

The Regional Collaborative Programme

In an attempt to address the issues highlighted by Chapter 13 (Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development) of Agenda 21, in January 1995 ICIMOD embarked on an ambitious four-year (1995-1998) **Regional Collaborative Programme for the Sustainable Development of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas (RCP-I)**. The Programme was designed after extensive consultation with partner institutions in ICIMOD member countries, ICIMOD's Board of Governors and Support Group, and many others.

The experience gained during RCP-I was enormously valuable in helping the Centre move on to the next phase of programming for sustainable mountain development in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas (HKH). This next phase (1999-2002), called **Mountains 2000 and Beyond: Second Regional Collaborative Programme for Sustainable Development of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas (RCP-II)**.

RCP-II did not commence with a clean slate. Many of the important initiatives of RCP-I: soil conserving farming systems, gender, management of natural resources, preservation of biodiversity, risk and hazard management, development of high-value enterprises, GIS/RS applications, and information exchange were continued, as these have also been identified as priority areas by various local and national organisations in the member countries. RCP-II has introduced several new priority activities that have been identified by the Centre's various interactions and activities so far.

During the period from 1999 - 2002, ICIMOD is focusing its activities on five key programme areas. These reflect the three principal thematic concerns in sustainable development of the HKH and the two main mechanisms that ICIMOD uses to increase the capacities of local and national institutions to apply the knowledge generated by its thematic programmes.

Programme Areas

I. Sustainable Livelihoods for Mountain Households - The focus in this programme is on poverty reduction in mountain households by introducing appropriate technologies for sustainable farming

systems, marketing farm products, promoting opportunities for income generation and enterprise development, and integrating environmental and socioeconomic concerns of mountain households in a sustainable manner.

II. Gender Balanced Mountain Development - The focus here is on ensuring that women will be equal partners in and beneficiaries of the development processes taking place in the HKH and on removing inequities. Although this is also an integral part of the main programme areas, it is presented separately because of the special emphasis needed in the early stages of development and integration.

III. Sustainable Management of the Mountain Commons - This programme focuses on the sustainable management of more than 60% of the HKH which consists of rangelands and forests, of the water resources that are so essential for maintaining and/or improving farming systems, livelihoods as a whole, and of the biodiversity of this unique ecosystem.

IV. Capacity Building of Mountain Development Organisations - This programme concentrates on strengthening the capacities of partner institutions and organisations in the HKH to implement their mandates in aspects of sustainable development with focused training programmes and tailor-made institutional strengthening activities. This is complementary to the training components of the activities undertaken under the first three thematic thrusts.

V. Information and Outreach - The collection of information and its distribution to as wide an audience as possible is continually being strengthened. While traditional publication methods continue to be used, innovative approaches and technologies for reaching out to the 140 million inhabitants or their representatives are also being explored.

Each of these five programmes consists of a number of activities with distinct objectives and outputs. While each of these activities is self-contained, there are close linkages between activities.

Organisational Structure

The Centre's activities are implemented through six divisions and a small institutional strengthening unit. The Centre's organogram is given on this page.

The **Mountain Farming Systems' Division** mainly focuses on farming households and their privately-owned lands for reducing poverty and increasing sustainability. Particular emphasis is given to increasing the productivity of marginal farmlands, improved agricultural technologies, and gender.

The **Mountain Natural Resources' Division** concentrates on those natural resources that are owned and/or managed by governments and/or communities as mountain 'commons'. Important among these resources are rangelands, forests, water, and biodiversity - and the people who must manage them at the local level.

The **Mountain Enterprises and Infrastructure Division** focuses on ways and means to diversify mountain economies by identifying opportunities for products and services that have comparative advantages over those from the plains to increase income along with supporting physical infrastructure design improvements to increase access to markets and services.

The **Mountain Environment and Natural Resources' Information Systems' Division** provides services and training on the application of geoinformatics for sustainable development including applications related to forestry, glacial lakes, disaster prevention, and area and town planning.

The **Information, Communications and Outreach Division** is the focal point for sharing documentation and information on development in the HKH in general and dissemination of mountain knowledge generated by ICIMOD and its partners.

The **Administration and Finance Division** ensures the effective and transparent functioning of the Centre.

The **Institutional Strengthening Unit** was established in 1999 to strengthen the partnerships of ICIMOD with institutions in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas and is being expanded to deal with cross-cutting planning and organisational issues.

