

Consultative Workshop Proceedings

Promoting Transboundary Tourism  
in Mapchya Rural Municipality, Humla,  
Kailash Sacred Landscape, Nepal



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Promoting Transboundary Tourism in  
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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

DNPWC	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
DoF	Department of Forest
FACD	Foreign Aid Coordination Division, at the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
GHT	The Great Himalayan Trails
GLOF	Glacial Lake Outburst Flood
GoN	Government of Nepal
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
KM	Kailash Mansarovar
KSL	Kailash Sacred Landscape
KSLCDI	Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative
MoFSC	Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NTFPs	Non-timber Forest Products
RECAST	Research Centre for Applied Science and Technology
TAR	Tibet Autonomous Region
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VDC	Village Development Committee

# Executive Summary

A consultation workshop was organized by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC), Research Centre for Applied Science and Technology, Tribhuvan University, Nepal, (RECAST) and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) to understand issues, challenges and opportunities for promotion of transboundary tourism in the Kailash Sacred Landscape of Mapchya Rural Municipality, Nepal.

The event provided a platform for stakeholders including government agencies, tour operators, Limi youth group, community representatives from Limi Valley, local authorities of Mapchya Rural Municipality, and experts of Limi/Humla to work towards a common vision in promoting Humla as a unique tourism destination. The stakeholders noted that the sacred Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar, natural and cultural assets of Humla offer an opportunity to promote transboundary heritage tourism and ecotourism. These inherent tourism assets of global and local cultural and environment values and economic scope are the binding threads for transboundary tourism collaborations. Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development and the Great Himalayan Trail (GHT) initiatives are important avenues for harnessing both heritage and ecotourism for the livelihood co-benefits in the landscape.

Awareness and sensitization on tourism opportunities, capacity enhancement of stakeholders, market assessments, documentation of tourism assets, promoting tourism value chain, trade linkages and collaborative partnerships were identified as major areas for transboundary tourism collaboration. The workshop reiterated the need for mainstreaming innovative ideas on responsible tourism in the local development plans of Mapchya Rural Municipality.



# Introduction

Humla, lying in the Karnali zone of province number 6 of far west Nepal, is endowed with rich biodiversity and cultural heritage sites. It is a gateway to globally significant Kailash-Mansarovar sacred monuments, located in Pulan county of Tibet Autonomous Region of China. The Kailash sacred site attracts tourists of all faiths such as Hindu, Buddhist, Bon, Jain and Christian. The Humla district of Nepal and Pithoragadh district of India serve as historical pilgrim routes and points of intersection between the cultural, environmental, economic and political features of the three nations.

Humla district is known among international tourists for its rich culture and adventure tourism. Promoted as the starting point of the Great Himalayan Trail (GHT), Humla is part of the longest and highest trekking destinations that links six Asian countries, covering the Great Himalayan Range. The positioning of the Humla-Limi valley provides opportunities for transboundary ecotourism in the landscape.

In order to synergize the multiple and often competing values for sustainable heritage and ecotourism development at the transboundary level, ICIMOD has initiated the Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI), a cooperative programme of three countries, China, India and Nepal. The three governments have prioritized responsible tourism for promoting transboundary collaboration in the landscape.

## The Setting- Mapchya Rural Municipality

Mapchya Rural Municipality is located in the Humla district of Nepal with an area of 2,419.04 sq. km. It has six wards with a total population of 3,900. The economy of the area is based on agricultural production and trade such as export of medicinal herbs and import of household materials (rice, wheat, dal, salt, sugar and oil). Other supporting income generating activities include rearing domestic animals like yak, buffalo, Juhma, Jhopa, goat, pig, sheep, chicken, duck and pigeon. Due to its remoteness, the municipality lags behind in development. In general, Humla is often portrayed as a remote, inaccessible, impoverished, famine stricken and undeveloped district of West Nepal (Buijtendijk, 2009; SNV, 2008; ODI, 2001). Statistical data representing different development indicators and ranking of Humla based on scores also reinforce such established narratives.

However, Mapchya Rural Municipality, and Humla in general, has potential for tourism development. Tourist destinations in the area include Kermi, Yalbang, Muchu, Limi, Halji Gopma, Tumkot Gompa, the ancient and medieval salt trade route and the famous pilgrimage route to Mt Kailash. Since the opening of Humla to the outside world in 1993, many international non-governmental organizations (SNV, UNWTO & GHT) have been promoting pro-poor value chain tourism in Humla.

In addition to being a gateway to Mt Kailash Humla district, Humla is a unique ecotourism destination known for offering both cultural and hard-core adventure tourism. Humla is promoted as the starting point of the Great Himalayan Trail (GHT), the longest and highest trekking destination in the world linking six Asian countries (covering Great Himalayan Range). The location of Humla in general and Mapchya Rural Municipality in particular provides rich potential for transboundary ecotourism.

## The Motivation

The government of Nepal has placed high strategic importance on diversifying tourism products by opening new tourism products and consolidating emerging ones. Humla is already a prioritized pilot site for tourism within the KSL programme. Under the newly adopted federal government system, the responsibility falls within the jurisdiction of Mapchya Rural Municipality, which places strong emphasis on promoting cross-border tourism and trade.

The Pulan County, TAR tourism road map envisions a Kailash Tourism International Cooperation Zone (KTICZ) that highlights promoting transboundary tourism cooperation and trade with Nepal through Humla. Such emerging opportunities provide an important basis for multi-stakeholders to come up with a collaborative strategy, framework and roadmap for effective promotion of transboundary tourism initiatives.

# Scope and Objectives

The scope of this workshop was to engage multi-stakeholders in thematic discussions on synergizing tourism policy, plans, programmes and resources, exploring possibilities of initiating multi-stakeholder collaborative partnerships and strengthening alliances for collective strategizing, planning, implementation, marketing and communication, and learning. Specific objectives of the one-day stakeholder's consultation were:

- Share and validate key heritage and ecotourism information on Humla, Limi Valley and KSL;
- Identify challenges and opportunities for multi-stakeholder collaborations to promote transboundary tourism; and
- Collect, consolidate and synthesize key pointers/guidance for a tourism roadmap (Mapchya Rural Municipality/ Limi valley) in the context of transboundary linkages with Pulan County, TAR.

## Expected Outcomes

- To analyse transboundary heritage tourism gaps in the Kailash Sacred Landscape
- Develop a way forward to conserve cultural heritage, and promote inclusive and equitable tourism development in Mapchya Rural Municipality
- Develop greater collaboration among multi-stakeholders (government, people of Mapchya Rural Municipality, industry and tourism experts)



# Inaugural Session

Dr Tashi Dorji, livelihood specialist, ICIMOD, greeted the participants and reflected on the significance of the event being held in the first week of July. He stated that the timing coincided with the celebration of the birth anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava, who is often referred to as second Buddha. The Guru in those days travelled across Himalayan nations spreading human values, promoting wellbeing and leaving behind a legacy of blessed spiritual and cultural assets across the Himalayan landscape. In particular, much of the history and landmarks of the Guru are in the three KSLCDI member countries (TAR, China; Nepal and India) and thus transcends borders. In today's context, while discussing "transboundary collaboration", there is much to reflect on and learn from past glories, he said. The timing also fell just after the happy celebration of a holy month on the Buddhist calendar called "Saga Dawa". Such auspicious timing would add value to the discussions and contribute in fulfilling the objectives of transboundary tourism – to which the most sacred Mount Kailash and Lake Mansaorver provided centre stage, he remarked. To take the discussion forward, Dr Dorji handed over the session to the chair, Mr Dhananjay Paudyal, Chief of Foreign Aid Coordination Division (FACD), MoFSC. The Chair requested the participants to introduce themselves.

The welcome remarks, background and objective of the workshop were delivered by Brij Rathore, Chief Policy Advisor, ICIMOD. Shri Rathore welcomed everyone on behalf of ICIMOD. The key highlights from his statements were as follows:

- Humla and Limi valley has immense cultural, natural and spiritual assets, and values are interwoven with biological part of the heritage. Life-forms such as snow leopards, wild asses (kiang) and wild yak are unique to the remote landscape.
- Its remoteness, however, will gradually decrease and this area will become more accessible. When a pristine area opens up to tourism, there can also be a sudden surge of interest; plans should place the biocultural heritage of Humla at the centre.

Promoting a different kind of tourism in the unique topography of KSL-Nepal requires strategic planning.

- Limi valley also faces challenges – supraglacial lake outbursts and flash floods throw up threats to livelihoods and the Halji monastery itself stands at risk. These risks force people to migrate but herein also lies an opportunity – tourism done in a different manner could offer advantages.
- The workshop will involve brainstorming by knowledgeable stakeholders for different ideas. The municipality holds a key role for the future. Stakeholders will also grow. Humla district authorities will be stakeholders. The presence of the Ministry of Tourism and RECAST in the workshop is a big support.
- The multi-stakeholder process should be done in the landscape itself to get local people fully on-board.





People will support new plans if they strengthen their livelihood. Now is the right time as we also have a new body of decentralized governance institutions.

The inaugural session proceeded with a presentation by Mr Tshewang Lama, who is a former minister and local historian. Delivered under the topic 'Revisiting Tourism Journey: Experiential Narrative on Overview of Humla Tourism', Mr Lama highlighted the unique north-south ("Chang-Rong") connect, elaborating on the strong symbolic cultural, environmental and economic relationships in the Humla landscape.

He talked about Humla being a junction of different ethnic groups – Tibetan, Khas and Byansi – whose cultural practices are unique. For instance, their belief in ideas of divine justice dispensed by shamans (dhamis) and modes of worship of local communities, which include animal sacrifice, are not so prevalent in other regions. The culture of the people is closely interwoven with the region's ecology, as reflected in the folk story about the journey of two fishes upstream in the Karnali River. The sacred ancient monasteries – Raling gompa, Yalbang monastery, Tumkot gompa and Rinchhen Ling gompa (biggest monastery in west Nepal) are still preserved in their original form. Humla retains the monastic culture of Buddhist mainland Tibet. The Nyin valley in Humla houses Mt Shelmo-kang, a local prototype of Mt Kailash. Further, Hilsa is the gate to Kailash-Mansarovar.

Humla also houses sites of historical importance – for instance, the Chase Namkha Dzong cave with cave paintings and the ancient barter trading places of Marjonglai and Chagpalung, which lie along the Lalung zom border. The Lalung zum border on the Nepalese side provides an excellent panoramic view of Mt Kailash and Lake Mansarovar.

Mr Lama also pointed out that some places in Humla face the threat of floods due to their precarious geographical location. The symbiotic trading relations between the Chang (northern steppe Tibetan lifestyle) and Rong (southern agrarian lifestyle) are disappearing. Access to Kailash and Mansarovar have also become difficult due to border issues. Globalisation and the market economy have disrupted the socio-religious fabric of the communities. Basic needs such as health, education and medical facilities are still wanting.

Mr Lama provided following key recommendations:

- Re-establish the relation between the Chang and the Rong.
- Promote transboundary cooperation by formalising Lapcha la pass that connects Limi and Pulan.
- Profile and promote the shaman and caravan route by developing a Green Road via Limi valley
- Promote eco-tourism including an appropriate home-stay model.

# Technical Session 1: Thematic Presentation by Industry Experts

Technical session began with a presentation by experts engaged in promoting tourism in the KSL in different capacities. The purpose was to provide rich contents related to tourism in the Humla-Limi valley within the context of transboundary tourism promotion.

*Great Himalaya Trails, Humla Section as Transboundary Tourism Destination: Prospects and Challenges:* Mr Jigme Lama, Advisor, the Great Himalaya Trail Alliance

Mr Lama presented on the principles and progress of the GHT. He said that the GHT is an iconic product for Nepal and forms an extensive network of trails across the Nepal Himalaya. It offers a single long-distance trail to mountaineers, short and long distance trails to hikers, and wildlife, spirituality and more to special interest tourists.

The GHT project was initiated in 2008-10 with pilot programmes at Humla and Dolpa, with the support of SNV Nepal and UNWTO. The project conducted an in-depth analysis of tourism value chains, developed a website, created a brand identity, and organised capacity building programmes for local stakeholders through training and exposure visits. The project also developed short/medium/long-term plans for acquiring long-term funding. About 150-200 people were directly supported.

One specific initiative was certification of the Great Himalayan Trail. This was required for safety issues, insurance, porter services, proper treatment of the staff, and business standardization.

Some challenges observed in implementation of GHT included: inconsistencies in the Humla-Pulan border policing regulations; limited access to flights; lack of co-operation between actors - private, local, international market, stakeholders; lack of capacity of local government; limited financial resources for destination management; impacts of climate change, drought and threats to cultural and natural resources - flood, illegal poaching.

Following opportunities were highlighted:

- Limi as a quick gateway to Kailash for Indian pilgrims. The number of Indian pilgrims has increased from 3000 per year to 30,000 pilgrims per year. So there is a need to develop policies, infrastructure, and services to facilitate tourism for local benefits.
- Opportunities for promoting deep immersion tours and eco-tourism

*'Contextualizing Transboundary Tourism (heritage and ecotourism) in Humla Limi Valley, Kailash Sacred Landscape, Nepal':* Dr Anu Kumari Lama, Tourism Specialist, ICIMOD.

Dr Lama's presentation began by highlighting the need to contextualize transboundary tourism (heritage and ecotourism) in Humla Limi Valley. She suggested that the Humla Limi valley provides an interesting case of 'untapped tourism potential' (with great global, regional and local values), and 'emerging prospects' – untapped, mainly from the point of view of transboundary tourism (heritage and ecotourism), and emerging prospects due to the enabling global-regional-local policy environment and the cross-border partnership initiation (between Pulan County, TAR China and Humla district, Nepal). For this reason, contextualizing the tourism potential of Humla Limi from a transboundary perspective will be critical.



Table 1: **Inputs from participants**

Speaker	Observation/Inputs
<b>Markets &amp; competitions</b>	
Mr Sagar Rimal	There are 3–4 routes from India for pilgrimage to Kailash. This has implications for the tourist market that Humla can tap into. These potential routes and their implications should be properly analysed while developing a tourism plan for Humla.
Mr Jigme Lama	Indian pilgrims usually fly to the area by helicopter as they do not like to walk long hours. Since Humla is the shortest pathway to Kailash, it will remain the most preferred route to Kailash.
Mr Tshewang Lama	Tatopani- Phidim route is fragile and vulnerable to natural disaster. But the Humla route is wider and less vulnerable to disaster with a robust geophysical structure. In ancient times, famous routes like salt route and silk route had trails going through Humla.
Mr Sher Singh Thagunna	We should know from which part of India we are getting all the pilgrims and what their expectations are. If the Chinese border is closed, then which route will get affected? We need to consider the instability of border opening by China. Also, we must know what type of tourists we are targeting. Are we just planning to increase the number of tourists or trying to get quality tourists? For example, Everest nowadays suffers from excess solid waste. Therefore, the tourism plan needs to be holistic and consider all aspects such as conservation, development, branding and inclusiveness.
<b>Niche, branding</b>	
Mr. Raju Acharya	In terms of branding, Humla is known for wild yaks and black-necked cranes. Also unique customs such as the tradition of feeding dead bodies to vulture and the polyandry system still exist in Limi. More research on the social, economic and cultural aspects of the place would help us understand their significance and promote tourism. Security and other services need to be enhanced through capacity building initiatives.
<b>Value chains, cocol benefits</b>	
Ms. Sabitri Shrestha	There is a need to increase investment in identifying herbs, adding value and developing them as a viable enterprise that can be linked to the growing tourism market. Also, there should be a focus on cultural tourism in Humla to bring local benefits through community participation.

Dr Lama said that current narratives present Humla as a remote, inaccessible, impoverished, famine-stricken and undeveloped district. Since Humla opened to the outside world in 1993, tourism development scoping and the approach used was influenced by static/place based tourism development and pro-poor tourism.

She said that the emerging narratives (the need for transboundary tourism promotion) are an outcome of the tourism scoping and development contexts that evolved since 1993. Significant ones are KSLCDI, which focuses on cross border heritage tourism, and GHT, which seeks to diversify tourism products and income/benefits beyond mainstream tourism destination hubs.



In Nepal, SNV and ICIMOD took the lead in developing the GHT programme under the umbrella of Sustainable Mountain Tourism in the Himalayas (SuMiT) and in collaboration with the Nepal Tourism Board and the Sustainable Tourism Network. Challenges such as accessibility, poor products and services, poor HR, management and governance capacities, lack of/poor information availability, still affect this development process. At the national level, the National Tourism Strategic Plan (2015-2024) provides much needed strategic direction and guidelines for tourism development.

Dr Lama noted that scoping of Humla-Limi as an independent destination needs to be re-imagined/reframed within the broader context of transboundary heritage tourism (gateway to Kailash Mansarovar) and ecotourism (starting point of GHT). The linkage between these two significant attributes – heritage tourism and ecotourism – provides unmatched global positioning and great competitive advantage for promoting tourism at a transboundary scale.

**Table 2: Inputs from participants**

Speaker	Observations/Inputs
<b>Marketing, equity and benefits</b>	
Mr. Nabaraj Lama	How can we advertise Humla for tourism, keeping in mind its culture and heritage? Nepal provides an indirect route to Kailash, as there are direct routes from India and Tibet. However, Nepal is benefitting at the moment due to the geo-political situation. Thus, focus should also be given to developing tourism destinations within Humla based on its heritage and cultural attributes. Benefit to local communities must be the guiding philosophy of the tourism plan in the landscape.
<b>Market, visitor profile, product diversification</b>	
Ms. Sabitri Shrestha	Humla's tourism assets can be harnessed through eco-tourism, cultural heritage or Buddhist tourism.
<b>Transboundary opportunities, market specificities</b>	
Dr Anu Lama	Access is the biggest issue. If there is opportunity we must optimize it. We can optimize the opportunity to bring benefits to the local people by showcasing a package of culture and heritage from Mapchya. We must also keep in mind changes in the travelling pattern and the growth of tourism observed on the Chinese side. Understanding the market from the demand side will be critical. This is the missing link in both KSLCDI and GHT tourism development plans and processes. The Humla Limi tourism landscape has changed not only from barter economy to market economy, but also from the market pulse perspectives. Demographic profile of tourists, country of origin, purpose of visit, including the behaviour of new age tourists, have changed over time. People now create a bucket list and travel several countries in as few days as possible. The traditional paper and guidebook dependent mode of travel and activity selection, has been replaced by information and communication assisted tools. Tourists are on the lookout for niche products and experiences. So it is important to understand the market pulse and package and promote the products accordingly, satisfying different clientele.
<b>Transboundary opportunity assessments, options for local benefits</b>	
Mr. Mangal Lama	In terms of transboundary tourism, one should first identify the needs of Nepal and China and then see how we can have a win-win situation. Development of infrastructures (Hilsa bridge, road) is critical but government must simultaneously support development programmes to optimize the benefits of these facilities. Promotion of value chains, vegetables, fruits and facilitating trade across borders will bring local benefits for communities at the transboundary level. We should also focus on increasing the flow of Chinese tourists as they also wish to visit Limi, Simikot. Even if Humla can get 10% of Chinese tourists visiting Kailash, the local economy will improve. Building a helicopter destination in Yalbong will also facilitate tourism growth in the area.
<b>Equity and benefit from tourism</b>	
Mr. Amga Bahadur Lama	There are nearly 113 helicopter landings per day in Simikot. About 90% of the benefit goes to the airlines and 10% to the travel agency. The benefit to the local people is limited. As such, there is an urgent need to develop a tourism plan that can benefit local communities. Value chains such as organic vegetables can be cultivated and exported to China. Awareness among local people and social leaders, information documentation and media outreach require due attention.

Dr Lama mentioned that the following fundamental points need to be considered:

- **Scoping:** Transboundary tourism (heritage and ecotourism) will require re-imagining and reframing Humla Limi valley tourism from static (site specific) and socio-economic (poverty) focused landscape to dynamic landscapes (geo-political, cultural, environmental, economic and institutional) of transboundary nature, embedded within multilevel governance contexts.
- **Partnerships:** Multi-stakeholder collaboration at different governance levels (transboundary, national, state and local levels) will be critical for coming up with collaborative tourism development strategies, frameworks and roadmaps for providing consolidated direction to effective promotion of transboundary tourism.

Dr Lama concluded her presentation by reiterating her opening statement as to why and how the Humla Limi valley is an interesting case of 'untapped tourism potential' and 'emerging prospects', and proposed a framework (suggestive) for tapping such opportunities.

## Observation and Inputs from Local Experts

Mr Mim Hamal, an expert from Humla, cited some examples to illustrate the impact of tourism. The Indian movie '3 Idiots' increased the number of tourists visiting Ladakh from 30,000 to 3 million. But the environment was destroyed. In Humla, the number of tourists has increased from 3,000 to 300,000 but we are still not able to make it inclusive for local benefit. What should be our approach? A high-value/low-volume based tourism or the other way round? Probably, the way forward for Humla is to target high-end tourism. Limi valley in itself can be a potential UNESCO world heritage site. These days, we should also utilize drone-based planning for heritage, landscape, wildlife, and terrain development. Innovative plans can attract investments in such areas.

Mr Nabaraj Lama, a youth representative, said that often incidents of politically sensitive nature take place at border areas. These will obviously lead to closure of the borders by the respective governments. It is critical to empower our local people to understand such political dynamics to bring peace, harmony and promote transboundary cooperation. Furthermore, there is serious lack of documentation, such as the number of tourists visiting Kailash or Humla. Expensive airfare to Simikot and visa issues at the border also require immediate attention from the government.



Professor Dr Ram Prasad Chaudhary, Emeritus Professor, Tribhuvan University remarked that we should focus on getting quality tourists rather than on mass tourism. Bringing benefits to local communities through appropriate governance should be a primary concern. With the increase in tourists, the area is bound to get polluted so we should consider environmental issues and create a situation where we can win more and lose less. Also, we need to work around how to promote the shortcut routes to Kailash.

# Technical Session 2: Group Exercise

The thematic presentations were followed by group work of the invited participants representing different organizations. The purpose of group work was to collect diverse views and information regarding activities, roles, skills/resources, challenges and opportunities linked with transboundary tourism promotion. For smooth facilitation of group work and information gathering, broad issues that affect the Humla-Limi valley and were relevant to participants' interests and experience were selected. The themes included:

Theme 1: Transboundary tourism development context

Theme 2: Harnessing the environment and biodiversity for transboundary tourism

Theme 3: Heritage and ecotourism products/service development

Guiding questions (for transboundary tourism) included:

- What activities are currently carried out in transboundary tourism?
- What roles do you play in transboundary tourism development?
- What skills/resources do you have for transboundary tourism development?
- What are the perceived challenges in transboundary tourism development?
- What are the perceived opportunities in transboundary tourism development?

The group exercise process followed two steps. Step 1 was dedicated to understanding ground realities or contextual knowledge and Step 2 to collecting action plan and partner database. The outcomes of this group exercise are summarized in Annex-1.



# Workshop Outcomes

Dr Tashi Dorji summarized the outcome of the one-day consultative workshop under the following headings:

**Humla** - a different and high value tourism product: Both local and government stakeholders emphasized that Humla should target a different tourism market with a high value and low impact. The entire Humla district is rich in unique trans-Himalayan culture, tradition and nature. Tourism in the landscape must be built on local culture, values and conservation of local flora and fauna. Therefore, it needs to be marketed among right, targeted groups of visitors.

**Infrastructure development:** Basic touristic infrastructure such as health post, access to water, camping sites, waste disposal, accommodation units, telecommunications, information centres, early warning system (GLOF) and teahouses were top on the agenda. The local stakeholders of Mapchya Rural Municipality emphasized that these basic infrastructures are urgently required in the landscape.

**Cheaper air accessibility:** A major limiting factor for tourism in Humla is the high cost of flights to Simikot. Therefore, emphasis should be laid on cheaper airfare and increased flight frequency between Kathmandu-Nepalgunj-Simikot. For this the Nepal Tourism Board and other stakeholders could innovate some tourism promotional programmes and influence the government to subsidize flights to Simikot.

**Sino-Nepal cooperation and dialogues:** Transboundary tourism cooperation between Humla and Pulan will be key for economic growth as well as natural resources management in Humla. In order to capitalize on these opportunities, the Sino-Nepal strategic cooperation and dialogues, which are already under way both at the central and local level, need to be strengthened to smoothen cross-border mechanisms such as tourist checkpoints, promotion of trade and tourism for mutual benefits.

**Equity and benefits:** An important requirement of responsible tourism is that benefits from tourism must trickle down to local communities. While the role of private operators and established business houses are critical in the tourism value chains, due attention must be paid to promoting community-led enterprise development and involvement in order to ensure equity in benefit sharing.

**Community awareness and capacity building:** Greater community awareness and capacity in the areas of waste disposal, trail safety, hygiene, service quality, entrepreneurship skills, cultural interpretation and hospitality are crucial for improving tourism services at the local level.

**Awareness and sensitization:** Tourists travelling to the landscape need to be sensitized on local culture and values. Such activities should be mainstreamed in local tourism development plans.

**Marketing and promotion:** The landscape is still unknown among many tourists. Therefore greater emphasis must be laid on marketing and promoting the destination at a large scale to ensure a regular flow of high-end visitors.

**Visa and immigration services:** To enhance trust and opportunities for working together in promoting transboundary cooperation, there is a need to revisit existing visa and immigration services in the Nepal-China border areas and work towards harmonising the services to create a win-win situation for both countries.

# Way Forward

The workshop provided an important basis and direction for moving ahead with the process of operationalizing collaborative transboundary tourism development and partnerships.

It was learnt that the process of collaborative development and partnership is needed at different levels of transboundary tourism landscapes (political and socioeconomic). Also, there is political willingness for cross-border collaborations between Pulan County and Humla to facilitate effective tourism and trade. The collaboration hinges on issues/agendas related to enabling tourism and trade policies (e.g., immigration/visa, check-posts, accessibility – transportation, market and information). Such collaborations are nurtured through Sino-Nepal dialogue and cooperation. The workshop also underscored the roles and values of partnerships among national and local tourism stakeholders. Within the scope of partnerships, government institutions such as the MoCTCA, department of tourism, department of immigration, Nepal Tourism Board, Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal; Mapchya Rural Municipality; private sector actors such as trekking agencies/guides, hotel/homestay operators, transport operators and farmers and traders, and bilateral development agencies have been identified as crucial partners to facilitate the process of institutional collaboration for transboundary tourism promotion.

Based on the deliberations, participations agreed on a way forward, which is summarized in Table 3.



Table 3: **Way forward**

Activity	Remarks/Notes	Timeline	Expected outcome	Role/responsibility of each partner/ resource people
Guidance and support for developing local plans for Mapchya Rural Municipality during the upcoming high-level visit from Nepal to Kailash to discuss smoothening tourism and trade between Humla and Pulan.	Mapchaya Municipality Chair -Mr Bishnu Lama, Mr Tshewang Lama (ex-minister) and Mr Mangal Lama (president of Humla chamber of commerce) will facilitate local participation.	5–7 September 2017 at Yalbang, Mapchya	A report with clear action points (short-mid-long term) on Responsible Tourism Plan (including transboundary context) for Mapchya Municipality.	Anu Lama, Tashi, Laxmi MOFSC, RECAST
Local level (local government of Humla and Pulan) cross-border meeting at Hilsa, Simikot or Pulan.	Pulan-Humla chamber of commerce can lead the process. Our input will be to add transboundary tourism cooperation in the agenda. Mr Mangal Lama, president of Humla chapter, shall make efforts to arrange the border meeting with his counterpart Mr Lhakpa, President of Pulan Port Management Committee.	Tentatively scheduled for 10 September 2017 (after the fieldwork at Hilsa)	Resolution of border meeting with key cooperation areas identified and agreed on transboundary tourism promotion.	Mr Mangal Lama, Mr Tshewang Lama, Laxmi, Anu Lama, Tashi MOFSC, RECAST
Organize awareness and sensitization on responsible tourism through brochures and pamphlets.	Information on tourism products and other knowledge products from Humla will be synthesized and packaged to enhance visitor/ pilgrim satisfaction.	Sep-Nov 2017	Records of brochures and pamphlets distributed to tour operators, and local hotels in Humla and linkage in tour operator websites.	Prakash Rout, Anu Lama, Swapnil, Tashi MOFSC, RECAST
Establish/strengthen networks and partnerships with regional, national and local tourism stakeholders and bilateral development agencies to synergise transboundary tourism development collaborations.	To explore partnership, synergy and linkage with tourism stakeholders. This is mainly to leverage fund (e.g., DFID, GIZ, NTB) and join efforts for sustainability. It can be discussed within the context of the Visit Nepal 2018 initiative of the Government of Nepal.	July-Sep 2017	Minutes of meeting on possibilities for multi-sector engagement to promote transboundary tourism in Humla.	Anu Lama, Tashi, Laxmi MOFSC, RECAST

# Conclusion and Vote of Thanks

Professor Ram Prasad Chaudhary reiterated that addressing local livelihoods is key to ensuring long-term sustainability of ecosystems. The tourism plan for Humla must be carefully designed to promote Humla as a competitive tourism destination. For this, relevant stakeholders must come together to build a shared vision. He expressed his satisfaction that a single-day session of brainstorming had brought together key partners relevant for promoting tourism in Humla. He said that the outcomes of the consultation must find their way into the upcoming Mapchya Rural Municipality Plan, and thus, the team must plan to liaise closely with the newly elected leadership of Mapchya.

Mr Tshewang Lama thanked MoFSC, RECAST and ICIMOD for organizing the consultation event that provided a timely platform to discuss their problems and prospects. He stated that the market has transformed from a barter economy to a market economy. Unlike in the past, one can get everything in the market but for that people need cash. To generate cash, one needs to have products. Product development further requires capacity and education at the local level. Such brainstorming sessions contribute to building capacities. He said that similar consultations should be organized as soon as possible at Mapchya Rural Municipality.

In his concluding remarks Mr Sher Singh Thagunna said that the consultation meeting was timely as the local institutions are now in place, and that they are in the process of developing their plans. He reiterated that natural and cultural assets of Humla must be tapped for livelihood co-benefits. He stressed that the valuable ideas that have emerged from the consultation must be communicated to major stakeholders engaged in tourism. For instance, the Department of Tourism, Nepal Tourism Board, relevant private sectors and civil society organizations must be engaged meaningfully to ensure coordinated and coherent planning and implementation of unique tourism in Humla. He reminded that the Kailash programme coordinated by ICIMOD should continue to play a proactive role in providing a platform for the three member countries (TAR, PR China, Nepal and India) to come together to promote heritage tourism in the landscape. Mr Thagunna reassured everyone that the Government of Nepal would support the cause of transboundary tourism in the Kailash landscape.

Finally Dr Anu Lama delivered a vote of thanks. She expressed gratitude to Mr Dhananjay Paudyal and Mr Sagar Rimal from MoFSC for their support and leadership; and to Professor Dr Chaudhary from RECAST and other KSL Nepal focal officials for their presence and contribution. Special thanks was extended to Mr Tshewang Lama for coordinating with participants from Humla and also for sharing his vast and valuable local knowledge. The meeting benefited from the input received from local participants and experts of Humla. Dr Lama acknowledged the participation of the ministry of tourism and civil aviation. Thanks was also extended to Mr Brij Rathore, Mr Laxmi Bhatta and Dr Rajan Kotru of ICIMOD for their support and guidance in organizing the workshop.

# Annexes

## Annex 1: List of Participants

Name	Designation
Dhananjay Paudyal	FACD Chief/ MoFSC
Sagar Rimal	FACD/MFSC
Sher Singh Thagunna	DDG/DNPWA
Mohan Raj Kafle	Under Secretary, Dept. of Forests
Tshewang (Chhakka Bahadur) Lama	Historian, researcher, ex-minister, Humla
Rameshwar Adhikari	RECAST
Ram P Chaudhary	RECAST/ KSLCDI
Mim Hamal	EU/ PM
Sabitri Shrestha	T.U.
Mangal Lama	President, Nepal China Chamber
Anga B.Lama	SHIP-M, Humla
Chhabi Lama	Humla
Subhadra Gupta	Consultant
Yadav Ghimirey	Director, Friends of Nature
Rishi Sharma	Lumbini- Global Peace College
Shrimani Dawadi	Media person, Aapasi Kawach
Tsering Nyekyap Lama	Limi Youth Society
Sonam Ngadup Lama	Limi Youth Society
Saprabhat Banut	REED Nepal
Bala Ram Kandel	MoFSC
Furi G Sherpa	NATTA/ Member
Usha Lama	Humla
Namghang	Humla
Pema Topchen Lama	Humla
Tsogyal Wangmo Lama	Humla
Ramesh Raj Pant	Deego Bikash
Ram Bdr Kunwar	DOA
Ram Sapkota (Kamal)	President- VITOF
Janga B. Lama	KTES
Raju Acharya	Director, Friends of Nature
Keshab Veedha	Co-ordinator, MTCPL South Asia
Rinjin Angdu Lama	Sunny Treks Field Asst.
Prem Dorji Lama	Shambhala Holiday Treks
Subhash Jha	Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal
Rakesh Shahi	GHTNA
Chhapsang Lama	
Urgan Lama	Sunny Travels
Jusfa Pandey	Jusfa International Travel and Tours
Nabdu La Jigme	GHTNA
Nabraj Lama	Smiling Eyes International Travel and Tours

Chhewang Lama	Responsible Treks
Sagar Lama	Smiling Eyes International Travel and Tours
Wangdu Lama	Sunny Trek
Tashi Dorji	ICIMOD
Anu Kumari Lama	ICIMOD
Brij Rathore	ICIMOD
Swapnil Chaudhari	ICIMOD
Ujala Rajbhandari	ICIMOD
Serena Amatya	ICIMOD
Prakash Rout	ICIMOD
Himani Upadhyaya	ICIMOD

## Annex 2: Programme Agenda

8:30–9:00	Registration
9.00–10.00	Inaugural Session (Chair: Dhananjaya Paudyal, Chief, FACD, MoFSC)
	Welcome remarks, background of KSLCDI and workshop objective - Brij Rathore, Chief Policy Advisor, ICIMOD
	Harnessing emerging opportunities for transboundary tourism cooperation in Humla (Tshewang Lama, Ex-Minister, Historian, Humla)
	Remarks by Ram P Chaudhary, RECAST
	Remarks by Chair
10:00–0:30	Tea/coffee break and Group photo
10:30–13:00	Technical Session (20 min presentation followed by 10 min Q&A) Chair: Ram P Chaudhary, RECAST
	Prospects and Problems in promoting the Great Himalayan Trail as a transboundary tourism destination – Jigme Lama, Advisor, GHT Alliance
	Contextualizing Transboundary tourism (heritage and ecotourism) in Humla Limi Valley of Kailash Sacred Landscape, Nepal – Anu Kumari Lama, Tourism Specialist, ICIMOD
	General inputs and statements from key stakeholders (Mangal Lama-President Nepal-China Chamber of Commerce Humla; Amga Bdr Lama, Chairperson, Lama Sanskritki Manch, Humla; Mr. Mim Hamal,, Limi Youth Club, women representative, CAAN, private sector actors, etc.)
13:00–13:30	Lunch break

## Annex 3: Group Work Format

<b>Theme 1: Transboundary tourism development context</b>	
Guiding Question What is the contextual tourism development situation?	What activities are currently carried out within transboundary tourism?
	What roles do you play in transboundary tourism development?
	What skills/resources do you have for transboundary tourism development?
	What are the perceived challenges in transboundary tourism development?
	What are the perceived opportunities in transboundary tourism development?
<b>Theme 2: Harnessing the environment and biodiversity for transboundary tourism</b>	
What is the environmental and biodiversity situation?	
<b>Theme 3: Heritage and ecotourism products/service development</b>	
What is the product/service development situation?	

Heritage/ ecotourism	Activities	Roles	Skills	Challenges	Opportunities

Challenges/ opportunities	Activity (What)	Timeline (When)	Responsibility (Who)	Process (How)

## Annex 4: Outcome of Group Work

### Theme 1: Transboundary tourism development context

	Activities	Roles	Skills	Challenges	Opportunities
Heritage/ ecotourism	<p>Itinerary preparation and product development</p> <p>Simikot-Kailash pilgrimage.</p> <p>Product identified - documented by GHT, pictorial guidebook by Friends of Nature.</p> <p>Limi circuit guide book in progress.</p> <p>Co-operation with Chinese parts - ongoing</p> <p>Initiate tourism related trainings (ICIMOD, travel operation, GHT, NGOs and INGOs)</p> <p>Local stories of Humla region - (Penguin, publication in process)</p> <p>Limi youth society- magazines and documentary published</p> <p>Academic articles -journals, newsletters</p> <p>Spatial database prepared (ICIMOD)</p>	<p>Promote Humla instead of other places (Annapurna and Everest) by travel agencies.</p> <p>Academic research on biodiversity and wildlife components going on</p> <p>Limi hot springs- campsites and toilets have been built.</p> <p>Promotion of Limi valley and Humla in international tourism fair by travel agencies.</p> <p>Karnali Tourism Entrepreneur Society provided homestay and guide training.</p>	<p>Entrepreneurship, making wooden items (cups), Yak cheese, ghee, apple farming, barley and radish.</p> <p>Access to policy making (DOF, DNPWC).</p> <p>Historical landscape with high-value culture.</p> <p>Monasteries and pilgrims.</p> <p>Water resources- springs.</p> <p>Festivals, Lama dance, shamanism, horse race.</p>	<p>Infrastructure-road &amp; communication.</p> <p>Security-No hospitals</p> <p>Health services (Poor)</p> <p>Air access available but expensive</p> <p>Lack of accommodation facilities</p> <p>Locals lack ability to influence national policy.</p> <p>Border issues (Border close without prior information)</p> <p>Lack of quarantine at the border (no test mechanism to sell food items)</p> <p>Fuel problem</p>	<p>Hotel business</p> <p>Favourable border environment for Chinese tourism</p> <p>Timber market in Tibet</p> <p>NTFPs (Herbs and Vegetables)</p>

Challenge/ Opportunities	Activity (What)	Timeline (When)	Responsibility (Who)	Process (How)
Infrastructure	Government programme and project Needed	1–2 years	Ministry of local development	Bidding
Fuel	Building fuel stations	1–2 years	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Dialogue with Chinese government and local people
Health services	Health posts, rescue centres	1 year	Government, Tour operators	Government budget, amount from tour operators, and support from Himalayan Rescue Association
Air access	Reduce air fare for western tourists	1–2 years	Local government, airlines	Consultation meeting with concerned stakeholders (Civil aviation and airlines)
Accommodation facilities	Encourage for homestay, build guest houses, tea houses and rest houses	1 year	Local people, NGOs, INGOs, local government	Empowerment, training, homestay registration, loan with low interest rate
Hotel business	Branding internationally, marketing, establish hotels	4–5 years	Tour operators, locals	Certification, encourage investments (micro finance) and tax subsidies
Promotion of Chinese tourism	Clear immigration policy on border side	2–3 years	Government of Nepal and China	Dialogue between two countries

## Theme 2: Environment and biodiversity harnessing for transboundary tourism.

Challenges/ Opportunities	Activity (What)	Timeline (When)	Responsibility (Who)	Process (How)
Timber market	Afforestation	1–2 years	Locals, NGOs and INGOs	Local mobilization
GLOF	Early warning system set up, awareness on GLOF, building engineering structure, relocation and resettlement option	1–2 years	NGOs, INGOs, ICIMOD, Water Induced Disaster Control Department	Discussion with locals, study assessments and raise awareness
Diverse flora and fauna	Branding and publishing (Wild yak and Black Necked Crane)	1–2 years	Government and locals	Conservation area built

## Theme 3: Heritage and ecotourism products/service development

	Activities	Roles	Skills	Challenges	Opportunities
Heritage/ ecotourism	Monastery visit, Kailash Mansarovar Pilgrimage, Trekking, Research and development	Tourist guide, Destination planner for implementing agencies, hotel and tour operators, accommodation provider, cultural representative, and information package designer for the landscape	Traditional knowledge and skills, engineers, multilingual, Legal aspects, guide for trekking and mountaineering, entrepreneurship skills and cultural interpretation expertise	Costly travel trip for Humla, lack of trained human resources, access to Simikot, shortage of camping sites, lack of water at camps, toilets, trail safety, waste management, tele communication, public awareness, interpretation centre, cheap and regular flights, permit fees, visa services at border/ immigration, code of conduct on camp site	Employment, Conservation of local culture and values

Challenges/ Opportunities	Activity (What)	Timeline (When)	Responsibility (Who)	Process (How)
Unpredicted policy on quota of tourists from China. Time at check in border areas; Nepali foods are not allowed in China	Sino-Nepal collaboration	1-2 years	Government of Nepal and China	Bilateral dialogue
Costly trekking trip	Institutional mechanism for trekking	1-2 years	Government of Nepal, civil aviation authority and airline companies	Dialogue
Health Safety	Health safety code (acclimatization) and health safety facility at Hilsa	1-2 years	Government of Nepal and local municipality	Dialogue





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