

The Hindu Kush Himalaya Innovation Challenge for Entrepreneurs (HKH - ICE 1.0)

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in collaboration with the Global Resilience Partnership (GRP), launched the Hindu Kush Himalaya Innovation Challenge for Entrepreneurs (HKH-ICE) in November 2024. This is an initiative by ICIMOD's HI-REAP programme, funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

Twelve business startups won the challenge with their innovative, scalable solutions that enhance the resilience of communities and ecosystems across the HKH region.

Problem and climate risks addressed

The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH), known as the water tower of Asia, provides ecological services essential to the lives and livelihoods of approximately two billion people. It is the largest repository of ice outside the polar regions and a custodian of four global biodiversity hotspots.

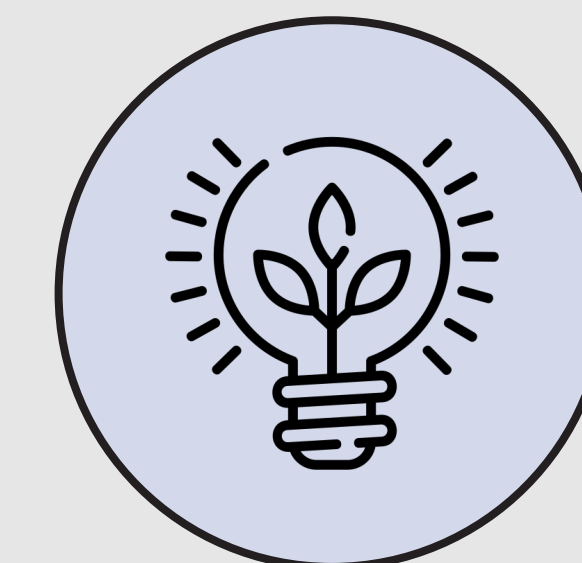
The HKH region faces unprecedented climate challenges, including:

- rapid warming, which is twice the global average
- decline in biodiversity and degraded ecosystems
- increased glacier melt and water scarcity, resulting in lower agricultural productivity and a rapid decrease in traditional livelihoods
- unpredictable hazards such as landslides, flashfloods, and drought

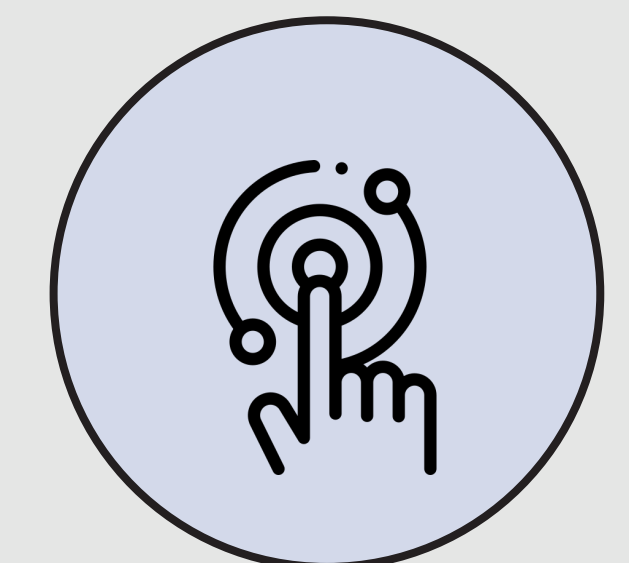
These challenges are exacerbated by financing gaps and a lack of support for existing scalable, sustainable solutions to ensure mountain resilience.

Solution and innovation

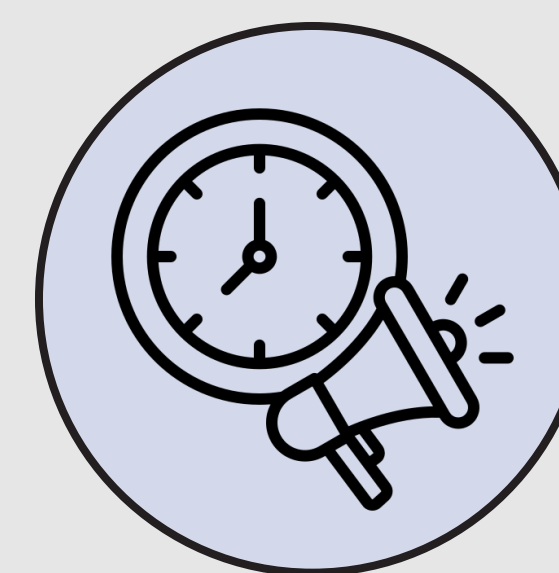
HKH ICE included portfolio of scalable, market-ready solutions that enhance resilience of mountain communities



**Advancing
green growth**



**Digital
innovation**



**Early-stage
entrepreneurs**

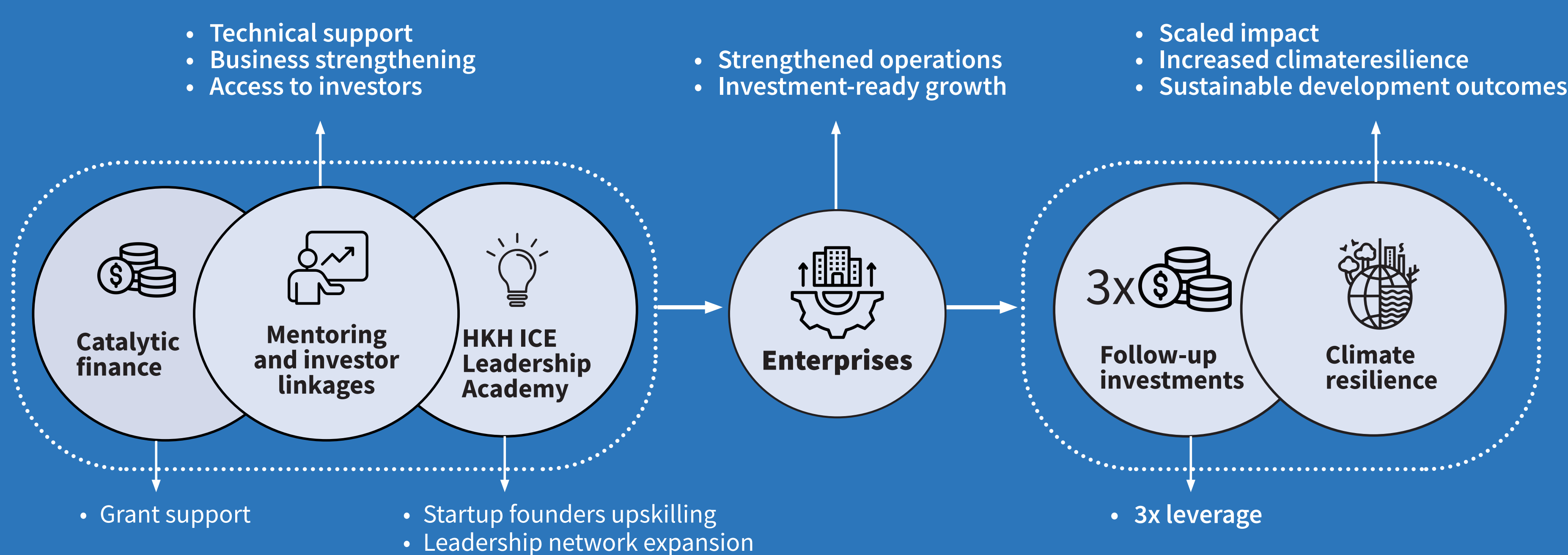


**Nature-based
solutions**



**Climate-resilient
livelihoods**

The process



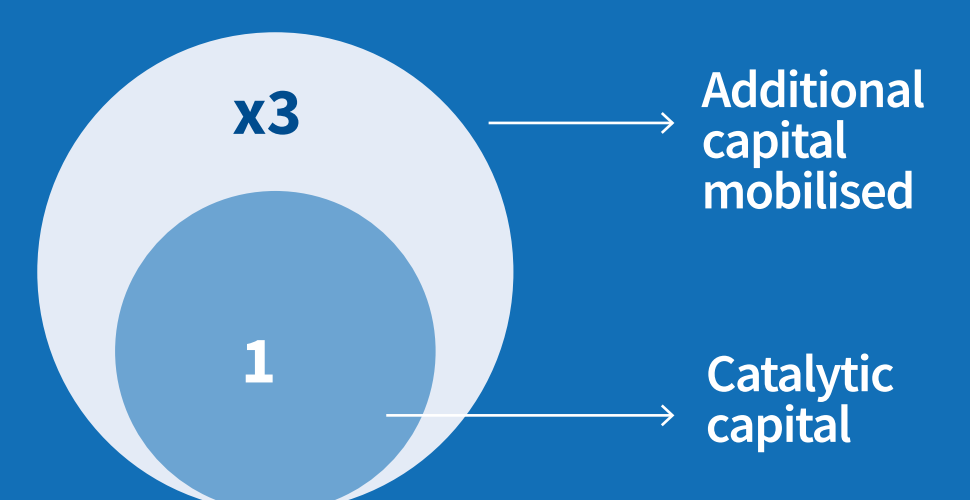
Impact

- Demonstrated strong **scaling potential in mountain sectors**
- Increased resilience outcomes, such as **risk reduction, ecosystem services, and livelihood resilience**
- Early-stage support unlocked **private and public capital**

11,600+
people benefited

**USD
961,076**
mobilized in private investment

Catalytic capital leverage ratio



Targets

- Communities from Bangladesh (Chittagong Hill Tracts), Bhutan, India (Himalayan States), and Nepal
- Priority sector: resilient agriculture, water security, and sustainable tourism

Resources/government systems used

- Several innovations mainstreamed through public systems
- Engaged with line ministries of agriculture, rural development, irrigation, local governments and municipalities, and policy and standards bodies (e.g. forestry, construction, textiles), public universities, and research institutions



HKH-ICE offers a replicable model for scaling sustainable mountain-based climate enterprises.

Join us to add more value towards green, inclusive, and resilient HKH.

Partnerships developed

HKH ICE opened up pathways for public-private adaptation finance

