

A woman wearing a red turban and a light-colored shirt is smiling and holding a pineapple in a field. In the background, there are lush green hills and mountains under a clear sky.

Building on the Past; Looking to the Future

The Hindu Kush Himalayas are a truly global resource with a rich biological and cultural diversity. The problems in mountain areas are multifaceted and too complicated to address through one discipline or approach. Over the last 30 years, ICIMOD has developed its capacity to work within the region's complex myriad of strengths, challenges, opportunities, and vulnerabilities. However in recent years the sustainability of the region's vital natural resources and the resilience of mountain people are being increasingly challenged by emerging global, regional, and local changes.

ICIMOD must continually adapt to respond to local, national, and regional needs and address evolving scenarios in regional member countries while representing mountain issues globally.

Lessons Learned in the Last Five Years

Position ICIMOD as a regional institution in support of the Mountain Agenda: The Mountain Agenda gained momentum in global discussions, with ICIMOD increasingly recognized as a centre for knowledge on mountains in global discourses and forums.

Generate greater ownership by the countries: Efforts to address the needs and priorities of regional member countries during the past five years have resulted in greater regional ownership of ICIMOD activities. In addition to rising core contributions by regional member countries, India donated USD 1 million to the ICIMOD Foundation, and China provided financial support to the development of the Koshi Basin Programme proposal, which led to funding of the programme.

Share regional knowledge: The impacts of climate change on the cryosphere, water availability, and biodiversity and the threat of disaster are topics of regional concern. Availability of regional information and metadata is an issue that needs immediate attention. Baseline information and regional-level information were lacking four years ago.

Fill the knowledge data gap systematically: Filling data gaps must be systematically approached for regional representation; geographical and eco-region coverage; representation of ecosystem types and cultures; and relevance to upstream and downstream contexts. Its trans-Himalayan transects and river basin approaches are now embedded in the regional programme structure for a systematic approach for knowledge generation and sharing for the Hindu Kush Himalayas.

Increase scientific credibility: Good scientific information is lacking for the region. To support evidence-based policy making in regional member countries, ICIMOD and its partners must further increase their scientific credibility.

Show impact on the ground: Realizing the importance of capturing and monitoring impact more systematically, ICIMOD has adopted impact pathways analysis as a way to first identify desired changes and then work backward to identify the outputs, activities, and actors necessary to bring them about.

Support a holistic approach: Interfaces between natural sciences and social sciences, science and policy, policy and practice, mountains (upstream) and plains (downstream), and national and local benefits of development can only be addressed by adopting a

transdisciplinary and integrated approach. Addressing common climate change impacts requires countries to work across borders and regionally.

Strengthen gender analysis and equity: Research has found that mountain women and girls are more affected by climate and socioeconomic changes, such as men's outmigration. To address these challenges and bring about change on the ground, ICIMOD will continue to strongly integrate gender in its programming.



Mustang, Nepal

Generate knowledge about emerging economic and development issues: ICIMOD has analysed regional issues of agriculture, food security, rural development, natural resource governance and shared this knowledge with relevant stakeholders, including policy makers in the region. These contributed significantly to raising mountain issues in the agricultural and rural development agenda and raised ICIMOD's visibility.

Offer incentive-based mechanisms: Mountain people are often undercompensated for their important role in protecting mountain resources. ICIMOD has developed a framework for the valuation of mountain ecosystem services and developed customized economic assessment tools, methods, and approaches to create incentives for mountain communities to continue in their role as stewards of mountain resources.

Enhance communication: Knowledge management and communication are at the core of ICIMOD's mandate. Various communication strategies are required to reach the range of stakeholders in the region. To enhance impact, there is a need to develop a sound communication strategy for ICIMOD, including its work with partners.

Working Across Disciplines for Greater Impact

The 2008 Strategic Framework set a long-term vision for ICIMOD. Building on this vision, in 2012 ICIMOD developed a new strategic framework by consulting with regional member countries, stakeholders, ICIMOD staff, the ICIMOD Support Group, the Board of Governors, which includes representatives from all regional member countries, and 30 Friends of ICIMOD, including former Board Members and regional and international professionals. Altogether, 261 institutions and 557 individuals were involved in national consultations and one regional consultation, which helped ensure the Centre continues to respond to needs on the ground in our regional member countries.

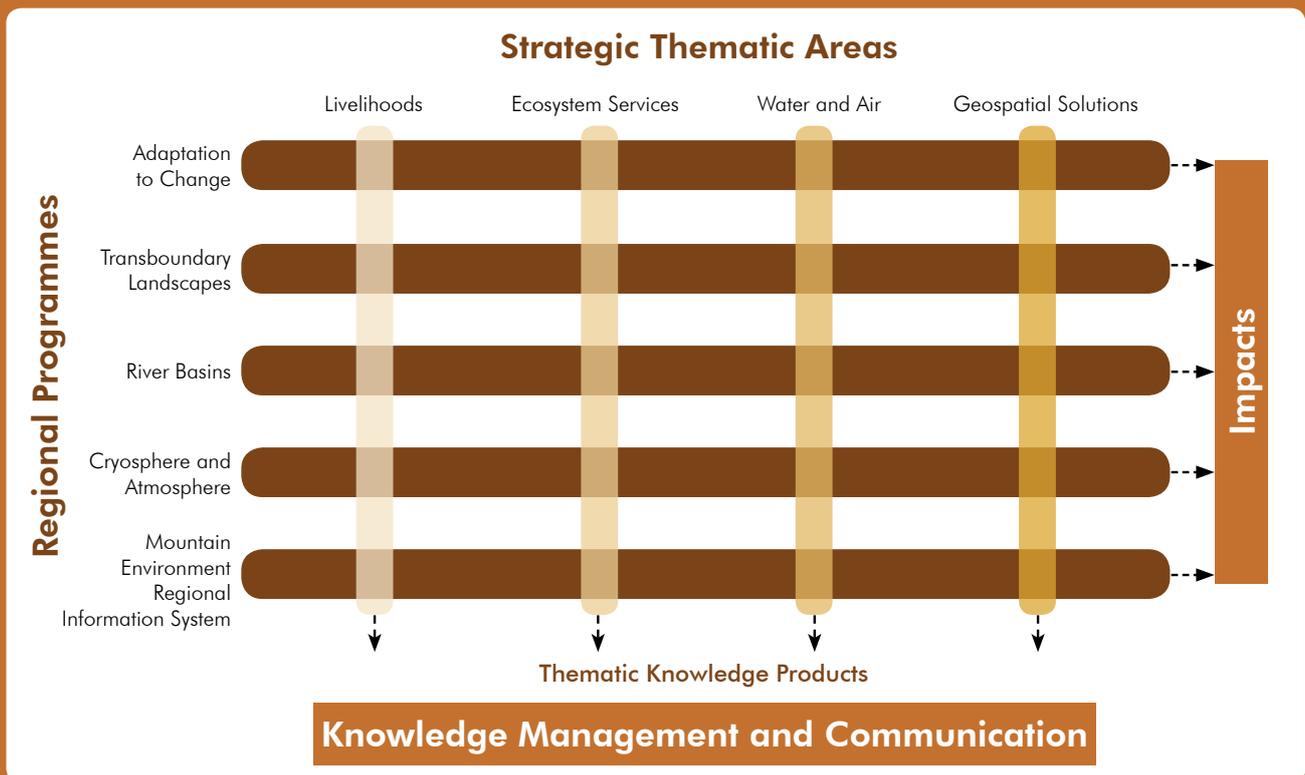
The new Strategic Framework 2012 unveils a major shift in ICIMOD’s structure to facilitate interdisciplinary work. It strives for impact through six long-term, transdisciplinary regional programmes supported by expertise in strategic thematic areas. As a knowledge

institution, all of ICIMOD’s work is underpinned by a strategy for sharing targeted knowledge to affect change at local, national, and regional levels.

ICIMOD’s work is aligned with its Strategic Framework through a five-year roadmap, the Medium-Term Action Plan (MTAP). The first MTAP, from 2003 to 2007, aimed to deliver projects on the ground. MTAP-II covered the period of 2008 to 2012 and tried to address data gaps and promote adaptation to climate change. In the coming MTAP-III, from 2013 to 2017, ICIMOD will build on lessons learned to deliver greater impacts on the ground and transform research into action.

The Strategic Framework 2012 and implementation of MTAP-III require an organizational change to make ICIMOD more responsive to the needs and demands of its stakeholders and partner organizations, especially the women, men, and children of the HKH region.

Within ICIMOD’s new structure, long-term, transdisciplinary regional programmes are designed to deliver impact in regional member countries with the support of experts from strategic thematic areas. Knowledge management and communication underpin programmatic and thematic activities. Himalayan University Consortium, not shown in the chart below, is an emerging Regional Programme.



Honing Core Competencies through Strategic Thematic Areas

ICIMOD's strategic themes provide technical knowledge to raise emerging issues, to research questions, and to develop the tools and methodologies necessary for ICIMOD to carry out science for development. ICIMOD's strategic thematic areas work to mobilize global and regional expertise to provide input to regional programmes, initiatives, and partners in member countries. Cross-cutting topics such as gender, governance, poverty, economic analysis, and private sector engagement are integrated into the strategic themes, and require special emphasis in the regional programmes.

“ICIMOD's fields of specialization enrich the repository of mountain-related knowledge of individual mountain states. It is time that the expertise and linkages available with and through ICIMOD is made available to various Ministries dealing with mountain-related issues.”

– Dr RS Tolia, former Chief Secretary of State, Uttarakhand, India, in 'A Planning Framework for the Mountain States of India'

Livelihoods

The Livelihoods theme provides in-depth knowledge and a sound understanding of the social and economic conditions needed to generate and customize knowledge about drivers of change and their impacts as well as emerging challenges and opportunities for livelihood enhancement. The theme explores appropriate frameworks for promoting innovations, strategies, approaches, and methodologies for improved and sustainable livelihood options.

Ecosystem Services

The Ecosystem Services theme provides scientific understanding of ecosystem structures and functions to help build resilience and develop sustainable land-use practices in landscapes of the region under different types of ecosystem. The theme

generates scientific knowledge to contribute to global understanding on key issues related to biodiversity conservation and management, integrated forest and watershed development, and regional rangeland management, with additional focus on high-altitude wetlands and mountain farming systems.

Water and Air

The Water and Air theme brings sound research expertise to build on the knowledge of regional water regimes, river basins, and snow and glacial mapping for the HKH region using remote sensing and GIS technologies; field-based glacier mass balance monitoring, glaciohydrological models, atmospheric pollution, and assessment of climate change impacts.

Geospatial Solutions

The Geospatial Solutions theme builds institutional and regional capability to mainstream geospatial solutions that help bridge the knowledge gap on regional priorities. It offers a state-of-the-art geo-ICT facility with operational satellite receiving stations, high-end farm and storage devices, and the latest software platform and cloud computing options. It engages with regional and international agencies to adapt international knowledge to mountain environments. The thematic team works with other Thematic Areas and Regional Programmes to fulfil the growing demands for geospatial information services.

Rangamati Hill District, Bangladesh



Yala Glacier, Nepal

