

Call for Proposal (CFP)

**Feasibility assessment for Integrated Climate
Adaptation Solutions for the Hindu Kush
Himalaya Region (HI-CAS)**

Strategic Group: Resilient Economies and Landscapes

ToR

About ICIMOD

The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region stretches 3,500 km across Asia, spanning eight countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. Encompassing high-altitude mountain ranges, mid-hills, and plains, the zone is vital for the food, water, and energy security of up to two billion people and is a habitat for countless irreplaceable species. It is also acutely fragile – and frontline to the impacts of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), based in Kathmandu, Nepal, is an international organisation established in 1983, that is working to make this critical region greener, more inclusive and climate resilient. For more information, read our [Strategy 2030](#) and explore our [website](#).

Background

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is inviting proposals from qualified firms to undertake a multi-disciplinary consultancy under the 'Integrated Climate Adaptation Solutions for the Hindu Kush Himalaya Region' (HI-CAS) project at ICIMOD funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) – Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). The project aims to improve climate-resilient, nature-positive livelihoods while strengthening the leadership and agency of rural women and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.

The project will be implemented through the adoption of locally tailored climate adaptation solutions that are responsive to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) – grounded in feminist and human rights-based methodologies – that place the rights, agency, and leadership of IPLCs at the centre. These evidence-informed Integrated Adaptation Solution Packages (IASPs) will combine springshed management, renewable energy technologies for power irrigation systems, and agrobiodiversity practices. They will be complemented by capacity building and knowledge sharing to drive institutional policy and action and to attract sustainable investments in climate action and development, particularly in the water, energy, and agrobiodiversity sectors, with a strong focus on the leadership of women and IPLCs.

The HI-CAS project will be implemented in two gewogs (blocks) in Bhutan – Punakha and Paro; two upazilas (sub-districts) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh – Bandarban and Khagrachari; and two municipalities in Nepal – Dhankuta and Roshi. Over its four-year duration, the project aims to benefit approximately 40,000 IPLCs and other vulnerable groups by reducing their exposure and sensitivity to climate change impacts while fostering ecosystem health and climate mitigation outcomes.

Objectives

This assignment aims to support the HI-CAS project by conducting detailed comprehensive assessments on GESI analysis and environmental safeguarding, with a focus on springshed management, renewable energy systems, and agrobiodiversity practices across six selected pilot sites (two in each country) in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal to inform the design, implementation, and scaling of IASPs. The key objectives of these assessments include:

1. Conduct environmental safeguarding assessments in identified pilot sites, to highlight potential environmental risks and develop mitigation measures for activities to be implemented at these pilot sites in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.
2. Undertake a comprehensive GESI analysis and develop a GESI strategy using feminist, participatory, and IPLC-centred methodologies and approaches, to ensure inclusive, implementation across all project components.

The assessments should include comprehensive needs analyses, site surveys, technical and cost-benefit analyses, and the development of implementation plans, with a strong focus on environmental and social safeguarding measures. Assessments should look at climate vulnerability, biodiversity, and potential environmental impacts of proposed interventions (e.g., solar-powered irrigation, recharge pits, agrobiodiversity practices), recommend mitigation measures, and define safeguarding indicators aligned with DFATD's and ICIMOD's policies.

Scope of the work

The environmental and safeguarding assessments component will include a needs assessment, site surveys/assessments, technical and cost-benefit analyses, and the development of tailored Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) with mitigation measures, aligned with ICIMOD and GAC standards.

The GESI component will involve reviewing relevant documents, engaging stakeholders (including women's groups and IPLCs), identifying barriers to inclusion, and developing a GESI-responsive strategy with clear, actionable recommendations on inclusive governance, capacity building, and implementation – ensuring alignment with GAC's Feminist International Assistance Policy and ICIMOD's social equity commitments.

A detailed scope of work is available in the links below:

- [ToR GESI Analysis and Strategy Development \(HI-CAS\)](#)
- [ToR Environmental Safeguarding Assessment \(HI-CAS\)](#)

Requirements

Specific requirements for the consultancy:

1. General qualifications of the firm

- Proven experience in conducting multidisciplinary feasibility assessments integrating environmental, technical, and social dimensions in climate adaptation or development projects.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience working in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region, particularly in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.
- Demonstrated capacity to integrate GESI in environmental or infrastructure design and planning.
- Familiarity with the environmental and social safeguarding policies of international development agencies, particularly GAC and ICIMOD.
- Ability to apply feminist and IPLC-centred participatory methodologies.
- Legally registered with valid certificates and licences to operate a business.

2. Team composition and expertise required

The consultancy firm must propose a multi-disciplinary team that includes, at a minimum:

1. Environmental safeguards specialist
 - Expertise in environmental assessments, including climate vulnerability, biodiversity, and risk mitigation planning.
 - Experience aligning with DFATD/GAC and ICIMOD safeguarding standards.
2. GESI expert
 - Demonstrated experience in conducting GESI analyses in climate adaptation, natural resource management, or rural development projects.
 - Strong understanding of feminist and participatory methodologies, Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), as well as Indigenous knowledge systems.
3. Socio-environmental researcher or facilitator (optional/additional)
 - Experience in stakeholder engagement, facilitation of focus group discussions, qualitative research, and validation workshops.
 - Experience working with IPLCs in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.

Proposal

Technical proposal

Applicants must include the following sections in the technical proposal:

1. Technical approach and methodology:

In this section, applicants should explain their understanding of the objectives of the assignment, approach to the services, and methodology to obtain the expected output.

2. Work plan

Applicants should include the main activities of the proposal, content and duration, milestones, delivery dates and a management and operation plan. The proposed work plan should be consistent with the technical approach and methodology.

3. Organisation and experts

Applicants should propose the structure and composition of their team, mentioning their qualifications and skills as requested in the team section. Applicants should list the main discipline of the assignment, the key expert responsible, and the proposed technical and support staff.

4. Relevant past experience

Applicants must include the past experience of their organisation and experts relevant to this request for proposals.

Financial proposal

The bidder should provide the financial quote with the breakdown of all the costs and include the tax in the budget (refer to the table provided below):

- Breakdown of the experts, number of days required, rate per day
- Breakdown of other costs, unit, quantity, rate per unit

Evaluation criteria

The technical proposal will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Maximum score	Details
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1. Technical proposal	45	Evaluation of the overall approach, understanding of the assignment, methodologies, and alignment with HI-CAS objectives.
1.1 Understanding of scope and objectives	10	Demonstrates clear understanding of HI-CAS goals, multi-disciplinary nature, cross-country context, and climate adaptation priorities.
1.2 Methodological soundness	15	Soundness, feasibility, and coherence of proposed methodology for environmental safeguarding and GESI strategy.
1.3 Integration of cross-cutting themes	10	Integration of feminist, participatory, rights-based, IPLC-informed, and GESI-responsive approaches.
1.4 Work plan and timeline	10	Realistic timeline, sequencing of tasks, stakeholder engagement plan, and responsiveness to deliverables and reporting schedule.
2. Team composition and expertise	30	Assessment of proposed team's qualifications, diversity, and capacity to carry out multi-country, multidisciplinary tasks.
2.1 Relevant experience of team members	15	Relevant qualifications and prior experience of key team members in environmental safeguards, GESI analysis, and stakeholder engagement.
2.2 Regional experience	5	Experience working in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal, with specific understanding of IPLCs, gender, and environmental contexts.
2.3 Multidisciplinary approach	5	Evidence of effective collaboration across technical, environmental, and social domains.
2.4 Gender and inclusion balance in team	5	Gender-balanced team composition and inclusion of women and local/IPLC experts in key roles.
3. Past performance and capacity	15	Institutional experience with similar assignments and capacity to deliver results.
3.1 Experience with similar assignments	10	Demonstrated success in similar projects (e.g., integrated feasibility studies, gender and climate assessments, donor-funded projects).
3.2 Organisational/institutional capacity	5	Capacity of firm or individual to manage timelines, quality assurance, and donor/stakeholder coordination.
4. Financial proposal	10	Assessment of financial reasonableness and value for money.
4.1 Cost-effectiveness	10	Justification of cost, detailed breakdown, alignment with deliverables, and overall value for the budget proposed.
Total	100	Proposals must score at least 70 overall and 50% in Technical proposal section (i.e., at least 22.5 out of 45) to be eligible for financial evaluation.

The service provider will be selected on the basis of the highest cumulative weightage scores obtained in the technical and financial proposals using the following formula:

- Technical score = Score obtained based on technical proposal (out of 100)
- Financial score = Score obtained based on financial proposal (out of 100)
- Total score = 70% of technical proposal + 30% of financial proposal

The service provider scoring the maximum score based on the criteria will be awarded the consultancy. However, **the service provider should score at least 60 out of 100 in the technical proposal to qualify for financial evaluation.**

Duration

The consultancy is expected to be completed by 15 October 2025 from the contract start date. The proposal should include a workplan and timeline aligned with ICIMOD'S schedule and milestones.

Reporting and supervising

The consultancy firm will report to the Senior Project Coordinator, HI-CAS, who will facilitate the sharing of compiled inputs from the technical team – GESI Lead, Action Area Economies Lead, and Biodiversity and Ecosystem lead at ICIMOD. The consultancy firm will also work in close collaboration with the HI-CAS project implementation team and ICIMOD's project partners in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.

All reports and deliverables must be in English. The consultancy firm should have the capacity to conduct field research in Bangla, Dzongkha, and Nepali languages and with local dialects, or partner with local facilitators who can.

ICIMOD's core values

Our core values are integrity, neutrality, relevance, inclusiveness, openness, and ambition. These values are an expression of our culture and are central to the guiding beliefs and principles of our work and behaviour. Our core values will lie at the heart of ICIMOD operations and delivery. They will underpin everything we do and frame how we work with our partners. They reflect our founding intentions and the balances we seek to hold, while equipping ourselves for the future.

Ethical and safeguarding compliance

The consulting institution/firm will be required to take all the necessary actions to handle the collected data responsibly (see [ICIMODDataSharingPolicy](#)) to ensure data privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. The firm needs to adhere to the in-country regulations while executing the project.

The firm must ensure full compliance with ICIMOD'S environmental and social safeguarding (ESS) policy, including free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) where applicable.

The firm must adhere to ethical research principles with IPLCs, ensuring participatory, inclusive, and respectful engagement processes.

Our commitment to the prevention of sexual harassment

ICIMOD is committed to the prevention and redressal of sexual harassment at the workplace and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults, and expects all staff,

consulting institutions/firms, and volunteers to share this commitment. We will do everything possible to ensure that only those who are suitable to work within our values are selected to work for us.

Confidentiality/non-disclosure

All material issued in connection with this ToR shall remain the property of ICIMOD and shall be used only for the purpose of this procurement exercise. All information provided shall be either returned to ICIMOD or securely destroyed by unsuccessful applicants at the conclusion of the procurement exercise.

During the performance of the assignment or at any time after expiry or termination of the Agreement, the consulting institution/firm shall not disclose to any person or otherwise make use of any confidential information which they have obtained or may obtain during this agreement relating to a partner organisation/ICIMOD, the respondents or otherwise. The consulting institution/firm will be required to sign a non-disclosure/confidentiality agreement as part of their undertaking of this work.

Intellectual property, copyright, and ownership of all prepared information

The consulting institution/firm shall retain all rights to pre-existing (background) intellectual property or materials used by the firm in the delivery of this study. All arising intellectual property, ideas, materials, processes, or processes formed in contemplation, in the course of, or as result of this study shall be passed to ICIMOD without restriction.

The consulting institution/firm shall warrant that all arising intellectual property, materials and/or products produced in pursuit of this study shall be original and shall not infringe on any third party's claim. All technical or business information, in whatever medium or format, originated, collated, or prepared by or for the consulting institution/firm in contemplation, in the course of, or as result of this assignment shall be transferred to ICIMOD without restriction on completion and shall not be used by the firm for any other purpose without express written permission of ICIMOD.

Copyright of all arising documents, data, information, or reports produced by the consulting institution/firm under this agreement shall belong to ICIMOD and will be passed to ICIMOD without restriction. Such documents, data, information, and reports shall not be used by the firm for any other purpose other than in conjunction with this assignment, without the express written permission of ICIMOD's Head of Programme Funding.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and safeguarding

ICIMOD's human resource selection process is based on the qualifications and competence of the applicants. As an employer, ICIMOD is committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, and offers equal opportunities to applicants from all backgrounds and walks of life, including but not limited to gender, age, national origin, religion, race, caste, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or social status. ICIMOD strongly encourages applications from all eligible applicants, especially women, from all parts of the HKH region.

ICIMOD is dedicated to establishing and upholding a safe and nurturing work environment, where all its employees can participate fully and meaningfully without fear of violence, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Any type of abuse or harassment, including sexual misconduct [including child abuse], by our staff, representatives, or stakeholders is not condoned or tolerated.

Method of application

The completed proposal should be submitted through email to Consultancy.int@icimod.org by 11:59 PM (Nepal Standard Time), on 20 August 2025. Proposals must be submitted as two separate files: one for the Technical Proposal and one for the Financial Proposal.

Eligibility:

- A single firm with expertise in multiple relevant sectors (covering all components under one firm), or
- A joint venture (two firms, with one serving as the lead and the other as a participant).

Proposal Requirements:

1. Technical Proposal
 - Demonstrates understanding of the Terms of Reference (ToR)
 - Details the required knowledge, technical skills, experience, and capability
2. Financial Proposal
 - Quoted in either USD or local currency
 - Provides a detailed cost breakdown, inclusive of all applicable taxes
3. Supporting Documents
 - Up-to-date CVs and licensed certificates of all partners and team members
 - At least two references or recommendation letters from similar past assignments
 - Audit reports and tax clearance certificates for the last three years
 - Valid registration, membership, and affiliation certificates for identity verification

