

Reports from the Country Offices and Committees

CNICIMOD Secretariat

The Chinese Committee on ICIMOD (CNICIMOD) was set up in November 2006 to coordinate mountain environmental conservation and development initiatives among government agencies and academic institutions in the country, in close collaboration with ICIMOD HQ. CNICIMOD is hosted by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the ICIMOD nodal organisation in China, with the main secretariat office located in Chengdu Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment. The Secretariat gathers and compiles information on ICIMOD/ China initiatives in integrated mountain development, which is disseminated through newsletters, and facilitates exchange.

In 2008, CNICIMOD implemented various activities with a focused, and productive approach based on ICIMOD's development strategy. They included assisting ICIMOD to publicise its new development strategy in China, participating in the coordination of bilateral high level dialogue between China and ICIMOD, and the development of a 'proseminar' strategy. Through these activities, CNICIMOD helped to expand the scope of regional cooperation between China and ICIMOD and to raise ICIMOD's profile, thereby increasing the Centre's influence and recognition in China, as well as enabling it to play a more meaningful role in mountain development and the protection of the ecological environment in China.

To facilitate the regional implementation of ICIMOD's new development strategy, CNICIMOD organised relevant scientists to discuss how to further strengthen international cooperation under an ICIMOD-led strategy. CNICIMOD also collected the opinions of relevant research units and scientists in order to ascertain the region's programmatic needs and priorities and thus

to be able to promote project proposals on multilateral cooperation with ICIMOD. CNICIMOD has also been embarking on long-term, multidisciplinary, and comprehensive research to support economic development and environmental protection in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region.



In 2008, CNICIMOD published periodical newsletters giving updates on the activities of ICIMOD and CNICIMOD and reporting topical information on mountain research and mountain development. After '5.12', the Wenchuan earthquake disaster, CNICIMOD published a special issue of the newsletter reporting on the scientific and technological aspects of earthquake relief, and discussing the effective scientific emergency work, as well as expressing concern and extending the condolences of international organisations including ICIMOD.

Afghanistan Office

ICIMOD Kabul Office – graduating towards a vibrant country office

On 11 February 2007, while inaugurating the ICIMOD office in Kabul, the then Afghan Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation described the event as “an important and valuable step for Afghanistan at this critical stage in its history”. The office was opened in response to repeated requests from the Afghan Board Member for ICIMOD to begin more activities in Afghanistan and to establish a coordination office to enable better contact with ministries and donors in the country.



By the end of 2008, the office had made some achievements and learned some lessons. As envisioned by the Board of Governors in November 2005, the office played the role of liaison office well and tried to establish itself as a fully-fledged ‘country office’, while also managing a USAID-supported country focused programme. In its liaison role, the office facilitated the participation of Afghan partners in several ICIMOD headquarters-managed programme activities. The Afghan office, in effect, brought ICIMOD’s headquarters to the doorstep of its Afghan partners.

With the help of the USAID-supported programme, the Kabul office is trying to make scientific and technological innovations from the countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region available to Afghanistan through capacity building initiatives and by establishing peer networks with institutions of excellence in natural resources management (NRM). As of December 2008, a total of 95 professionals and community leaders (80 men and 15 women) had been exposed to different NRM techniques and practices through 6 sets of training and exposure visits. By the end of the USAID-supported programme period (June 2009), the total number of participants in such trainings and exposure visits is expected to reach 449 (371 men and 78 women).

The operation of the Kabul office has also tested ICIMOD’s real footing in its regional member country Afghanistan. ICIMOD had previously enjoyed unhindered operations from its headquarters in Kathmandu for more than two decades before being challenged to prove itself as a legal entity in one of its own regional member countries. The Kabul office has experienced various operational difficulties mainly arising from difficulties with registration (the office is not registered till date), lack of credible security arrangements, and non-competitive salary/overall incentive packages, which have contributed to a high turnover of key staff, slowing the implementation of planned activities.



The experiences of the past two years constitute a basis for reflection and definition of ICIMOD’s role in Afghanistan.

There is potential for increasing ICIMOD’s commitment in the country, for which a clear country strategy is required.

Pakistan Office

ICIMOD decided to establish an office in Pakistan with the aim to

- Respond with follow up activities with a view to scaling up projects and mobilising resources locally to address the needs of poor communities in mountain areas using the experience of ICIMOD and available technologies for addressing development issues in the context of the poverty-environment nexus.
- Provide support for the effective implementation of regional projects.
- Enhance the image of ICIMOD in Pakistan and highlight issues such as climate change, glacial melting, disaster preparedness and mitigation, payment for ecosystems services, and the increased feminisation of mountain areas

ICIMOD is in an advantageous position to operate effectively in Pakistan because of its regional experience and wealth of knowledge, as well as its linkages in the region, which will enable it to mobilise regional experts quickly. Furthermore, opportunities for resource mobilisation in Pakistan are high because of the increasing aid-flow to Pakistan. In addition, as the security situation in the ICIMOD project areas in Pakistan (NWFP, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and Balochistan) has deteriorated, the local office has an important role to play in the implementation of ICIMOD regional programmes and in providing logistical support to incoming missions as well as ensuring their security.

ICIMOD's consultations with the national partners and the Government of Pakistan during the formulation of its strategic framework and operational planning workshop revealed expectations in the following areas: (i) monitoring of ice, snow, and water in the Indus basin and its tributaries in the context of climate change and its consequences for water availability for hydro-energy and food security, (ii) capacity building and awareness raising for disaster preparedness and management, and (iii) improving the livelihoods of poor communities through promoting income generating activities and introducing renewable energy technologies.



Accordingly, strong interaction has been developed with the relevant action area team leaders and programme managers in ICIMOD HQ. A two-way mechanism has been developed between the national partners and the concerned programmes to provide adequate technical support. The Pakistan Office has been instrumental in mobilising funds locally for the establishment of the Centre for Disaster Preparedness and Management at the University of Peshawar, which is now fully functional, and for the project 'Capacity Building for Improved Snow, Ice and Water Resources in the Indus Basin'.