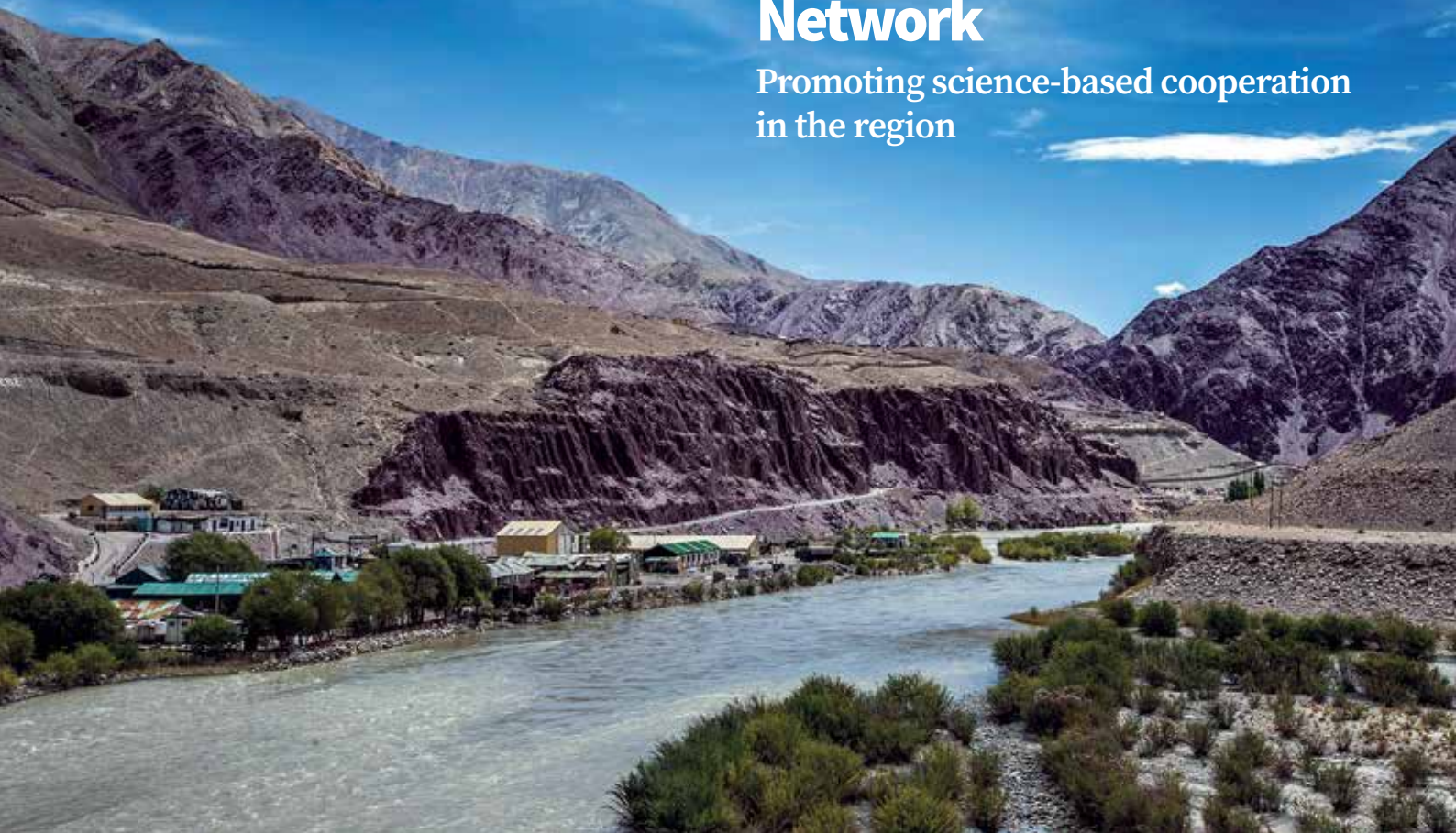


The Upper Indus Basin Network

Promoting science-based cooperation in the region



The Upper Indus Basin Network

Climate change is leaving an indelible mark on the high-mountain regions of the Indus basin. Challenges stemming from this change have profound impacts on countries that share the basin: Afghanistan, China, India, and Pakistan. This underlines the need for regional cooperation and knowledge sharing. Prior to establishing the network, a monitoring working group (MWG) was setup in 2012 – with support from the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) – as a working group of professionals focused on the basin. In 2014, this group was established as the Upper Indus Basin Network (UIBN), a knowledge-sharing to address gaps in climate research, community interventions, and policies.

The UIBN is a voluntary and informal knowledge and research hub for national and international institutions and researchers working on the basin. It aims to strengthen upstream–downstream linkages and foster increased coordination and research related to the climate, cryosphere, water, hazards, vulnerability, and adaptation.

The Indus and its challenges

The transboundary Indus River basin covers 1,165 sq. km and supports about 268 million people in its riparian countries. Water sourced from this predominantly glacier- and snow-fed river is primarily used for agriculture, energy production, industrial use, and human consumption. The basin is crucial for sustaining livelihoods and provides important ecosystem services that support economic activity.



The Indus is the most meltwater-dependent river within the upper Indus Basin.



The Indus basin – spread across Afghanistan, China, India, and Pakistan – provides important ecosystem services for its 268 million inhabitants (Source: ICIMOD/GRID Arendal/Cicero)

The Indus region is facing climate change and other environmental impacts as well as rapid population growth, which brings about increasing demands for water, energy, and food. To increase understanding on these key developmental challenges, it is essential that research looks at current and future changes in the climate and basin hydrology and their impacts on upstream and downstream populations. This can help address issues ranging from equitable water use to understanding the resources required to develop resilience to disasters and climate shocks in the basin.

What motivates the UIBN?

The UIBN's objective is to promote coordination and collaboration among organizations and promote activities that focus on resilience (research, pilots, networking) in the upper Indus basin. It encourages its members to come together and explore issues related to present and future water availability/demand and emerging hazards, and develop gender-sensitive solutions for all stakeholders within the basin. The UIBN's overarching aim is reflected in its vision statement: a resilient and empowered upper Indus basin region through science-based regional cooperation.

Core principles



PEOPLE CENTRIC



VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS



VALUE ADDITION



REGIONAL APPROACH



NEUTRALITY

How the UIBN functions

The UIBN is a voluntary network that functions through country chapters. There are four country chapters representing the basin member countries: Afghanistan, China, India, and Pakistan. Within these chapters, members focus on conducting research on key topics identified through six thematic working groups (TWGs) on cryosphere; climate change and air pollution; surface and groundwater hydrology; hazard management; management of gendered socioeconomic impacts; and framework for data collection and standardization. UIBN members have identified a broad set of crucial questions (see next page) that further guide the UIBN and its chapters in formulating a roadmap of activities. The UIBN's main governance body is the Regional Strategic Committee, which works with members to highlight the UIBN's research and other significant achievements at the regional level. Country chapters of the UIBN are led by or have strong participation of government institutions.

THE REGIONAL STRATEGIC COMMITTEE

At the regional level, the UIBN is governed through the Regional Strategic Committee, headed by the chairperson. The committee comprises two members (coordinator and co-coordinator) from each country chapter, along with one member from any relevant international organization,



and two members from ICIMOD. A group of advisors nominated by the country chapters also helps advise the RSC. This committee meets biannually to discuss the UIBN's progress, strategize on effective collaboration, and provide guidance to the UIBN country chapters. A regional UIBN annual meeting is also held once a year, where leads from the TWGs of the country chapters also participate.

For more information on how the UIBN functions, please scan the QR code above to access a copy of the UIBN governance framework.

The UIBN's key guiding questions

1. What were the climatic trends and variabilities in the basin in the past, and how will they be in the future?
2. What is the status of cryosphere components (glacier, snow, and permafrost), how have they changed over time, and how will they change in the future under climate change?
3. How can the present observation system be strengthened to address questions 1 and 2?
4. How can the effectiveness of data collection, quality control, and dissemination be enhanced at the national and regional levels?
5. How will climate change and cryosphere dynamics impact water availability in the future?
6. What are the likely future water demand scenarios?
7. How can supply-demand gaps be addressed?
8. What are the most suitable and sustainable development options for the basin's upstream region?
9. Which are the natural hazard hotspots, and how are vulnerabilities changing there?
10. What are the potential impacts of cryospheric changes on ecosystems?



UIBN's history: Key milestones

2012 UIB MWG formed by national and international partners at a workshop on "Building resilience to climate change impacts on water resources of the UIB"



2014 A group of government, non-government, and international experts visit Gilgit-Baltistan. Based on field observations, six TWGs are formed and the MWG is renamed as the UIBN

2017 UIBN begins collaboration with the Indus Forum and co-organizes international events like the Indus Basin Knowledge Forum (IBKF)



2018 UIBN members decide to expand the network to all basin countries and establish country chapters in Afghanistan and Pakistan



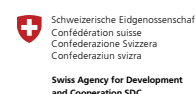
2019 UIBN governance framework is agreed on. The network and each of the country chapters start discussions on theory of change frameworks. India and China country chapters formed.



For further Information

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