

SYMPOSIUM

# Rethinking tourism for resilient mountain development in the Hindu Kush Himalaya

27 September 2022 | 09:00–13:30 (NPT) | Kailash Hall, ICIMOD, Kathmandu

## About the event

On World Tourism Day, we are organising a symposium in collaboration with the Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA), and Community Homestay Network (CHN). The symposium aims to highlight the sustainability of tourism in mountain regions as a critical contributor to the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action agendas, and innovative solutions as an important lever in building the resilience of mountain destinations, businesses, and services in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region.

## Objectives

- Share current policies, practices, and science-based knowledge on the challenges and opportunities in promoting innovative solutions for future-proofing mountain tourism destinations, business, and services
- Promote regional learning through sharing of experiences and best practices
- Explore opportunities for harnessing innovative solutions and multistakeholder collaboration at the regional level

## Outcomes

- Sharing regional experiences, best practices and learning while promoting innovative actions for building resilient mountain destinations, business, and service
- Enhanced understanding about opportunities to harness innovative solutions and collaboration

## Background

Sustainable tourism has great potential to bring about transformative change in the HKH region. It is an important driver of socio-economic development through job creation, service export, investment, destination development, and marketing and promotion. Sustainable tourism provides inclusive spaces with huge opportunities for women and youth, thereby stemming outmigration, generating local jobs, and supporting small businesses and services. Sustainable tourism is therefore a sustainable development agenda, the means, and end of which, are its people.

However, mountain destinations and their people are facing multiple crises arising from climate change and the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The Global Risk Report 2022 ranks 'climate action failure' as the number one long-term threat with severe impacts over the next decade. The pandemic has exacerbated the issues further, as the impacts were widely felt in the tourism sector and its supply chains, bringing mountain economies to a standstill. The impacts of such crises were disproportionately felt by mountain tourism stakeholders – small businesses (MSMEs) and frontline workers, particularly women and youth.

Given this context, the future of sustainable tourism lies in the ability of the HKH countries and tourism stakeholders to innovate and think about a range of solutions, co-designed and co-developed through reconsidering and reengineering development and business approaches, and developing action plans that contribute to green, inclusive, and resilience building pathways.

# Agenda

Time (NPT)	Session
09:00	Registration
09:00–09:30	<p>Welcome remarks – <b>Izabella Koziell</b>, Deputy Director General, ICIMOD</p> <p>ICIMOD’s experience of responding to climate change impacts in the HKH region: Science and society interface – <b>Arun Bhakta Shrestha</b>, Regional Programme Manager, River Basins and Cryosphere, ICIMOD</p> <p>Nepal Mountaineering Association’s effort in sustainable mountain tourism in Nepal – <b>Nima Nuru Sherpa</b>, President, Nepal Mountaineering Association</p> <p>ICIMOD’s effort in sustainable mountain tourism in the Hindu Kush Himalaya – <b>Anu Kumari Lama</b>, Tourism Specialist, ICIMOD</p>
09:30–09:55	<p>Soft launch of innovative tourism products</p> <p><b>Community Homestay Network, Nepal</b></p> <p>Transboundary homestays in Kangchenjunga Landscape and red panda trail: Collaborative partnership perspectives – <b>Aayusha Prasain</b>, CEO and <b>Poonam Gupta Shrestha</b>, COO, CHN</p> <p>Product launch (Community homestay and red panda trail listing in CHN’s business platform)</p> <p>Way forward: Product viability and market linkages – <b>Rabi Sthapit</b>, Head, Department of Sales and HR, Royal Mountain Travel</p> <p><b>Beta Park Pvt., Ltd, Bhutan</b></p> <p>GreenHKH digital aggregator platform: Pioneering green tourism businesses in the HKH region – <b>Kezang</b>, CEO and <b>Damodar Adhikari</b>, Chief Technical Officer, Beta Park Pvt. Ltd., Bhutan</p> <p>Green tourism product launch (GreenHKH Website)</p>
09:55–10:15	<p><b>Statements</b></p> <p><b>Nima Nuru Sherpa</b>, President, NMA</p> <p><b>Izabella Koziell</b>, Deputy Director General, ICIMOD</p>
10:15–10:30	Group photo and tea break
10:30–11:45	<p><b>Sharing of best practices: Rethinking mountains and sustainable mountain tourism</b> (7 min each)</p> <p>Valuing tourism-water-GESI for green, inclusive, and resilient destination development in Dhankuta district – <b>Chintan Tamang</b>, Mayor, Dhankuta Municipality, Nepal</p> <p>Building climate resilient tourism business in Nepal: Nana’s journey from low land to mountain region of Nepal – <b>Vivek Pyakurel</b>, Managing Director, Nana Jungle Resort, Chitwan</p> <p>Prospects of homestay tourism in the Kangchenjunga Landscape, Bhutan: Private sector’s perspective – <b>Needup Wangdee</b>, All Bhutan Connection (ABC) Pvt. Ltd., Bhutan</p> <p>Youth leading tourism entrepreneurship through digital innovation: experience in promoting homestays in North Sikkim, India – <b>Winona Lepcha</b>, Manager, Yealbong Lee Homestay, Dzongu, Sikkim, India</p> <p>Sustainable tourism for livelihood recovery project: Building back better – <b>Mani Raj Lamichhane</b>, Director, NTB, Nepal</p> <p>Q &amp; A (40 min)</p>
11:45–12:20	<p><b>Key take-aways and way forward</b></p> <p><b>Nakul Chettri</b>, Regional Programme Manager, Transboundary Landscapes, ICIMOD</p> <p><b>Kul Prasad Rai</b>, CEO, NMA, Nepal</p> <p><b>Aayusha Prasain</b>, CEO, CHN, Nepal</p> <p><b>Chintan Tamang</b>, Mayor, Dhankuta Municipality, Nepal</p> <p><b>Damodar Adhikari</b>, Chief Technical Officer, Beta Park Pvt. Ltd., Bhutan</p> <p><b>Mani Raj Lamichhane</b>, Director, NTB</p>
12:20–12:30	Vote of thanks – <b>Tashi Dorji</b> , Programme Coordinator, Kangchenjunga Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KLCDI), ICIMOD
12:30–13:30	Lunch

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