

**TERMS OF REFERENCE  
FIFTH QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW (QQR) ICIMOD  
October 2015**

**1. Background**

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is a regional intergovernmental learning and knowledge sharing centre serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. Mountains are important global ecosystems facing especially rapid socioeconomic and environmental changes, particularly the impacts of climate change. Our aim is to influence policy and practices to meet environmental and livelihood challenges emerging in the HKH region. To do this we bring together researchers, practitioners and policy makers from the region and around the globe to generate and share knowledge, support evidence-based decision making, and encourage regional collaboration. ICIMOD delivers impact through its six regional programmes of Adaptation to Change, Transboundary Landscapes, River Basins, Cryosphere and Atmosphere, Mountain Environment Regional Information System, and Himalayan University Consortium. These regional programmes are supported by the four thematic areas of Livelihoods, Ecosystem Services, Water and Air, and Geospatial Solutions and underpinned by Knowledge Management and Communication. ICIMOD seeks to improve the lives and livelihoods of mountain women and men, now and for the future.

**2. Context of the Review**

After more than 30 years of growth in many dimensions, the Fifth QQR, covering the period of 2011 – 2015, is scheduled for the first half of the year 2016. It shall provide a timely opportunity to review past achievements and critical issues, the current work programme and to identify clear options for the future. The past QQRs covered the periods from 1985 to 1990, 1990 to 1994/95, 1995 to 2001, and 2001 to 2006, respectively. However, a mid-term review (MTR) was commissioned in 2010 for midterm course correction that covered the period of 2007 to 2010. The previous QQRs played important roles in assessing ICIMOD's contribution, functioning, and future directions.

The fifth QQR will also play an important role in defining and recommending directions for ICIMOD's strategic orientation after 2017.

The MTR of 2010 confirmed that ICIMOD had taken into consideration the recommendations made in the Quinquennial External Review 2006.

In consultation with regional member countries (RMCs) and other stakeholders, ICIMOD developed its Strategic Framework and Medium Term Action Plan III (MTAP III 2013–2017) that was approved by the board. The current strategic framework has identified six regional programmes, namely Adaptation to Change, Transboundary Landscapes, River Basins, Cryosphere and Atmosphere, Mountain Environment Regional Information System, and Himalayan University Consortium. The thematic focuses are Livelihoods, Water and Air, Ecosystem Services, and Geospatial Solutions, with Gender and Governance as cross cutting issues. Knowledge Management and Communication and Monitoring and Evaluation are key institutional functions for improving organizational performance and visibility. The Framework placed emphasis ICIMOD's niche as a regional intergovernmental organization, as a bridge between science, policy, and practice; strengthening its science base; and more emphasis on planning and monitoring impact.

During the implementation of MTAP III, a number of independent reviews were carried out by Germany, Sweden, Norway, Australia, and the UK, and more are planned in 2016. These reviews have influenced the implementation process and will also provide a good basis for the QQR assessment.

### **3. Objectives of the Review**

The purpose of the review is both to provide accountability to the Board, ICIMOD Support Group (ISG), and other stakeholders and to strengthen ICIMOD's functioning based on the conclusions and recommendations of the review. Thus the review will:

- 1) Assess the performance of ICIMOD based on its approved Strategic and Results Framework in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of results.
- 2) Provide recommendations of how ICIMOD can improve its strategic results framework and implementation plan (MTAP) in the future.

The review will cover ICIMOD's six strategic goals; priority actions and projected outcomes and outputs; means of achieving these through RMC engagement and

cooperation; partnerships, knowledge management and communication; and monitoring and evaluation.

#### 4. Questions for the Review

##### 4.1. Strategic Goals, Regional Programme Goals, Thematic Areas and Priority Actions

4.1.1 Comprehensively **assess and review** the performance of ICIMOD in achieving its **six strategic goals** and **regional programme goals** as defined in its Strategic Result Framework (SRF) and MTAP III.

4.1.2 Has ICIMOD addressed appropriately the **priority actions** for the region as outlined in the SRF?

- increased emphasis on outcome, impact, and learning
- further efforts to engage regional member countries (RMCs) on issues of regional importance, with attention to the overlap with country priorities
- ensuring high-quality solution-oriented research and knowledge products including position papers on emerging issues and new topics for the region
- significant improvement of communication and knowledge exchange within and outside the region
- collaboration with strategic partners in the RMCs to deliver programmes
- attention is given to planning, monitoring, and generating impact across programmes

4.1.3 What are all the **significant achievements** and factors that contributed to achieving the six strategic and regional programme goals?

4.1.4 Critically review the **key challenges and obstacles** that impede ICIMOD in achieving the strategic and regional programme goals.

4.1.5. Have the **inclusive** development priorities including **gender** been strategized and integrated sufficiently across ICIMOD's work?

4.1.6. To what extent has ICIMOD been able to implement the recommendations made by the MTR 2010?

4.1.7 Has ICIMOD's work contributed to strategic impacts (poverty reduction, reduced physical and social vulnerabilities, and improved ecosystem services)?

## **4.2. Complementarities, synergies, and added value**

4.2.1 Assess the **complementarities and synergies** with respect to different donor-funded programmes currently implemented by ICIMOD as part of the strategic results framework

4.2.2 Assess the **comparative advantage** of ICIMOD compared to other organizations working in the HKH region?

4.2.3 Where has ICIMOD added the most value in terms of regional programmatic approach, themes, and partnership building?

## **4.3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Governance**

4.3.1 Is ICIMOD effectively measuring its results and outcomes? Has it developed an effective **M&E system** which can serve the need for accountability and learning?

4.3.2 Have internal systems and **governance** mechanisms been supportive to deliver results (finance, KMC, partnership). This issue should be discussed in light of increased volumes and activities in the period.

## **4.5. Partnerships**

4.5.1 Critically assess the multi-stakeholder **partnership** of ICIMOD with RMC governments, CSOs, universities, research institutions, and the private sector and their contribution in realizing the ICIMOD SRF.

4.5.2 Has ICIMOD been able to adequately **strengthen** and engage strategically with these key stakeholders?

4.5.3 Has ICIMOD's work **contributed** to **regional cooperation between RMCs** and other actors? To what extent has this been possible? (Illustrated by means of some outstanding paradigms.)

4.5.4. Has ICIMOD been **effective** in terms of **policy influence** and **capacity building**, particularly with regard to RMCs? How can it be improved, if necessary?

## 4.6 Funding

4.6.1 Assess the funding scenarios for ICIMOD and make recommendations for future support and fundraising strategies

## 5. Methodology

The evaluators will mainly use more than ten external evaluations and review reports of the last three years. In addition, the following types of data and information will be used for the QQR.

1. ICIMOD available progress reports and M&E data
2. Interviews of ICIMOD key staff and partners
3. Selected field-based observations
4. Observations from relevant published materials and websites
5. If possible, comparative analysis of similar entities which are intergovernmental, regional, knowledge centres

## 6. Proposed Process and Timeline

The review will rely heavily on existing reviews, then fill in gaps with additional work including interviews and additional reviews.

The ICIMOD support group has formed a special committee for quality assurance and approval of all the final processes and product of the QQR. For the Fifth QQR, it has been decided to engage independent evaluation firm through competitive bidding process. The following process will be followed

S#	Process	Date
1	Draft ToR prepared and submitted	20 September 2015
2	Review and approval of the TOR by the ISG Committee	20 October 2015
3	Expression of Interest (EoI) Announced	20 November 2015

6	ISG and Board informed on the process	28 November 2015
4	EOIs received from various firms	31 January 2016
5	Assessments done by the QQR committee and four selected firms will be asked to submit a full proposal in a given format	10 February 2016
7	Full proposals received	10 March 2016
8	QQR committee proposes firm to be selected	20 March 2016
9	ISG selects one firm for the QQR	30 March 2016
10	All other evaluation firms are notified of the decision	30 March 2016
11	Inception meeting with QQR Committee/ ICIMOD/selected firm: Discussion on the TOR, expectations, quality, and timing	5 April 2016
12	Contracting process with the selected firm completed	15 April 2016
13	Inception report submitted	20 April 2016
14	Discussion of the inception report and approval/ disapproval by QQR Committee and ICIMOD	25 April 2016
15	Commence the QQR evaluation: Interviews and field visits	25April-25May2016
16	Presentation of initial findings of the QQR at the ISG and PAC joint meeting	15 June 2016
17	Feedback incorporated and final draft report shared with ICIMOD and ISG	15 July 2016
18	Final draft QQR report submitted to ISG, BOG, and ICIMOD	15 October 2016
19	ISG and BOG approve the report and recommendations	November 2016

## **7. Implementation Schedule**

The QQR implementation period will be within 40 days, which are described below as per stages of the review.

### **7.1. Inception Period - 8 days**

- Review of all documents, including existing review reports
- Interaction and discussion with key ICIMOD staff
- Prepare inception report
- Submit inception report to ICIMOD and QQR committee
- Approval of inception report and way forward by QQR committee

### **7.2. Field Interaction - 16 days**

- Meetings with QQR committee and ICIMOD staff
- Meetings with key ICIMOD partners
- Meeting with selected regional ICIMOD Board of Governors (BOG) members
- Meeting with selected ICIMOD Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) of the BOG and ICIMOD Support Group (ISG) members
- Visiting field implementation sites in three RMCs. ICIMOD will provide guidance to the selected firm to identify these sites/countries (Nepal will be one of them for budgetary reasons); the QQR committee will approve the choice.

### **7.3. Compilation and preparing reports - 6 days**

- Prepare initial draft and share for feedback
- Prepare presentation to ISG and PAC joint session (Team Leader will make a presentation)

### **7.4. Finalization of the Report - 10 days**

- Incorporate feedback and finalize the report
- Submit the report to ICIMOD and QQR committee
- Presentation of the findings to the Board and ISG

## **8. Reporting**

The QQR Team will report directly to the ISG committee for QQR on matters related to findings of the review. On operational matters, the QQR Team will report to ICIMOD and the focal point would be Mr Farid Ahmad, Head of Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, ICIMOD.

The following reports will be submitted during the course of the review:

1. Inception Report
2. Detailed Plan and Budget
3. First Draft QQR Report
4. Final Draft QQR Report