

International conference on Sudurpashchim studies: Heritage, innovation, and transformation

Panel discussion: Inter-university collaboration for innovative research and education in Sudurpashchim Province

14 December 2022 | Mahendranagar, Kailali, Nepal

About the event

At the Meeting of Nepal's Country Chapter in Dhulikhel in December 2021, Amma Raj Joshi, Vice Chancellor of Far Western University, emphasised the need to attract knowledge think tanks to the Far-Western provinces of Nepal, co-create locally relevant solutions to harness the enormous potential for socio-economic development, and generate high quality workforce in the province. The 'International conference on Sudurpaschim studies: Heritage, innovation and transformation' being held in Mahendranagar from 12-14 December 2022 will provide a platform to deep dive into the aforementioned topics and harness inter-university collaboration for innovative research and higher education.

In this regard, the Himalayan University Consortium (HUC) is organising a panel discussion where panellists – mid/senior level research scholars, entrepreneurs, and university faculty members – will discuss and take stock of collaboration opportunities between Far Western University and other universities along with research partnerships with private sectors to co-create evidence-based solutions for socio-economic and environmental benefits. Panellists will deliberate on the importance of research-into-use and inter-university exchange within Nepal and across the HKH region. Further, the discussion will explore ways to expand and foster these collaborations for green, resilient, and inclusive economic development. The discussion is expected to identify priority areas of collaboration as well as existing or potential resources that can be mobilised.

Panellists will be guided by the following questions:

- How important is research in your respective organisations?
- How can research-into-use help in linking policy, practice, and science?
- What are some useful ways to mobilise resources for research?
- Why do universities, research centres, and private sectors in the same country and region need to collaborate?
- What are some concrete ways to expand and foster collaborative research between universities and other like-minded institutions?

The HUC Secretariat will be coordinating the organising process for this panel discussion.

Background

The Himalayan University Consortium is a network of 90 member universities in the eight Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) countries and outside of the HKH region. The Consortium aims to foster regional and international collaboration in innovative research and education for sustainable mountain futures in the region. In Nepal, six HUC members have formed a Country Chapter, focusing on the promotion of inter-university exchange of researchers, lecturers, and students within Nepal. This inter-university collaboration facilitates the flow of intellectual resources and creates opportunities for problem-based, solution-driven research which are practically useful for local economic development and resilience building thereby increasing the relevance and accountability of universities to the society, enterprises, and entrepreneurs. It also provides opportunity for inter-university collaboration on research-into-use and capacity development through peer learning and sharing for mainstreaming knowledge into the academic curriculum, community practice, and informed policy.

Under the Green Resilient Agricultural Productive Ecosystems (GRAPE) Field of Action (FA) 2 – action research – ICIMOD is collaborating with universities such as Agriculture and Forestry University in Rampur, Far Western University, Faculty of Agriculture in Tikapur and Mid-West University in Surkhet, to co-identify, co-design, and co-implement action research for generating evidence-based knowledge and make it available for wider use and application.

As part of the GRAPE project, ICIMOD is taking the lead in implementing Field of Action (FA) 2 – action research – in 19 municipalities across three agroecological zones in Karnali and Sudurpashchim provinces of Nepal. Through action research and production of knowledge, GRAPE FA 2 fosters climate-resilient food production and enhances digital access to farmers. GRAPE’s four fields of action – economic governance, action research, roll-out, and upscaling – aim to make agroecosystems more sustainable and climate resilient through innovation and capacity building.

GRAPE is jointly planned and financed by the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Tentative programme

Chair: Tri Ratna Bajracharya, HUC Steering Committee Member, Nepal Chapter

Facilitator: Chi Huyen Truong (Shachi), HUC-ICIMOD

Rapporteur: Erica Udas, ICIMOD

Time	Programme	Speakers
5 mins	Introduction of the chair and panellists Objectives of the session	Chi Huyen Truong (Shachi) Programme Coordinator, HUC, ICIMOD
10 mins	Setting the context	Kamal Aryal, Project Coordinator, GRAPE, ICIMOD
40 mins	Panel discussion Yagya Raj Pathak, Registrar, Far Western University Arjun Kumar Shrestha, Director, Directorate of Research, AFU, Rampur Nina Amatya Gorkhali, Senior Scientist, National Agriculture Research Council Sabnam Shivakoti, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development Sameer Newa, Managing Director, The Organic Valley and Sustainable organic business expert	
25 mins	Question and answer	
10 mins	Way forward and closing	Tri Ratna Bajracharya, HUC Steering Committee Member, Nepal Chapter



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