

Himalaya Calling

An initiative to bridge the science–policy–practice divide and foster sustainable development in the Himalayan region



The rationale

The Himalaya are home to an immense diversity of life, culture, and beauty – a microcosm of the world around us. These mountains in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) are Asia’s water towers (as the source of 10 major Asian river systems) and considered the Third Pole (with the largest reserves of snow and ice outside the polar regions).

Mountain communities are experiencing myriad

sociocultural, ecological, economic, and disaster-related impacts due to multiple stressors, including climate change. The response to these impacts has often lacked institutional synergy and convergence.

Himalaya Calling is an initiative that pushes for corrective, value-added actions from all sectors and actors to sustain mountain environments and build the resilience of mountain communities.

A clarion call

*I have been calling out to you from time immemorial – but my cries have gone unheeded.
This, now, is a distress call ... I am melting, I am polluted, I am plundered. My rivers are deluged, my forests shrinking.
I am being deserted.*

My landscapes across the Himalayan region are being ravaged, threatening livelihoods and life as you know it.

Even if global warming is limited to 1.5°C by 2100, this translates to a

2.1 °C

warming in the HKH region



Majority of the hill and mountain populations depend on springs

Of the estimated 5 million springs in the Himalayan region, around

30%

are drying up and 50% are experiencing reduced discharge



In the Kailash Landscape,

22%

of the ice mass that feeds four major rivers has been reported to have melted in the last two decades.

Forest cover loss in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) amounted to

5,041 km²

from 2001 to 2017

Around **22,372 tonnes**

of municipal solid waste are generated and dumped from Himalayan cities and towns every day



Around 16,793 villages in Uttarakhand, India, have reported increasing out-migration trends, particularly among the youth, leaving

1,053 villages

with no inhabitants.



A total of

532 disaster events

occurred in the IHR between 1990 and 2012

*I implore you to rise – to save and rejuvenate me – so that I continue to nourish you for generations to come.
I know my call will go unheeded no longer ...*

What is Himalaya Calling?

Himalaya Calling is about listening to the pulse of the mountains and working towards the vision of wellbeing of people and the environment in the Himalayas and downstream. The initiative is committed to generating and sharing science-based evidence and traditional knowledge to effect change. Himalaya Calling promotes creative communication and engagement with multiple stakeholders to create awareness and foster collaborative actions that include influencing policies, institutions, processes, and practices around key thematic areas. Knowledge networks can greatly facilitate the process.

Objectives

- Build awareness towards sustainable actions in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) in six identified thematic areas : water use and springs, waste management, biodiversity conservation, ecotourism, shifting cultivation, and green skills.
- Foster collaborative networks engaging science–policy–practice constituencies for sustainable mountain development in the IHR
- Apply evidence-based knowledge, including traditional knowledge, to influence policies and practices



Strategy

- Identify pilot area for awareness to actions in six thematic areas in four aspirational districts (Chamba in Himachal Pradesh; Haridwar in Uttarakhand; Ribhoi in Meghalaya; and Namsai in Arunachal Pradesh) and dissemination of best practices in 12 states in the IHR.
- Collate research findings and develop knowledge products for policy messaging and for practitioners
- Promote creative communication using a range of tools and platforms
- Reach out to mountain champions and document best practices for developing Standard Operating Procedures
- Seek convergence and synergy with ongoing best practices including NITI Aayog initiative on Himalayas and HKH Call to Action

- Establish and strengthen networks
- Feed data into the Himalayan Data Centre
- Identification of innovative research areas through multi-stakeholder participation

Deliverables

- Strategy documents on Himalaya Calling, detailing the communication strategy, partnerships, and action plans
- Establish Himalayan knowledge networks and state chapters
- Network of leaders in the six thematic areas
- Strengthened database centre for wider use
- Compendium of innovations and best practices in the IHR and scaling up of pathways



Institutional mechanism

The GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development (GBPNIHESD) and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) will jointly facilitate the implementation of the Himalaya Calling initiative under the overall guidance of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India. A centrally

constituted advisory committee with members drawn from diverse sectors will help in providing direction and larger buy-in of multiple stakeholders. Similar bodies representing multiple stakeholders at the IHR state level will be set up to create larger ownership and synergy of actions.

Timeframe (2019–2021)

The first year of the three-year project will be focused on forging partnerships, building institutional mechanisms, and pilot testing the strategy and key actions. The second year will ensure coverage in all IHR states, and the third year will primarily be focused on scaling up efforts.

The project will operate on a budget of INR 50 million under the National Mission for Himalayan Studies of the MoEF&CC, Government of India.

About the implementing organizations

GBPNIHESD is an autonomous institution of the MoEF&CC, Government of India, with a mandate of advancing scientific knowledge, developing integrated management strategies, conserving natural resources, and ensuring environmentally sound development in the entire IHR.

ICIMOD is a regional intergovernmental learning and knowledge sharing centre focused on sustainable mountain development, serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalaya – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.



For further information

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