ICIMOD

ICIMOD **PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY**: 2025–2030

Partnerships for Impact: Moving Mountains Together

Endorsed by the ICIMOD Board of Governors
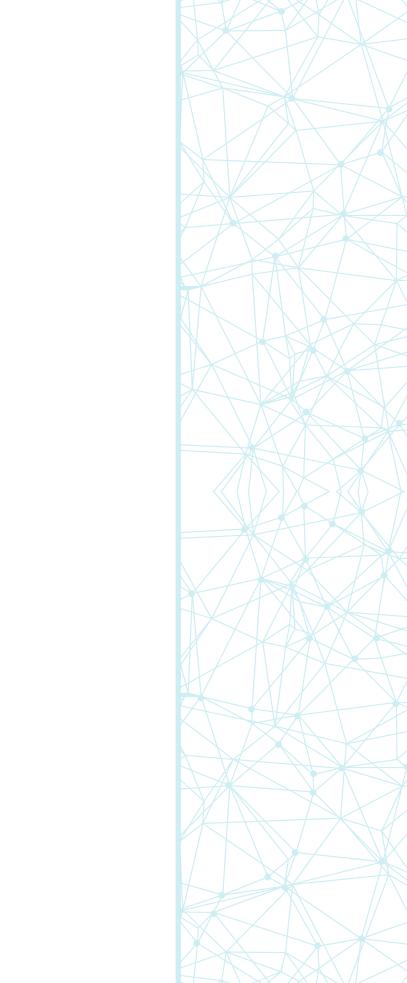April 2025

TABLE OF **CONTENTS**

ABBREVIATIONS

AAL	Action Area Lead
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AF	Adaptation Fund
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BoG	Board of Governors
CFP	Country Focal Point
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GCF	Green Climate Fund
HKH	Hindu Kush Himalaya
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IM	Intervention Manager
ISG	ICIMOD Support Group
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LoA	Letter of Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTAP	Medium-Term Action Plan
PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
PA	Programme Assistant
PO	Programme Officer
RMC	Regional Member Country
SAARC	South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation
SACEP	South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme
SAWEN	South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network
SMC	Senior Management Committee
SMI	Senior/Intervention Manager
SGH	Strategic Group Head
SOP	Standard Operating Principles
SRPBD	Strategic Results, Partnerships and Business Development unit

CONTEXT

The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) is a globally significant region, where the impacts of climate and environmental change are unfolding rapidly. As an intergovernmental organisation with a unique regional mandate, ICIMOD has been playing a pivotal role for over four decades in supporting our eight Regional Member Countries (RMCs) – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan – to respond to these complex, interconnected challenges. We do this through driving innovation and scaling of solutions, fostering regional cooperation and shared action, informing policy and decision making, and strengthening institutional capability and individual capacity across the region.

Our 2030 Strategy: Moving Mountains and fifth Medium-Term Action Plan (MTAP V) outline bold, high-level ambitions that are enshrined within ICIMOD's Long-Term Impact Areas, which align directly with our RMCs' multiple commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Paris Agreement, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), amongst others. However, the scale and urgency of the transformation required far exceeds what ICIMOD can achieve alone. Meeting the region's critical needs and the high expectations placed upon us — by governments, partners, and the people of the HKH – requires deeper, more sustainable, and results-driven partnerships.

As we move towards 2030, partnerships are not just an enabler – they are fundamental to delivering sustainable outcomes and impacts for the HKH region and its communities. To make this happen, we will need to adapt and, in some cases, refine our partnership approaches, structures, and processes. This Strategy lays out what ICIMOD needs to do to make this happen.

2

RATIONALE

ICIMOD's vision of a greener, more inclusive, and climate-resilient Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) cannot be realised without deeper, broader, and stronger public-sector engagement, and more focused partnerships for impact, as set out in our Strategy 2030. These two areas are among several strategic shifts identified in the Strategy 2030, reaffirming our commitment to building meaningful, purpose-driven, and sustained partnerships with key actors across and beyond the region.

These actors must include, first and foremost, government nodal ministries of our RMCs – the primary points of contact and delivery. In addition, we should engage more with a wider range of relevant public-sector agencies, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and academic institutions that are closely connected to the HKH. At the same time, it remains essential to nurture strong relationships with funding partners and to explore more effective ways of engaging with the private sector and investors.

To strengthen these partnerships, ICIMOD must better align its support with the national and sub-national priorities of its RMCs. This calls for deeper, more systematic engagement and a more nuanced understanding of national contexts, priorities, and development plans. Regular and sustained collaboration across a broader spectrum of government institutions will enable ICIMOD to co-design and deliver more integrated and targeted solutions, fostering national ownership and ensuring lasting impact. Through this Partnership Strategy, ICIMOD aims to focus its effort equitably across the RMCs, as circumstances allow.

This strategy must also improve how we identify and collaborate with partners that can both strengthen ICIMOD's thought leadership and elevate the voices and capacities of the many individuals, institutions, and networks we work with across the HKH – including women and other disadvantaged groups. These partnerships may include working with organisations that channel innovations through ICIMOD for broader regional benefit, or those who help catalyse advances in science and knowledge – by closing data and information gaps, introducing novel insights, or applying advanced analytical methods, and decision-support tools and technologies.

To achieve wider-scale impact with relatively modest resources, it is vital that this strategy helps us identify best-fit partners – those that can effectively link us to communities, as well as those that can contribute to shaping enabling policy and legal environments for systemic change and replication. It should also guide us in engaging with the right funding and investment partners, allowing us to better leverage our knowledge value chain to mobilise resources from bilateral donors, global funds, international financial institutions, and the private sector, for the benefit of the HKH.

Ultimately, we require a practical, forward-looking Partnership Strategy that enables ICIMOD to fully harness its unique regional position, inclusive governance structure, and extensive networks. Only then can we catalyse the collective action needed to address the unprecedented challenges facing the HKH, and seize the opportunities open to the region.

To realise this ambition, this strategy outlines a set of actions required to consolidate, adapt, and transform ICIMOD's approach to partnerships – drawing on lessons from our experience and our partners. This renewed approach will be guided by a set of core partnership principles (see Box 1) and a clear set of objectives (Section 5.0) that define how we evolve our ways of working, underpinned by a clearer, more refined understanding of what partnership means for ICIMOD (Section 3.0 and 6.0), and how we deliver it in practice.

3

ICIMOD'S **PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES**

ICIMOD's approach to partnerships is anchored in our core institutional values – integrity, neutrality, relevance, inclusiveness, openness, and ambition. These values are not only central to who we are and how we operate, but they must also underpin how we engage with our partners and guide the way we work together to deliver meaningful, lasting impact across the HKH. To operationalise these values in the context of our partnerships, we have defined a set of partnership principles that translate these values into practice. These principles provide a clear and consistent foundation for how we initiate, nurture, and sustain partnerships across the region and beyond – ensuring coherence, consistency, and shared purpose across all our partnership efforts.

INTEGRITY AND ALIGNMENT

ICIMOD builds partnerships with organisations whose values, credibility, and standing align with our institutional mandate and regional responsibilities. We work together to uphold neutrality and strengthen trust with our RMCs, fostering collaboration that supports credible, apolitical, and evidence-based engagement across the region.

SHARED PURPOSE AND MUTUAL BENEFIT

ICIMOD partners with organisations that share our vision and align with regional priorities. We seek partnerships and collaborations that are strategically relevant and mutually beneficial – combining complementary strengths, resources, and knowledge to create value, accelerate impact, and deliver context-specific solutions.

MUTUAL RESPECT

Our partnerships are rooted in trust, transparency, and mutual understanding. We engage as equal collaborators – acknowledging the expertise and contributions of each partner and working together in a spirit of openness and shared responsibility. This fosters respectful, responsive, and productive relationships across sectors and geographies.

SHARED INVESTMENT AND OWNERSHIP

ICIMOD values partnerships where all parties contribute meaningfully toward shared objectives. Contributions may be financial, technical, institutional, or knowledge based. We recognise joint investment, in-kind collaboration, and resource pooling as important ways to strengthen ownership, amplify impact, and support long-term sustainability.

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

ICIMOD is committed to partnerships that extend beyond short-term project cycles. We seek to build lasting relationships that promote sustained impact, regional ownership, and resilience. Through long-term engagement, we aim to deepen trust, scale successful models, and strengthen systems that lead to lasting benefits for mountain communities.

4

UNDERSTANDING ICIMOD'S
INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

ICIMOD's mission – to build and share knowledge that drives regional policy and action and to attract investment that enables the diverse countries and communities of the HKH to transition to greener, more inclusive, and climate-resilient development – is inherently collaborative. Our ability to deliver meaningful outcomes and impacts is intrinsically linked to the strength and effectiveness of our partnerships. To achieve this, ICIMOD engages with a wide range of actors and institutions through different types of relationships. These vary in their scope, intent and duration:

- **Scope** – The area(s) of collaboration, such as knowledge generation, joint research, policy development, regional cooperation, or capacity building.

- **Intent** – The desired outcomes, such as triggering policy change, scaling innovations, or establishing regional agreements.

- **Duration** – Whether the engagement is unique, short term, or part of a longer-term collaboration.

By clearly articulating these dimensions founded on the needs and priorities of the RMCs, as defined in our Strategy 2030 and MTAPs, ICIMOD ensures that each relationship is purpose driven, strategically aligned, and designed to deliver results.

4.1   WHAT IS A PARTNERSHIP

ICIMOD engages in partnerships that are formal or voluntary collaborations grounded in shared objectives and aligned values. These partnerships span a spectrum – from short-term, issue- or project-based collaborations to long-term strategic alliances. Partners contribute complementary strengths, networks, expertise, and resources. They are drawn from a diverse array of institutions (see Section 6.1) and play a critical role in jointly delivering outcomes across ICIMOD's five functional areas (see Section 6.2). A partner is, therefore, an organisation

or entity that collaborates with ICIMOD through a mutually agreed arrangement to achieve shared goals and jointly deliver outcomes and impacts.

Whilst all partnerships require thoughtful consideration of scope, intent and duration, it is also important to recognise the differing levels of strategic importance and contribution among partners. Some partnerships are intrinsically longer term – particularly those with RMC governments, intergovernmental bodies (such as UN agencies or regional platforms) and long-standing academic and non-governmental institutions. These partnerships form the foundation of ICIMOD's long-term engagement, typically carrying mandates that relate directly to HKH priorities and sharing ownership for long-term outcomes and impacts. These relationships are typically formalised through partnership instruments such as Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), Letters of Agreement (LoAs), or Letters of Intent (LoIs), supported by joint work plans.

By contrast, ICIMOD also engages in short-term partnerships. These collaborations – such as joint research, pilot implementation, or training – are time bound and narrower in scope. While they may not initially entail broader strategic alignment, they offer opportunities for mutual learning and trust building and may evolve into longer-term partnerships over time.

It is important to distinguish these **partnerships** from **contractual agreements**. A contractual agreement is a transactional arrangement in which an individual or organisation is engaged by ICIMOD to deliver a specific product or service under clearly defined terms and conditions. These engagements are governed by service contracts and do not involve shared strategic objectives and focus solely on the delivery of discrete outputs – such as a digital platform or scoping study. Contractors usually involve consultancy firms, individual consultants, but can also involve NGOs, research organisations, or private companies.

By clearly delineating these types of institutional relationships, ICIMOD ensures that each engagement is purpose driven, strategically aligned, and structured to maximise impact.

5

PARTNERSHIP **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS**

This Partnership Strategy outlines four strategic objectives and includes key actions to guide how we engage, manage, and grow our partnerships. These objectives and actions are guided by the partnership-specific commitments made in our MTAP V (Annex 3.3).

First, we aim to **deepen and diversify partnerships** to jointly deliver impact, ensuring a balanced and effective partner portfolio. Second, we will **strengthen ICIMOD's relevance and ownership among RMCs** through more strategic alignment and engagement. Third, we **seek to reinforce and expand mountain alliances** to attract greater investment and collective action for the HKH. Finally, we will **strengthen internal systems and approaches** to ensure our partnership practices are efficient, digital, adaptive, and fit for purpose.

OBJECTIVE 1 FORGE MORE DIVERSE AND PURPOSEFUL PARTNERSHIPS TO DELIVER SHARED OUTCOMES

ICIMOD will strengthen and diversify its partnership portfolio to better reflect regional priorities and engage a broader range of actors across sectors, disciplines, and geographies. Through more purposeful collaboration, we aim to co-create knowledge, leverage new insights, scale impactful solutions, influence policy, leverage innovation, and stimulate regional cooperation.

ACTION 1.1   ASSESS AND ALIGN THE CURRENT PARTNERSHIP PORTFOLIO

Use clear, strategic criteria – guided by the Partnership Principles – to review existing partnerships, identify alignment gaps, and highlight opportunities for diversification and greater impact.

ACTION 1.2   EXPAND AND ENGAGE A BROADER RANGE OF PARTNERS

Building on gaps identified in the portfolio review, identify and engage new partners across sectors, disciplines, and geographies who can address these gaps. This includes mapping potential collaborators, pinpointing key partnership opportunities, and establishing appropriate incentive mechanisms to encourage their incorporation into ICIMOD's initiatives.

ACTION 1.3　APPLY CONSISTENT GUIDELINES TO STRENGTHEN PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Implement engagement guidelines, based on ICIMOD's Partnership Principles, to guide partner selection, onboarding, delivery, and mutual learning – ensuring shared purpose and accountability.

ACTION 1.4　EMBED PARTNERSHIPS INTO INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND CAPACITY

Integrate partnership objectives and performance metrics into annual planning, budgeting, and reporting processes, and strengthen staff capabilities to manage diverse, high-impact collaborations.

ACTION 1.5　PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE THROUGH SECONDMENTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Facilitate placements from regional and global partners into ICIMOD, to strengthen networks, foster knowledge exchange and mutual learning, and deepen strategic collaboration.

ACTION 1.6　ENABLE JOINT LEARNING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Host learning exercises and partnership forums to strengthen relationships, share insights, and continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of collaboration.

OBJECTIVE 2　STRENGTHEN ICIMOD'S RELEVANCE AND OWNERSHIP AMONG REGIONAL MEMBER COUNTRIES

ICIMOD aims to deepen its engagement with RMCs by aligning its work more closely with national and regional priorities and strengthening relationships with public and sectoral agencies. This includes establishing effective coordination mechanisms, expanding the role of Country Focal Points (CFPs) – ICIMOD staff members who serve as a central point of contact for ICIMOD activities within each country, facilitating coordination with various stakeholders – deepening understanding of national priorities and plans, and broadening engagement with a wider range of government stakeholders. Through these efforts, ICIMOD seeks to reinforce its role as a trusted partner and convener, ensuring that its work is responsive to the needs and commitments of the RMCs.

ACTION 2.1   ESTABLISH COORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR STRONGER COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT

Build and strengthen mechanisms to enhance connection and communication between ICIMOD and relevant public and sectoral agencies in RMCs – such as establishing country coordination committees and appointing desk officers.

ACTION 2.2   ALIGN PROGRAMMES WITH NATIONAL PLANS AND STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF COUNTRY FOCAL POINTS

Ensure ICIMOD's initiatives align with the policies, plans, and commitments of RMCs, adding tangible value to national priorities. CFPs will take on a more prominent and active role in supporting this alignment by further improving coordination and deepening engagement with key government actors.

ACTION 2.3   ENGAGE SENIOR POLICY FELLOWS OR CHAMPIONS FOR POLICY INFLUENCE

Identify and appoint high-level policy fellows or champions in RMCs to advocate for ICIMOD's mission, build visibility, and promote policy alignment at national and regional levels.

ACTION 2.4   MOBILISE NEW AND ALTERNATIVE FINANCING FOR JOINT INITIATIVES

Leverage new and innovative sources of finance to support collaborative programmes, enhance long-term sustainability, and reduce reliance on traditional funding streams.

ACTION 2.5   BROADEN GOVERNMENTAL ENGAGEMENT ACROSS CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SECTORS

Expand ICIMOD's relationships with a wider set of government representatives, including focal points for major climate and development finance mechanisms [e.g., Adaptation Fund (AF) Green Climate Fund (GCF), Global Environment Facility (GEF)], to ensure more inclusive and cross-sectoral engagement.

OBJECTIVE 3 LEVERAGE STRATEGIC ALLIANCES TO STIMULATE ACTION AND MOBILISE FINANCE

ICIMOD will strengthen and expand its network of regional and global alliances to amplify the mountain agenda, attract climate and development finance, and enable the scaling of impactful solutions across the HKH. By deepening collaboration with existing partners and forging new alliances, ICIMOD aims to position the HKH as a priority region for investment in climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, air quality management, and sustainable development.

ACTION 3.1 REINVIGORATE AND EXPAND STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

Strengthen existing partnerships and identify new alliances that align with ICIMOD's mission, enhancing collective advocacy and resource mobilisation efforts.

ACTION 3.2 ESTABLISH COORDINATION MECHANISMS WITH ALLIANCES

Develop structured communication and coordination platforms to ensure cohesive action and shared objectives among alliance members.

ACTION 3.3 IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE NEW STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

Explore and establish partnerships with emerging regional and global alliances that align with ICIMOD's mission. Focus on collaborations that enhance advocacy, resource mobilisation, and enabling the scaling of green, inclusive and resilient mountain development initiatives.

ACTION 3.4 MOBILISE CLIMATE AND DEVELOPMENT FINANCE THROUGH ALLIANCES

Leverage alliances to access new and alternative financing opportunities, facilitating joint initiatives that promote sustainable mountain development in the HKH.

OBJECTIVE 4 STRENGTHEN SYSTEMS AND APPROACHES FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

ICIMOD will modernise its partnership management approaches by streamlining processes, embracing digital solutions, and enhancing internal capacities. This includes accelerating partner engagement processes, updating operational guidelines, strengthening communication mechanisms, and promoting more collaborative monitoring and evaluation – while also building the capacities of ICIMOD and its partners on partnership management.

ACTION 4.1 STREAMLINE AND DIGITISE PARTNERSHIP PROCESSES FOR EFFICIENCY

Revise and optimise procedures for identifying, selecting, and formalising partnerships to reduce administrative bottlenecks and accelerate collaboration. This includes developing standardised templates, clearer guidelines, and decision-making frameworks to ensure a more efficient and transparent partnership process. Recognising the varying durations and scopes of partnerships, ICIMOD will also adapt its processes to ensure flexibility and efficiency.

To further enhance efficiency, digitise the partnership formalisation and management systems. Implementing digital tools and platforms will enable ICIMOD to track, manage, and implement collaborations more transparently and effectively, aligning with best practices in partner management.

ACTION 4.2 UPDATE PARTNERSHIP STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS

Regularly revise existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and partnership instruments to reflect evolving needs and best practices. This will ensure clarity in roles, responsibilities, and processes, fostering more effective and accountable partnerships.

ACTION 4.3   **IMPLEMENT A ROBUST MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING SYSTEM FOR PARTNERSHIPS**

Establish a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework for Partnerships in coordination with respective Units, update MEL requirements in respective agreements, and establish processes that enable joint assessment of partnership performance, outcomes, and impact. Regular evaluations should also be commissioned to acquire independent views on performance in addition to being used to inform strategic decisions and continuous improvement in partnership management.

ACTION 4.4   **BUILD CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT**

Conduct targeted training and capacity-building initiatives for ICIMOD staff and partners. This will enhance skills in partnership development, negotiation, management, and evaluation, ensuring more effective collaborations.

6

TYPOLOGY OF PARTNERS

ICIMOD distinguishes its partners in two ways:

• By the **institutional nature** of the organisation

• By the **functional role** they play in advancing ICIMOD's four Impact Pathways, as outlined in our Theory of Change

6.1   **PARTNERS BY INSTITUTIONAL NATURE**

i   **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:**

National, sub-national, and municipal bodies, as well as parliamentary committees. These entities are in a position to integrate ICIMOD's knowledge into policy, planning, and investment. They include our nodal partners in each RMC, but also a wide array of other government departments and agencies, both regional and outside of the region.

ii   **CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs):**

NGOs, international NGOs (INGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), and Indigenous and disadvantaged groups that drive community engagement, advocacy, and grassroots implementation.

iii   **REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS:**

Regional cooperation bodies like Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), and other entities that facilitate cross-border collaboration, policy harmonisation, and transboundary cooperation.

iv   **ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS:**

Universities, research institutes, educational institutions, and think tanks that provide scientific expertise, data, and research support to strengthen evidence-based decision-making and capacity building.

v   **DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS:**

Multilateral agencies, international financial institutions [e.g. Asian Development Bank (ADB), UN agencies, World Bank] bilateral aid agencies, and philanthropic foundations that provide financial resources, technical expertise, capacity building, and policy support aligned with HKH priorities.

vi   **INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES:**

Agencies like Future Earth, Global Landscapes Forum, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the Mountain Partnership, which enable global collaboration, knowledge sharing, and advocacy to position HKH issues in international agendas.

vii   **MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION ORGANISATIONS:**

National, regional, and international media, environmental journalism networks, and science communicators that amplify ICIMOD's impact through awareness campaigns, research dissemination, and policy advocacy.

viii   **PRIVATE-SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS AND BUSINESS INCUBATORS:**

Agencies from the private sector that promote innovation, investment, and green entrepreneurship to drive sustainable solutions.

6.2   PARTNERS BY FUNCTIONAL ROLE

ICIMOD partners classified according to the primary function they play in advancing our results delivery are in line with the four Impact Pathways outlined in our Theory of Change: Innovation and Scaling, Regional Cooperation, Policy, and Capability. This functional typology helps ensure that partnerships are purpose driven, outcome oriented, and aligned with the type of support ICIMOD needs to deliver long-term, systems-level change in the HKH.

Each category below reflects a distinct contribution that partners make in enabling innovation (i.e. contributing new insights, technologies and approaches), expanding adoption and scaling (i.e. co-developing and expanding solutions for wider adoption), shaping policies (i.e. informing and influencing policy frameworks), regional cooperation (i.e. facilitating dialogue and collaboration on shared transboundary challenges) and capability (i.e. strengthening institutional capability and individual capacity) across the region.

i   KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION PARTNERS

These partners support the co-development, testing, and refinement of research, tools, and approaches that respond to emerging regional challenges. They contribute new insights, enable cross-disciplinary collaboration, and often bridge traditional and scientific knowledge systems. Their involvement strengthens ICIMOD's ability to remain up to date, or at the forefront, of the latest science and innovation.

ii   SCALING PARTNERS

Scaling partners work with ICIMOD to ensure that proven solutions are adapted and adopted at scale. They help validate tested models, co-develop scaling pathways, and support practical implementation on the ground – particularly with communities, institutions, and delivery agents. These partners are essential for transitioning from innovation to real-world impact.

iii   POLICY PARTNERS

Policy partners contribute to the formulation, alignment, and implementation of policy frameworks at national, regional, and global levels. Their role includes absorbing data and analyses, and channelling information and policy recommendations with a view to feeding into policy change.

iv   **CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

These partners focus on strengthening institutional and individual capacity. They support the design and delivery of training, mentoring, and technical support initiatives that enhance the ability of stakeholders to understand, adapt, and apply knowledge. Their work helps build a critical mass of skilled actors able to drive change in the region. They may also play a role in replicating the training at a wider scale.

v   **REGIONAL COOPERATION PARTNERS**

Regional cooperation partners are essential for fostering transboundary collaboration across the HKH. These entities – such as regional organisations and intergovernmental bodies and multilateral platforms – also possess specific mandates to address shared challenges that transcend national boundaries. By working with such partners, ICIMOD can collaborate in convening forums and science-policy-finance dialogues that can help promote integrated and more cooperative management on critical issues such as climate change, air pollution, water resource management, biodiversity conservation, and disaster risk reduction, and amplify the region's voice in multilateral processes.

vi   **FINANCE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERS**

These partners provide the resources needed to scale ambition and impact. They work with ICIMOD to mobilise and align finance flows – including grants, blended finance, and de-risked investments – that support climate action, innovation, and long-term sustainability in mountain contexts.

7

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clear roles and responsibilities are vital for effective partnership management. An overview of key functions and accountability mechanisms to ensure transparency, mutual expectations, and effective delivery is provided in Annex I.

8

WAY FORWARD

Following endorsement of this Partnership Strategy by ICIMOD's Executive Board, ICIMOD will develop a detailed implementation plan aligned with the objectives and actions outlined in this strategy. This plan will include timelines, assigned responsibilities, and mechanisms for monitoring progress. Implementation will be iterative, with learning loops built in to enable adaptation and responsiveness over time.

ANNEX I: PARTNERSHIP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Function	Responsibilities
Board of Governors (BoG), ICIMOD Support Group (ISG), Programme Advisory Committee (PAC)	Endorsement and advice on Partnership Strategy
Director General, Deputy Director General and Director of Administration, Finance and Operations, and the Senior Management Committee (SMC)	Strategic guidance, direction, and identification of suitable partners Deepening relationships with partners at the highest levels Review, guidance, and approval of changes to internal administrative processes Final approvals on partner selections that are above the Strategic Group Head (SGH) level of delegation of authority (DoA)
Strategic Group Heads (SGHs)	Identify new partners from across relevant networks Endorse the selection of new partners (MoU, LoI, LoA) and receive the required approvals from the Directorate (in line with DoA) Ensure the selection of new partners in a way that supports the delivery of milestone and result targets Perform regular review of the existing list of partners Bring to the attention of SMC and the Strategic Results, Partnerships and Business Development (SRPBD) Unit, any indicators of success, opportunities, and challenges around partnerships Ensure each SG spends a minimum 20% of their annual budget through partners (through the Partners Managed Fund)
Action Area Leads (AALs)	Review and approve relevant agreements ensuring close alignment on results and that they fall in line with the Partnership Strategy principles and definitions Ensure quality assurance of partner's deliverables Ensure respective Programme Officers (POs)/ Programme Assistants (PAs) have received required updates and reporting requirements from partners in time Bring to the attention of the SGH and Partnerships Unit any indicators of success, opportunities, and challenges around partnerships

Senior/Intervention Managers (SIMs/IMs), Project Coordinators (PCs)	Support the identification of relevant new partners Ensure the Partnership SOP is followed when drafting relevant partnership instruments (e.g., LoA) Ensure partners' deliverables are in line with our results targets Bring to the attention of the relevant AAL and Partnerships Unit any indicators of success, opportunities, and challenges around partnerships
POs, PAs	Follow the guidelines of the Partnership SOP in managing partnerships Support formalisation of partnerships in close cooperation with IMs, AALs, and SGHs Carry out partnership-related administrative and reporting tasks
Partnership Specialist/ Coordinator, SRPBD	Overall coordination of the partnership function and implementation of the Partnership Strategy
Project Management, SRPBD	Ensure partnership reports align with donor requirements Support consultative process
Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting, SRPBD	Peer review and quality assurance of the log-frame, LoA Set standards/templates for results frameworks Support progress reporting (templates, etc.)
Resource Mobilisation and Business Development, SRPBD	Share insights on potential partners for new business development Perform donor mapping and intelligence gathering
Programme Finance	Perform due diligence process on partner selection in cooperation with relevant other unit(s) Provide administrative, legal, and financial support on partnership management
Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU)	Support carrying out evaluations of partners and partnerships as needed
Cross-cutting (GESI, Climate, Biodiversity)	Ensure cross-cutting elements are embedded in partnership instruments and functions Identify suitable partners operating in cross-cutting areas Conduct orientation on key requirements to partners (safeguarding)
Human Resources	Ensure safeguarding elements are incorporated into agreements and appropriate checks and balances are carried out (in consultation with GESI Lead)

Communications Unit	Partner profiling on digital platforms
	Supporting partner knowledge dissemination; branding
	Carry out strategic communications activities for events and engagements
Country Focal Points (CFPs)	Provide insights on potential and new partners
	Deep liaison with RMCs
Primary Focal Point for MoUs/LoIs	Serve as the ICIMOD representative for taking measures to assist in the further development of the cooperative activities between the two organisations in line with the MoU/LoI
	Keep a record of official engagements with the partner organisation and share the updates with the Partnership Unit and the Directorate/SMC for institutional record
	Help facilitate at least three periodic meetings with the partner organisations to keep track of the status of partnerships, and provide relevant updates to the Partnerships Unit and SMC as required
Primary Focal Point for LoAs	Ensure the required coordination with the partner organisation in carrying out activities outlined in the LoA
	Take on the responsibility of receiving and approving outputs/deliverables and reports from partner organisations
	Ensure to alert relevant AA leads, and the SGH in case of any existing or potential challenges around the partnerships

ANNEX II: PARTNERSHIP SOP

During the implementation of the Partnership Strategy in 2025, the Partnership SOP, launched in 2024, will be revised based on the updates carried out in partnership instruments and the partnership management workflow.

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