The key outcome of the meeting was that participants agreed that by engaging in UIB-N, Afghanistan would benefit from science based regional cooperation and joint research. It was also agreed that Afghanistan will be a part of the governance structure of Regional UIB-N and nominate experts as Technical Working Group (TWG) leads, co-leads, strategic committee members and advisors, after discussions with relevant Afghan experts and following the procedures of government of Afghanistan.

During the main Regional UIB-N event, it was agreed that the Afghanistan country office will serve as one of the UIB-N's secretariats to carry out work in Afghanistan. It was agreed that the Afghanistan Country Chapter of the UIB-N would be established with support from SWaRMA.

**The Upper Indus Basin Network (UIB-N)** is an informal science based research network of national and international researchers working in the upper Indus Basin.

The UIB-N mission is to promote coordination and collaboration among organizations and individuals active in research in the Upper Indus Basin for improved understanding of present and future water availability, demand, and hazards.

UIB-N also seeks to develop solutions for various stakeholders at local, national and international levels. The network comprises of members from national organizations and universities of Afghanistan, China, India, and Pakistan, ICIMOD and other international organizations and universities working in the UIB.

## Relevance for Afghanistan

The UIB-N will support Afghanistan to develop an understanding of present and future water availability, demand, and hazards in the context of climate and global change by:

- Providing regional and global platforms to share knowledge, identify knowledge gaps and develop solutions on the above mentioned topics.
- Linking Afghan experts with regional and international experts for advisory services to develop solutions to specific issues.
- Enabling sharing of state of the art knowledge (articles, events and news) of the Upper Indus Basins and sub basins through interactive virtual platforms.



# Background

Strengthening Water Resources Management in Afghanistan (SWaRMA) aims to enhance Afghanistan's regional engagement with its HKH neighbors for management and development of water resources of importance for Afghanistan's overall development. Preliminary assessments indicate a need to strengthen knowledge and fill critical information gaps through regular dialogue and interactions with neighbouring countries and international agencies for better understanding and management of water resources.

Afghanistan is one of the riparian countries sharing the Upper Indus Basin with China, India and Pakistan. The Upper Indus Basin Network, which was established in Pakistan in 2014, is gearing up to expand into the other three countries, including Afghanistan. With deliberations around this scheduled at the Upper Indus Basin Network (UIB-N) Workshop at ICIMOD in Kathmandu on 24 and 25 April 2018, ICIMOD's SWaRMA initiative held a side event with delegates from Afghanistan on 23 April 2018. The objective of the side event was to introduce the principles behind UIB-N, and share research experiences related to climate change and its impact on water resources. The meeting also presented UIB-N as a means to increase opportunities for science based collaboration with riparian countries sharing UIB waters. SWaRMA is a capacity enhancement initiative for co-creating knowledge and providing co-learning opportunities in Afghanistan, supported by the Governments of Afghanistan and Australia, and CSIRO.

The Afghanistan side event included a field visit to ICIMOD's Godavari Knowledge Park to demonstrate mountain technologies used in project sites.

Delegates from Afghanistan representing Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), and Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), and CSIRO from Australia, participated in the side event.





# The Meeting

## Opening Session

In his welcome remarks, **Dr David Molden**, Director General of ICIMOD said that the purpose of the special side event was to understand the UIB-N better and to discuss how Afghanistan can contribute to the UIB-N in generating and sharing knowledge on mountains, water, and climate change. He also highlighted the importance of the event in enhancing science based regional collaboration and shared benefits among the four riparian countries of Upper Indus Basin.

In his address, **Ezatullah Siddiqui**, Advisor to ANDMA said the World Disaster Report 2016-2017 ranks Afghanistan as the 15th most vulnerable country on environmental issues like climate change, floods, droughts, extended dry spells since 2015, and limited water resources. He said that this could be a good opportunity to integrate UIB-N with SWaRMA to gain experience, enhance expertise, enhance the database on water resources, generate and share information, and build capacity of Afghan professionals.

**Dr Arun B Shrestha**, Regional Programme Manager, River Basins and Cryosphere Programme, ICIMOD spoke of the relevance of UIB-N for Afghanistan. The River Basins and Cryosphere Programme at ICIMOD seeks to manage water resources and disaster risk reduction through science and research. It pays due attention to gender response and capacity building with past and future climatic trends in mind. The programme studies climate variability in the HKH, the state of the cryosphere and changes over time, and impacts of these changes on future water availability. The Indus Basin Initiative is one of six in ICIMOD's River Basins and Cryosphere Programme that has been involved in the UIB-N and has contributed to it since its establishment. It is supported by the Australian Government's Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP) of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

**Dr Carmel Pollino**, CSIRO, provided an overview of the working area, and CSIRO's engagement in Afghanistan. She highlighted collaboration with ICIMOD in the SWaRMA project to evaluate a range of possible water-related development pathways. These can include analysis of data at a basin scale, basin level modelling, scenario analysis using global data set, tool box development for understanding of water resources, simplifying water resource planning, and scenario development for decision support.

**Dr Neera Shrestha Pradhan**, Programme Coordinator, SWaRMA, introduced SWaRMA as a two-year project aimed at co-creating learning opportunities to strengthen water resources management in Afghanistan. It is supported by the Government of Afghanistan and Government of Australia and implemented through ICIMOD in collaboration with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), and relevant government organizations in Afghanistan. The project aims to strengthen Afghan capacity for water resources management by assessing water resources, developing and



using water information systems, enhancing capacity for water management planning, and boosting Afghanistan's regional engagement with its HKH neighbors. She also mentioned ICIMOD's previous engagements in Afghanistan and partnerships with the Government of Afghanistan including the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

SWaRMA was launched at an inception workshop from 9 to 11 March 2018 in New Delhi, India with support from the Government of Australia. The workshop brought together major stakeholders working on water resources management in Afghanistan to share and discuss the project concept, and develop it into a project document for implementation. In addition, the workshop helped raise awareness, develop a common understanding, secured commitment, and created a sense of ownership among different partners and stakeholders.

## Participant Expectations

1. To get information about the UIB-N and contribute to the network.
1. To value the activities of various organizations and institutions in the Indus Basin
2. To exchange knowledge and experience to strengthen existing knowledge systems.
3. To solve scientific matters jointly and value the activities of the network.
4. To focus special attention on Afghanistan and to seek support of experts who are working in similar contexts and on issues related to water resources and energy for enhancing capacities of Afghan professionals.
5. To make senior Afghan policymakers aware that science based research is important for Afghanistan.
6. Contribute to the network through science experience.
7. To benefit from information and data sharing.

## Understanding UIB Network:

Dr Arun B Shrestha introduced the UIB Network and the existing governance structure including the Chair, Strategic Committee members, six technical working groups, advisors as well as major activities and events organized.

He also highlighted the ten key questions that UIB-N seeks to address:

1. What were the climatic trends and variabilities in the basin in the past, and what will they be like in the future?
2. What is the state of various cryosphere components (glacier, snow, permafrost), how are they are changing with time, and how are they likely to change in the future under climate change?
3. How can the present observation system be strengthened to address questions that have been asked in the past?
4. How to enhance the effectiveness of data collection, quality control and dissemination at the national and regional levels?
5. How will climate change and cryosphere dynamics impact water availability in the future?
6. What will be the water demand scenario of the future?
7. How can supply-demand gaps be addressed?
8. What are the most suitable and sustainable development options for the upstream part of the basin?
9. What are the natural hazard hotspots, and how is vulnerability changing?
10. What could be the impact of cryosphere changes on the ecosystem?

## Discussion and Consensus Building Session

Participants agreed that by engaging in UIB-N, Afghanistan would enhance science based regional cooperation, and benefit from opportunities to conduct joint research. The outcomes of the deliberations in the Discussion and Consensus Building session were:

- Afghan participants agreed to actively contribute to the UIB-N through UIBN-Afghanistan Chapter, which includes the Strategic Committee (SC), and Technical Working Groups (TWG), with clear roles and responsibilities of respective committees and groups, after due deliberations with relevant Afghan experts and as per Government of Afghanistan procedures.
- Participants recognized opportunities in as well as challenges to collaboration among UIB riparian countries.

## Closing Session

In closing, Dr Arun Shrestha summarized key action points:

1. UIB-N will be useful for Afghanistan, and representatives look forward to contributing positively.
2. There is an opportunity to conduct joint research among regional countries sharing Upper Indus waters.
3. Members in a UIB-N governance structure will be nominated in accordance to official procedure and following discussions with Afghan experts.
4. SWaRMA will request the focal ministry in Afghanistan to nominate members as UIB-N SC, advisors, and TWG leads.





Muhammad Hassan Faizee, Deputy Director General for Security Cooperation and Border Affairs, MoFA appreciated the meeting for providing insights into the structure and functioning of UIB-N, establishing understanding on current status, and indicating the way forward. He supported the idea of Afghanistan representation on the UIB-N governing body, and to inform SWaRMA about representatives identified for the governance body following a focal point meeting in Afghanistan. He also said that the discussions reinforced coherence and meaningful energy for mutual cooperation. He highlighted the need for joint studies and research in order to understand issues and challenges as a whole. He ended by saying that Afghanistan seeks opportunities to share available water resources data, and so the UIB-N can link Afghanistan with other countries sharing common interests and benefits.



Dr David Molden said that UIB-N is a science based platform for moving forward and for building trust. ICIMOD is very supportive of cooperation and facilitates dialogues and interactions regularly. He also indicated that the Himalayan University Consortium (HUC) presents opportunities for collaboration between universities.

Dr Neera Shrestha Pradhan thanked the Afghanistan delegation of and other participants and concluded that the SWaRMA project and its engagement in UIB network will be a valuable and promising platform to learn from each other's experiences.





# Annexes

## Annex I: Workshop Agenda

Time	Programme	Facilitator
9:00–9:15	Arrival and registration of the participants - SWaRMA Programme Associate	Indu Chitrakar
Opening session 9:15–10:15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome remarks by <i>Dr David Molden</i>, DG</li> <li>1. Remarks by Representative from the Government of Afghanistan</li> <li>2. Participants' introduction and expectations</li> <li>1. Introduction of River Basin and Cryosphere Programme at ICIMOD and rationale of UIB network by <i>Dr Arun B Shrestha</i></li> <li>1. CSIRO's engagement in Afghanistan by <i>Dr Carmel Pollino</i></li> <li>1. SWaRMA – Strengthening Water Resources Management in Afghanistan and significance of Afghanistan's engagement in UIB Network by <i>Dr Neera Shrestha Pradhan</i></li> </ol>	Arun Shrestha
10:15–10:45	Group photo and Tea/Coffee Break	
Understanding UIB Network: 10:45–12:30	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presentation and facilitation by <i>Dr Arun B Shrestha</i>; supported by Mr Madhav Dhakal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UIB network in the context of Hindu Kush Himalaya</li> <li>• Strategic Committee (SC)</li> <li>• Technical Working Groups (TWG)</li> <li>• Major activities and events organized</li> <li>• Existing governance structure</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Discussions and consensus building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of SC and their roles &amp; responsibilities</li> <li>• Members of TWG and their roles &amp; responsibilities</li> <li>• TWG leads and co-leads</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Opportunities and challenges of collaboration for UIB in the basin, and between neighbouring countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan etc.</li> </ol>	Neera Shrestha Pradhan
Closing Session 12: 30–13: 00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action points and way forward by <i>Dr Arun B Shrestha</i>, ICIMOD</li> <li>• Remarks by Representative from the Government of Afghanistan</li> <li>• Remarks from ICIMOD</li> <li>• Vote of Thanks by <i>Dr Neera Shrestha Pradhan</i>, ICIMOD</li> </ul>	Arun Shrestha
13:00–14:00	Lunch	
Afternoon	Visit to Godavari Knowledge Park <a href="http://www.icimod.org/?q=1634">http://www.icimod.org/?q=1634</a>	

*Rapporteur: Mr Madhav Dhakal, Associate Hydrologist, ICIMOD*

## Annex II: Workshop Participants

S.N	Names	Organization	Designation	Email ID
1	Fayezurahman Azizi	MEW	Hydrology Specialist	fayez.azizi@gmail.com
2	Mohammad Ebrahim Barekzai	MoFA	T W Desk Officer	ebrahim.barekzai@gmail.com
3	Muhammad Hassan Faizee	MoFA	Deputy DG for Transboundary Water	mhassanfaizee@gmail.com
4	Ezatullah Sediqi	ANDMA	Advisor	eng.ezatsediqi@gmail.com
5	Jawid Ahmad Jawid	ICIMOD	Admin Officer, ICIMOD	jawid.ahmad@icimod.org
6	Dr. Carmel Pollino	CSIRO	Principal Research Scientist	carmel.pollino@csiro.au
7	David Molden	ICIMOD	Director General	david.molden@icimod.org
8	Arun B. Shrestha	ICIMOD	Regional Program Manager, River Basin and Cryosphere	arun.shrestha@icimod.org
9	Neera Shrestha Pradhan	ICIMOD	Program Coordinator, SWaRMA	neera.pradhan@icimod.org
10	Madhav Dhakal	ICIMOD	Associate Hydrologist	madhav.dhakal@icimod.org
11	Azaj Ali	ICIMOD	Program Officer, Indus	azaj.ali@icimod.org
12	Sanjeev Bhuchar	ICIMOD	Senior Watershed Management Specialist	sanjeev.bhuchar@icimod.org
13	Ashmita Shakya	ICIMOD	Program Associate, Indus	ashmita.shakya@icimod.org
14	Indu Chitrakar	ICIMOD	Program Associate, SWaRMA	indu.chitrakar@icimod.org
15	Smita Ghimire	ICIMOD	SSA, Knowledge Management and Programme Support	smita.ghimire@icimod.org

## Annex III: Post Assessment

### Post Assessment of the Upper Indus Basin Network – Afghanistan Side Event for Enhancing Science based Regional Cooperation

Four government officials from Afghanistan participated in this workshop and three of them provided their feedback.

Most of them said that workshop met their expectations. The workshop was relevant to the context and needs of the participants. The participants found the location of the workshop, timing and facilities satisfactory. However, their travel route (Kabul-Kathmandu-Kabul) was very challenging.

The most relevant science knowledge sessions were, a) Flood Modeling in the Upper Indus Basin – Challenges and limitations, and b) Activities of Hazards and Risks working group. Scientific Knowledge sharing sessions were important and they got intermediate (in between basic and advanced) level knowledge from the presentations of the six technical working groups of UIBN.

Overall, they found the technical and governance sessions informative and valuable. They would highly recommend others to attend such workshops in the future.









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**International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development**

GPO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal

**T** +977 1 5275222

**F** +977 1 5275238

**E** [info@icimod.org](mailto:info@icimod.org)

**W** [www.icimod.org](http://www.icimod.org)