

Nepal-ICIMOD Day and Open House 2011

Twenty-seven years of Nepal-ICIMOD partnership

ICIMOD

FOR MOUNTAINS AND PEOPLE

ICIMOD

Established in 1983, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu, facilitates transboundary cooperation in sustainable mountain development in the Hindu-Kush Himalayan region. A regional knowledge development and learning centre, ICIMOD serves eight countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. In Nepal, ICIMOD works primarily with government and line agencies as well as NGOs and the private sector to reach out to national and local partners and implement its programme.

ICIMOD's 2008-2012 strategy has three programmes focusing on globalisation and issues related to climate change, especially impacts on critical ecosystem services provided by mountains and implications for the livelihoods of upstream and downstream populations. By providing technical and scientific knowledge, ICIMOD builds capacities to understand these changes; adapt to them; and make the most of new opportunities while anticipating and addressing changes and impacts. The overall goal is to develop economically and environmentally sound socioeconomic and natural management systems to improve the living standards of mountain populations and sustain vital ecosystem services for the billions of people living downstream.

Nepal's special position in ICIMOD's partnership programme

As the host regional member country and founding member, Nepal gave its support to establishing ICIMOD's headquarters, and provided land in Godavari for a regional demonstration and training centre that has become a reference site for ICIMOD's partners and sponsors. Here we provide summaries of our country strategy and some programmes in Nepal in 2008-12. Currently Nepal not only participates in most regional research programmes supported by ICIMOD, but is also the venue for pioneer projects such as reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD/REDD+) and agri-business model development.



Imja glacial lake



Focus group discussion in Bajhang

ICIMOD's partnership activities in Nepal

Water and Hazards

- Research in this area focuses on the extent of possible impacts in areas where glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) could occur. The Imja, Thulagi, and Tsho Rolpa areas were studied based on past records, flood modelling, and interaction with local stakeholders. The conclusion was that a significant number of people could be affected and extensive structural damage accompanied by loss of goods and services could ensue. There was no indication that the problem from the lakes investigated is imminent, but there is a clear need for regular monitoring. The findings will help promote installation of early warning systems and development of disaster preparedness plans for potential GLOFs in the region.
- The people of Nepal's Koshi basin are experiencing climate-related changes, such as an erratic monsoon, floods, and extended drought. A study together with the Institute for Social and Environmental Transition–Nepal (ISET-N) looked at the ways people cope and adapt to the impacts of too much and too little water. The intention is to identify at different sites adaptation approaches that can be used by others in Nepal and elsewhere in the region in developing adaptation strategies.



Promoting the sustainability of ecosystem services

- ICIMOD has been heading a project on 'High Mountain Agribusiness and Livelihood Improvement-Climate Change Adaptation' (HIMALI-CCA) in partnership with Li-Bird, the District Development Committee–Local Development Fund, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, covering watersheds in Jumla

and Mustang districts. The goal is to increase socio-ecological resilience to climate change, and to use the lessons learned in preparing climate-proofed agribusiness-oriented integrated watershed management plans seeking financial support from the HIMALI Investment Project.

- As part of the Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation Initiative supported by GIZ-Germany, eight automatic weather stations and three hydrological stations are being established in Far Western Nepal in Chainpur, Chameliya, Darchula, Hilsa, Jumla, Patan, Rara, and Simkot. Stations will record and relay data at 30-minute intervals, thus helping to close the data gap in the Himalayan region revealed by IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report. Long-term weather monitoring will provide the time-series' data essential for climate modelling: the data will be shared regionally and globally.
- The Asia Network for Sustaining Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB), Federation of Community Forest Users in Nepal (FECOFUN), and ICIMOD are joint coordinators of a pilot project for REDD in Chitwan, Dolakha, and Gorkha districts. The aim is to demonstrate the feasibility of the REDD payment mechanism for carbon enhancement in community forest management by involving local communities and applying the lessons learned in other parts of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas.
- The Rangeland Resources' Programme Phase III has provided support to the Nepal Government since 2007 for formulation of a national rangeland policy. A task force established by the Department of Livestock held stakeholders' workshops in the five development regions and one national workshop to collect suggestions for the policy. The National Rangeland Policy, now awaiting government approval, was designed with the objectives of addressing poverty among pastoral communities and improving the productivity of rangeland ecosystems in the Nepal Himalayas.



Sustainable livelihoods in a changing world

- The tourism component of the Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation Initiative has been assessing and documenting the potential for eco-tourism in Baitadi, Bajhang, Darchula, and Humla districts as a strategy for improving livelihoods, heritage conservation, and adaptation to climate change, all crucial for maintaining the cultural integrity of the landscape.
- ICIMOD and ADAPT HIMAL assessed community perceptions of climate and socioeconomic changes, impacts, responses, and support needs in Bajhang, Dailekh, Humla, Tanahu, and Terhathum districts. The findings are being used in designing interventions by partners, particularly in promotion of stress-tolerant crops, risk management and income generating options.
- The Nepal component of the regional action research on 'Remittances: A Key to Adaptation?' completed a study of labour migration in water-stressed communities of Dhankuta, Saptari, and Sunsari districts of Eastern Nepal. It was found that the amount that migrant workers from these districts sent to their families, although small, made a big difference to the households and their ability to adapt to environmental and non-environment changes.



- The Nepal component of a regional poverty analysis has been completed. Using survey data from the Nepal Living Standards Surveys held in 1995/96 and 2003/04, studies were made of food poverty and non-food poverty, disparities within the mountains and hills of Nepal, and proximate determinants or impacts of different triggers on 'mountain poverty'. The findings will be published in a regional poverty report.

- ICIMOD uses a pro-poor mountain-specific value-chain approach to improve mountain livelihoods by addressing mountain specificities such as fragility, marginality, limited accessibility, and specific niche resources in interventions. Action research is carried out on high-value niche products and service sectors which can benefit upstream producers in the mountains of South Asia. A bay leaf value-chain intervention in Udaypur focused on improving the capacities of the target group (mostly women) in grading and packaging. Providing market information and linking them to the market led to improved bargaining powers and increased average incomes from NRs 3,000 to NRs 9,000 in 2009, taking the target households above the national poverty line.

Managing knowledge and communications

- In 2010, USAID, NASA and ICIMOD jointly established SERVIR-Himalaya, a platform used for regional monitoring and visualisation of key environmental and natural resources. The platform has been established in order to improve decision making on environmental issues in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region through dissemination and analysis of earth observation data which can be used for a variety of purposes such as disaster preparedness and management.
- Under the Sentinel Asia framework, a Jaxa Winds' communication satellite station was established on ICIMOD property. In the event of a major disaster in the region, emergency response will be activated and satellite data will be 'pushed' using the WINDS system at a speed of 1.55 Megabyte per second. The data can then be downloaded in near-real time and distributed to regional disaster management networks for rapid action. They can be shared globally via the open access 'Mountain GeoPortal', facilitating rapid response mapping of forest fires, floods, and earthquakes and helping deliver post-disaster relief where it is most needed.



- ICIMOD's GIS/RS team (MENRIS) is assisting the REDD project in above-ground biomass (AGB) estimation and mapping using high-resolution satellite imagery integrated with field/in situ measurements. Boundary delineation of community forests in the three watersheds and capacity building of user groups and national stakeholders are part of the work.
- ICIMOD organised a knowledge forum with Nobel Laureate Dr. Elinor Ostrom that was open to anyone interested from Kathmandu. Dr Ostrom spoke on her work on forestry communities and forest resources to a packed audience.
- ICIMOD promoted herbal gardens among schools in Kathmandu to raise awareness about conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources, particularly medicinal and aromatic plants. The programme is now being offered to government schools outside the valley.
- ICIMOD's Asia Pacific Mountain Network (APMN) co-organised a Café Climate together with the British Council under a new programme, 'Youth for Sustainable Mountain Development'. A climate dialogue and a workshop on climate change were held, as well as a 'Youth Forum on Climate Action' and an international graduate conference on climate change co-sponsored by ICIMOD's Himalayan Universities' Consortium. APMN has 859 individuals and 83 organisations registered from Nepal and has supported more than 12 youth initiatives in the country
- ICIMOD's centre in Godavari covers 30 ha and demonstrates technologies for sustainable land use and management of natural resources in mountain areas. Visitors range from farmers to government ministers. Training is provided for farmers and practitioners to facilitate improvement of farm incomes. In the next phase, facilities will be improved and good practices documented and disseminated to regional partners to augment their knowledge and skills in resilience and adaptation to climate change.



Promoting the Nepal-ICIMOD partnership

The Nepal-ICIMOD Day and Open House planned for March 11th and 12th seek to improve the mutually beneficial partnership between Nepalese partners and ICIMOD staff. Your partnership and involvement in our work is solicited. You can do this by participating in these events; by visiting ICIMOD's homepage www.icimod.org; by following ICIMOD news on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube; by being on the mailing list; and by organising group visits to ICIMOD's Godavari Centre. Additional information is available at: info@icimod.org.



For further information contact

Krishna Prasad Oli: koli@icimod.org
Nira Gurung: ngurung@icimod.org

Photos: Nabin Baral, Amanda Gurung, Sharad Joshi, Bishnu Hari Pandit, Eak Bahadur Rana, Samden Sherpa

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International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

GPO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel +977-1-5003222 **email** info@icimod.org **web** www.icimod.org