

**Background information**  
**Of**  
**The final synthesis and dissemination workshop of the EcoHealth**  
**project entitled “land use change and human health in eastern**  
**Himalayan—an adaptive ecosystem approach”**

**Date: July 20-22, 2011**  
**Venue: Kathmandu, Nepal**

Supported by IDRC, the international Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) formally initiated its first EcoHealth project entitled “land use change and human health in eastern Himalayas—an adaptive ecosystem approach” in April 2006 with a one-year preparatory phase. Within this year, ICIMOD study team together with its partners in three study sites (Nepal, Yunnan Province and Tibetan Autonomous Region of China) conducted field study and literature review to identify major land use changes, human health issues and the links between the two areas in eastern Himalayan region. The project also set up a multi-disciplinary study team in each of the three study sites and held training workshop to build the capacity of the study teams. The preparatory phase was finished in August 2007 and ICIMOD applied for fund from IDRC to continue a three-year second phase. Thanks to the support from IDRC, the second phase of this project was formally started in February 2008 and would be finished in August 2011 according to the plan.

The overall goal of the project is to reduce the vulnerability of mountain people to human health issues caused by land use change through promoting ecosystem approaches to human health in the Himalayan region. Under this overarching goal, the project aims to achieve the following general objectives:

- To share the research generated knowledge on how land use change, namely sedentarization of nomads, agricultural intensification and modernization, affects ecosystem services and human health and how to improve health and environmental sustainability in eastern Himalayas through sound research that employs an EcoHealth approach.
- To promote the application of the research findings and EcoHealth approaches in eastern Himalayas through policy advocacy, dissemination of research findings, and other activities such as capacity building of project site teams and other related partners

The overall research questions of the project include:

- What are the human health issues affected by changes in ecosystem services and social change associated with land use change in the eastern Himalayas?

- How is human health affected by changes in ecosystem services and social change associated with land use change in the eastern Himalayas?
- How can EcoHealth approaches be applied to generate information that will contribute to improved health and wellbeing as well as improved environmental sustainability in the eastern Himalayas?

For each of the three study sites, there are also a number of specific research objectives, research questions and hypotheses. To briefly summarize the main research problems of each study site here, it is malnutrition of Chepang people in the transition from shifting cultivation to permanent agriculture (Nepal study site); the health and environment impact of nomad sedentarization (Tibet study site); and water and pesticide management in the context of agricultural intensification (Yunnan study site). The focus of Nepal study site is to verify the main causes of malnutrition in Chepang people and to work out environment-friendly and sustainable solution for the problem. Yunnan study site focuses on identifying causes of ineffective government-sponsored water improvement program and reducing the negative impact of pesticide using. Tibet study site was changed from Dingzi County, an agricultural-pasture area, to Nima Township, Nierong County, a pastureland where animal husbandry is the main livelihood of local herders. The Tibet site team focuses on enhancing local livelihood by improving local herders' health through EcoHealth approach (goal), and to figure out whether there is any human health problem caused by land use change (sedentarization) and accordingly pilot the EcoHealth interventions to improve local health condition (objective).

The project was carried out in the three study sites in the last three years, however, due to some delay in the implementation process, the project was unable to finish by the originally planned time and we applied for 6 month no-cost extension from IDRC, which is kindly granted, thus the project will be completed by August 2011. We therefore have planned to organize a workshop at ICIMOD headquarter in Kathmandu, Nepal during July 20-22<sup>nd</sup> 2011 to summarize experience and lesson learnt and to disseminate findings from this project to stakeholders in the regional member countries. The purpose of the workshop is twofold: first is to summarize findings and lesson learnt from the project, second is to disseminate findings to and share with invited stakeholders so as to promote EcoHealth in the region.