ICIMOD Publications Policy 2025

Approved by the ICIMOD Board of Governors
April 2025

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Terms used in this Policy

Author	In this policy, the term 'author' can encompass other types of input to a publication as well as writing, e.g. creation of audiovisual products. See definition of the term 'publication' below, and paragraph 18 on authorship.
Altmetrics (alternative metrics)	Altmetrics aim to provide a broader perspective on research uptake beyond traditional bibliometrics. They track online engagement with research outputs, including mentions in social media, news articles, blogs, policy documents, and other online platforms.
Bibliometrics	Statistical analysis of output and citation of publications, in particular scholarly articles, journals and books.
Ephemeral publication	Short-lived published material that is intended to be discarded after use, for example leaflets or social media for an event. Not all such material turns out to be short-lived in practice, for example, social media posts can have a long afterlife, so it is still important that relevant quality checks are made.
Gift, ghost and guest authors	Ghost authorship occurs when someone who substantially contributed to a study is not included in the author list. Gift authorship [usually to colleagues] and guest authorship [to distinguished externals] occurs when someone who doesn't qualify as an author is still given credit for being one. Source: Modified from: Ghost Authorship, Gift Authorship, Guest Authorship – 3 Practices to Avoid	AJE
Infographic	An information graphic, infographic for short, is a combination of data and text presented in an easily-digestible visual form.
Op-ed	A short column expressing informed and focused opinion of the writer on a specific issue (traditionally published "opposite the editorial page" in a newspaper).
Publication	In this document, publication refers to all types of information products, including, for example, videos and podcasts, data and infographics (see paragraph 53 for examples)
Plagiarism	Taking credit for someone else's words or ideas, either on purpose or accidentally through failure to cite sources correctly.

Self-plagiarism	The reuse of one's own previously disseminated ideas, text, or data. This is unacceptable in a research context if such recycled work is passed off as new. Many journals will not allow any republication of material previously published in organisational research reports, for example, even if the source is fully acknowledged. See Footnote 5.
Quality Assurance (QA)	The process used to ensure that ICIMOD publications meet agreed quality standards, for example, peer review for research publications. QA varies depending on publication type and urgency.
Technical blog	A blog which includes scientific, socio-economic or other technical material and/or data. It is normally written in an informal style and may have a personal voice, aiming to explain concepts for a broader audience, but the technical content should be rigorously checked.

Acronyms and abbreviations

CCU	Central Communications Unit, ICIMOD
CO	Communications Officer
CRediT	Contributor Role Taxonomy
DDG	Deputy Director General
DOI	Digital Object Identifier
FAIR	Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable principles for use of data/ digital assets (details here)
GIDS-CARE	Global Indigenous Data Alliance – Principles on Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, Ethics
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
HimalDoc	ICIMOD's online resource library powered by open resource software, Invenio
HKH	Hindu Kush Himalaya
HOC	Head of Communications
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ID	identification
IPR	intellectual property rights
ISBN	International Standard Book Number
ISSN	International Standard Serial Number
MTAP	Medium-Term Action Plan
MTAPV	ICIMOD's Fifth MTAP (2023–2026)
ORCID	Open Researcher and Contributor ID
PA	Programme Associate
PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
PCO	Publications Coordination Officer
PO	Programme Officer
POP	Publishing and Outreach Panel
QA	Quality Assurance
RMC	Regional Member Country, ICIMOD
SCO	Senior Communications Officer
SE	Senior Editor
TOR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom

1. Background, objectives and rationale

1. ICIMOD is a leading regional and intergovernmental knowledge and learning centre for the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH), serving eight Regional Member countries (RMCs) – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. ICIMOD's mission to 2030 is: To build and share knowledge that drives regional policy and action and attracts investment that enables the diverse countries and communities of the HKH to transition to greener, more inclusive, and climate-resilient development.

2. ICIMOD's Strategy 2030: Moving Mountains, and Fifth Medium-Term Action Plan, 2023–26 (MTAP V), set out an ambitious agenda, which includes strengthening the quality, variety and usefulness of our publications[1]. This document sets out an updated ICIMOD Policy for Publications.

3. The Objectives of this Policy and the associated Publication Guidance[2] are to:
- Reinforce trust in ICIMOD's findings and recommendations, through ensuring the relevance, quality, transparency, neutrality and ethics of our publications
- Provide clarity on overarching publication principles and processes, for ICIMOD staff and partners
- Improve integration of ICIMOD's publications into our results framework, with clearer understanding of how publications contribute towards agreed outcome targets
- Promote consistency in ICIMOD identity, style and branding of publications.

4. This policy builds on ICIMOD's 2015 Publications Policy, and draws directly from it wherever possible[3]. The updated version also reflects changes in our 2030 Strategy and the new Communications Strategy (2025–30)[4]. These include:

- Increased and sustained emphasis on the strategic use of publications to enable progress against milestones and outcome targets in our Results Framework
- More co-production of publications and concomitant support to RMC partners, down to community level

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[1] In this document, the term 'publication' refers to all types of information products, including for example videos and podcasts, data and infographics (see paragraph 53).

[2] The existing Publication Guidance document will be updated to reflect the approved Policy.

[3] We appreciate and acknowledge the valuable work involved in developing ICIMOD's 2015 Publications Policy and Guidance documents, and have used their wording wherever possible, to provide continuity.

[4] The policy also draws on two internal reviews of publication policies and guidance documents from other international and regional thinktanks prepared for the ICIMOD Publications and Outreach Panel, 2024.

- Increased emphasis on production, use and application of digital publications, including data, audio-visual content, infographics, and data visualisation (and changes in digital formats).
- Internal changes in structure, roles and responsibilities

2. Scope and coverage of this Policy

5. This Policy covers all publications:

- Publicly released by ICIMOD and intended for broad distribution. This includes reports and papers, brochures, blogs, maps, posters, e-newsletters, press releases, newspaper articles, videos, podcasts, infographics, ICIMOD website materials, and selected social media posts, and other publications including statistics, graphics or policy recommendations[5].
- Released by partners with ICIMOD as co-publisher, or with an ICIMOD contribution
- External publications, such as peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, op-eds, or blogs, that include authors identified as staff members of ICIMOD.

6. The following types of publication are not subject to this policy:

a) Internal ICIMOD reports, proposals and other communications
b) ICIMOD project reports to bilateral funders
c) Personal publications, blogs and social media authored by ICIMOD staff outside of and unrelated to ICIMOD work. In such cases, if ICIMOD is identified as the author's address, the publication must carry an appropriate disclaimer (Section 5).

All internal publications must be appropriately archived (paragraph 14) and are subject to limited internal review, as set out in the Publication Guidance. They must also follow relevant ICIMOD policies and guidelines, including but not limited to the Communications Strategy, the ethical principles in this policy, and Guidance for social media.

7. ICIMOD's Publishing and Outreach Panel (POP) has the ultimate authority to determine whether and to what extent any publications fall under the aegis of this Policy.

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[5] See also Section 6 for further information on publication types and processes.

3. Key principles for ICIMOD's publication systems

8. ICIMOD publication *systems* should conform to the following six principles: Quality, Transparency/Accessibility, Ethics, Partnership, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, and Efficiency[6]. We will work towards fully integrating these Principles into ICIMOD systems through the Publications Policy Implementation Plan.

9. The Principles should be interpreted as set out in the following subsections (paragraphs 10–26). Specific issues of compliance with the principles may be decided by the Publications Coordination Officer (PCO) and/or the Senior Editor (SE) or Head of Communications (HOC) in the first instance and in cases of disagreement, by POP (paragraph 63).

Quality

10. ICIMOD shall promote the ten dimensions of quality (paragraph 0 and Annexe 1) as appropriate to the publication type, including appropriate caveats regarding the evidence for any findings and assertions.

11. ICIMOD shall plan for and allocate sufficient human and financial resources to ensure that all relevant dimensions of quality are assessed for each publication, as agreed by POP.

12. All individuals with responsibilities for publication Quality Assurance (QA) shall be appropriately qualified to assess the dimensions of quality that they are asked to assess, carry out QA to the best of their ability, and recuse themselves in any cases of lack of capacity or conflict of interest.

Transparency/Accessibility:

13. ICIMOD shall promote transparency and accessibility of publications to intended audiences (including partners), as provided for in our other policies[7]. Each (non-ephemeral) publication shall have a brief plan for sharing and dissemination, which will be agreed along with the publication. ICIMOD shall allocate sufficient human and financial resources to support this plan, including translation, development of appropriate formats, payment for Open Access, publicity through multiple channels, hard copies if required for the audience, and archiving services.

14. ICIMOD shall maintain an open archive of publications and other types of publications covered by this Policy (paragraph 0), including audiovisual products, on HimalDoc, within the limitations imposed by copyright law, and shall ensure that these are uploaded and

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[6] The first five principles are also applied to individual publications, via the ten dimensions of publication quality (paragraph 0 and Annex 1).

[7] and in ICIMOD's Fifth Medium Term Action Plan (2023-26), MTAPV.

updated in a timely manner. ICIMOD shall allocate a unique Himaldoc accession number for each publication, in addition to international identification numbers (e.g. DOI, ISBN/ISSN) which shall be allocated by ICIMOD or partners, as included in the relevant contract or Letter of Agreement.

15. The management of data connected to ICIMOD publications shall comply with ICIMOD's 2013 Data Policy and any updates to that policy (Annexe 2). ICIMOD shall strive to put systems in place to promote storage of and access to data to comply with FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) data principles[8].

Ethics

16. All published work by ICIMOD shall have been conducted in an ethical and responsible manner. This includes complying with ICIMOD's commitment to neutrality, with all relevant legislation, and not harming the wellbeing of partners and research participants. The collection of personal and identifying information of research participants is only allowed if their explicit approval has been given. All funding sources and potential conflicts of interest shall be disclosed.

17. Publications shall present results clearly, honestly, and without fabrication, falsification, plagiarism[9], or deliberate data manipulation or misrepresentation. Any use of Artificial Intelligence in writing or the underlying analysis must be fully explained and acknowledged. Sources must be fully acknowledged, especially for unpublished information and data originating from partners, and appropriate permissions obtained.

18. Authorship[10]: All individuals who have made a substantial input into a publication shall be considered as co-authors, irrespective of their formal job title or status inside or outside ICIMOD. The exception is editors and other communications staff, who will normally be added in the Acknowledgements in agreement with authors and HOC, SE or PCO[11].

- Each co-author must have made *significant* contributions in at **least two** of the following areas of the internationally accepted Contributor Role Taxonomy (CRediT): Conceptualisation (or reconceptualisation), Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Software, Writing – original draft, and Writing – review and editing. The CRediT roles of Data curation and Visualisation may also be considered for authorship, *if* the work involved represents a significant intellectual contribution.

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[8] as per MTAPV commitments.

[9] So called "self-plagiarism" is not included here. We believe it is acceptable and efficient for ICIMOD as a regional thinktank to re-use our own thinking and wording where useful, for example re-using some wording from a research paper in subsequent briefings, blogs and social media. However, ICIMOD will always comply with external publisher requirements on self-plagiarism, for example in peer-reviewed journal articles.

[10] The term 'author' encompasses other types of input, e.g. creators of audiovisual products.

[11] Communications staff can be included as co-authors if they meet the author requirements, subject to agreement of technical individuals and HOC.

The contribution of each co-author will be recorded, and will be made public for relevant publication types (see guidance).

- Other types of contribution (including but not limited to the CRediT roles of Funding acquisition, Project administration, Resources, Supervision and Validation, and CRediT authorship roles listed above), should be included in Acknowledgements

- In addition, every co-author must take collective responsibility for the finished publication, which includes reading and signing off the full final draft and agreeing on the list and order of authors. Where a publication covers a technical/specialised topic, it must have at least one author who is qualified in this topic area and capable of signing off on the technical content of the publication.

- Every effort shall be made to be inclusive in authorship (paragraph 22), and ICIMOD staff shall make all possible efforts to ensure that all deserving authors, including from partners, are not omitted, while ensuring that only those individuals who meet authorship criteria are given authorship (no gift, guest or ghost authors). Author teams will discuss authorship order and acknowledgements at the earliest possible stage of publication planning and transparently discuss any changes during the development process.

- Authors will be listed in order of their contribution, or alphabetically where the l evel of contribution is equal. Institutional authorship (i.e. the author is 'ICIMOD', or a section of ICIMOD) may be used when appropriate, for example for policy documents or others which represent an institutional position. The decision as to whether institutional authorship applies will be taken by POP. Sign-off by authors and technical specialists (third bullet, paragraph 18) also applies when the published author is institutional or anonymous. Where the official authorship is institutional, ICIMOD will make all possible efforts to list the authors in the acknowledgements or another appropriate location, depending on publication type.

- Grievances and disputes about authorship, including from partners, should be reported to the POP Secretariat and will be dealt with according to procedures in the Publication Guidance.

19. ICIMOD will set up robust systems to ensure ethical research and publication. This includes:

- Establishing and/or making use of existing appropriate structures (e.g. an Institutional Review Board or the Research Ethics Committee) for ethical approvals related to all research with human or animal subjects, including following all relevant national policies and requirements
- Developing appropriate ethical guidance and training materials
- Ensuring that all relevant staff are trained and certified in required ethical behaviour, for example in the planning and conduct of research, interaction with partners and communities, collection, handling and storage of personal data and visuals, and avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Partnership

20. ICIMOD will seek opportunities to develop joint publications wherever possible. Publications that are developed and published jointly with partners, including funders, can spread learning and ownership of ideas and make more efficient use of resources. Joint publications can be particularly valuable where ICIMOD contributes to a shared goal – such as a joint project or national programme. Where joint publication is not possible, ICIMOD will make efforts to maximise coherence and coordination with other existing and planned publications, to avoid duplication. All joint publications shall adhere to authorship ethics (paragraph 18) and (if published by ICIMOD) production guidelines (Section 5).

21. ICIMOD shall respect the rights of partners, including local communities, to manage and benefit from their knowledge, data, visuals and other information. ICIMOD shall strive to abide by the principles of GIDA-CARE data governance[12] Lead authors shall communicate and discuss their plans for publications in an accessible and appropriate way with relevant stakeholders during publication planning and at key stages of publication development. All information from partners who are not co-authors shall be collected and used ethically and given proper acknowledgement.

Gender equality and social inclusion

22. ICIMOD shall promote equality and inclusiveness[13] of both authorship and content of publications, both in ICIMOD and with partners to the extent possible. Where relevant, selecting publication types and languages which are potentially more inclusive (for example, podcasts and videos in an RMC language, instead of a printed document in English) is encouraged, to enable greater inclusiveness of 'authorship' as well as a more inclusive target audience. Achieving greater inclusiveness in authorship and publication development may also involve capacity development and mentoring, for example of early-career researchers, community leaders or other authors from under-represented backgrounds.

23. ICIMOD will monitor gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) in authorship to the extent possible, and particularly in the content of our publications, establishing a baseline for publications from the last MTAP and producing regular updates[14].

24. We will strive for inclusivity in POP and governance structures for publications and to find effective forms of representation, for example for youth, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged people.

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[12] [GIDA-CARE Principles — Global Indigenous Data Alliance](#)
[13] Inclusiveness implies improving accessibility for audiences with varying languages, literacy levels, disabilities, or limited access to printed materials, for example.
[14] ICIMOD's Independent Evaluation Unit may be requested to help with this.

Efficiency

25. ICIMOD will strive for timeliness and efficiency in use of human and financial resources, including:

- A strategic role for the members of the POP (Paragraph 29)
- Improved publications planning and QA processes (Section 6)
- Improving digital systems and templates. This includes using automated uploads whenever possible, and making automated links between HimalDoc (the main ICIMOD publication archive) and other ICIMOD digital systems.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the publications system, for example tracking publication types, topics and geographical coverage, the functioning of the publications pipeline and the inclusiveness, reach and use of selected publications, that will feed into decisions on improvements to the system (paragraphs 69 and 27)
- Constantly seeking to improve cost-effectiveness and timeliness, for example through the use of technology.

Individual publications: ten dimensions of quality

26. For individual publications, the ten dimensions of quality are:

- Relevance of publication to ICIMOD's results framework
- Value added of the publication for the intended audience
- Rigour and clarity of evidence and methods
- Ownership/ leadership/ inclusiveness with partners
- Coverage of relevant cross-cutting issues
- Ethics
- Authorship fairness and credibility
- Potential sensitivities
- Transparency and accessibility
- Readability/Useability

Annexe 1 gives more details and sample questions to be checked for each dimension.

4. Roles and responsibilities

27. ICIMOD's Board of Governors holds ICIMOD to account for our use of funds. The independent members of the Board of Governors constitute the Programme Advisory Committee (PAC). The PAC shall receive updates on ICIMOD's publications function and the progress of the implementation plan for this Policy through the annual progress reports and as part of their routine reviews of ICIMOD's work (paragraph 69). These periodic updates will include the number and impact of publications ICIMOD produces, and might extend to metrics on the topics, type, breadth, geographical coverage, quality and usefulness of publications, GESI and partnership aspects, the effectiveness and efficiency of the systems, and the human and financial resources allocated to this.

28. ICIMOD managers at all levels shall strive to support this policy: for example, creating staff incentives to develop high-quality publications that are well integrated into pathways to impact, and training and mentoring staff. Managers must allocate sufficient human and financial resources for planning and developing publications and for providing timely QA as required.

29. The **Publications and Outreach Panel (POP)**[15] will take on the strategic role of overseeing the progress of the publications policy and pipeline, and will make decisions on individual publications in cases of doubt or disagreement. Specifically, POP will:

- Agree and periodically update ICIMOD Publication Guidance, processes (in particular QA) and templates

- Annually review the publications proposed during ICIMOD's annual planning process (paragraph 55) and make recommendations as needed, for example to improve the balance between publication types or topics

- Review some individual publications, including initial versions of ICIMOD Flagship products and in cases where there is doubt or disagreement (paragraph 63). POP has the mandate to call in *any* individual publication for review.

- Regularly review the publications pipeline and monitoring data and make recommendations for improvements in the system. This includes assessing the adequacy of ICIMOD's human and financial resources for Publications and Outreach and making recommendations to the HOC and senior management

- Periodically review this Policy and its Implementation Plan and agree any minor changes needed to the Policy, or propose any major changes to ICIMOD's Board.

30. POP will be co-chaired by the ICIMOD Deputy Director General (DDG) and HOC and be managed by a small secretariat led by the PCO. POP shall work according to an agreed Terms of Reference that specifies membership guidelines and rules. POP may also invite other staff or experts as resource persons.

31. The **Publications Coordination Officer (PCO)** shall have primary responsibility for managing the technical publications pipeline, both proposals and draft publications. This

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[15] POP replaces the Publications and Outlook Committee (POUT), which had more responsibility for reviewing individual publications.

includes managing QA processes, making decisions on appropriate QA for specific publications, and whether publications are sent forward for final editing and production, returned to authors for corrections, or occasionally refused (see paragraph 63 for dispute resolution).

32. The PCO will also act as Head of the Secretariat to POP, proposing the agenda and minutes for approval, and developing and circulating documents to be discussed.

33. The PCO shall be provided with adequate administrative (and if needed, technical) assistance to carry out all the above tasks in a timely manner. The workload will be monitored through the publications monitoring system in order to determine the level of support required.

34. The **ICIMOD Senior Editor (SE)** has overall responsibility for managing the pipeline of general and ephemeral publications, including providing for quality checks. The SE also has oversight of editorial and production processes for all types of publications.

35. ICIMOD authors, and in particular submitting authors, are responsible for meeting the requirements of this policy and the associated Publication Guidance. The performance assessment of all professional staff shall include assessment of their publications and their fit with ICIMOD's results framework. Internal sanctions, including automatic poor performance assessment and others agreed by POP with ICIMOD senior management, may be applied to authors who are found to behave in an unethical manner, for example, knowingly committing fraud, falsification, significant plagiarism or unethical authorship practices.

36. ICIMOD line managers, Cross-cutting leads, Divisional communications specialists, Country focal points and other nominated staff are responsible for specific aspects of QA processes, as set out in paragraphs 56–61.

37. Information/library specialists are responsible for ensuring that ICIMOD publications are correctly archived and maintained according to Publication Guidance, in a timely and cost-efficient manner, and for producing regular statistics to support publication decision making, such as bibliometrics, alternative metrics (altmetrics), and views and downloads.

38. ICIMOD funders and partners will work closely with ICIMOD in planning for publications in relation to joint projects or ventures. ICIMOD managers and ICIMOD's Strategic Results, Partnerships and Business Development (SRPBD) Unit will discuss these issues with funders and partners as part of negotiating new projects/funding, and in regular project review/annual review meetings.

5. Style and production quality standards

Languages (English, others)

39. ICIMOD will prepare publications in English and/or, wherever relevant, in appropriate RMC language(s) for the target audience(s), and provide sufficient resources for translations when needed. UK English is the ICIMOD standard for English spelling and usage.

40. Translations should be organised through ICIMOD's Central Communication Unit (CCU) and /or (as much as possible) partner organisations, using the final edited text of the original. Published translations should follow the sequence of the original text and should contain appropriate identifying information and disclaimers.

41. An appropriate person – for example, the ICIMOD country focal point – should be consulted regarding context-sensitive language. (Annexe 1, quality dimension 8).

Acknowledgements

42. All funders and partners who contributed to a publication should be appropriately acknowledged, using a variant of the suggested Acknowledgement wording in the Guidance document, as agreed with the relevant partner(s). Individuals who contributed significantly to a publication, irrespective of their formal job title or status inside or outside ICIMOD, should also be acknowledged (paragraph 18).

43. All materials reprinted or reproduced from other sources in ICIMOD publications, especially copyrighted material, and all original work or unpublished materials originating from partners or others and used in ICIMOD publications, shall be properly acknowledged. This includes images and audiovisual material as well as written material. The submitting author is responsible for acquiring written authority to use such material from the copyright holder, with advice from the PCO if required.

Copyright and open access

44. ICIMOD will hold the copyright for all publications published by ICIMOD, and other publications as included in relevant contracts and Letters of Agreement with partners and contracted authors. ICIMOD will use an appropriate Creative Commons Non-Commercial license, whereby the user is free to copy, distribute, and transmit the work for non-commercial purposes and must also attribute the work in the manner specified by ICIMOD. All ICIMOD publications shall bear an ICIMOD copyright line, mentioning the Creative Commons license (if relevant) together with the year of publication.

45. ICIMOD is committed to Open Access publishing and to making our publications fully accessible as an international public good at no cost, wherever the publication is relevant to

ICIMOD's intended outcomes. Authors outside ICIMOD may self-archive an author-created version of the finished product on their own website and any institutional repository. For journal articles, ICIMOD shall give preference to Open Access journals, and ensure that the Author Accepted Manuscript version of all journal articles published by ICIMOD staff is made available in the ICIMOD institutional repository HimalDoc (in Green Open Access where available). For audio-visual publications, the HoC will decide on open access and the corresponding timeframe, with appropriate permissions and credits for use.

Disclaimers

46. Appropriate disclaimers, including but not limited to copyright, attribution of views, boundaries and endorsement of products, and limitations of translation accuracy, will be included in a prominent position for all ICIMOD publications, using the standard wordings provided in Publications Guidance, or any modifications as approved by the HOC (or their nominee) and relevant partners. For joint publications with partners, the lead partner will decide on appropriate disclaimers.

Branding and use of logos

47. All ICIMOD publications and co-publications shall bear the ICIMOD logo in a prominent position as per ICIMOD Brand Guideline. Any modifications from the guideline must be approved in advance by the HOC or their nominee. A short, standardised description of ICIMOD and/or link to the ICIMOD website should also feature prominently, as outlined in the Guidance.

48. Partners' logos will be included on ICIMOD publications in the case of co-publication, or in recognition of a major contribution made by the partner, on the advice of the submitting authors.

49. The logo of the funder(s) should be included on all relevant publications. Explicit agreement to use funder logos, and their placement, size and appearance, must be obtained in advance from respective partner(s)/donor(s) by the CCU.

Maps and Boundaries

50. As a general principle, ICIMOD avoids depicting international boundaries unless there is complete agreement by all countries involved. In situations where it is necessary to include international boundaries, the standard maps used by the United Nations will be followed, with appropriate disclaimers.

Detailed guidance

51. ICIMOD's Publication Guidance contains further details on the above, plus more information on house style, citations and referencing and other editorial and production issues.

6. Publication Types and Processes

52. ICIMOD is committed to increasing the relevance of our publications and integrating publication into our pathways to impact. This means:

- Supporting a wider range of publications, including more emphasis on digital and audiovisual technical materials such as technical blogs and podcasts
- Including publications more centrally in the annual planning process
- Introducing a proposal stage into the publications pipeline
- The increased use of templates for more standardisation and visibility of certain publication types
- Active monitoring of the publication pipeline.

Publications produced by ICIMOD

53. The main types of publications that ICIMOD publishes, together with partners where possible (paragraph 20), include, but are not limited to:

- Time-sensitive publications for specific events or occasions, such as some types of social media posts, blogs, presentations, data visualisations, posters, press releases
- Short publications such as Technical Blogs, Technical Notes, Perspectives, Explainers and Case Studies
- Longer documents such as research reports, policy and practice papers and overviews on HKH
- Data platforms, datasets and data visualisations
- Guidance materials for both technical and community-level audiences, in a variety of languages, for example manuals, e-courses, apps, and decision tools. These will normally be developed and piloted in close collaboration with partners before entering the publication process.
- Convening Papers that summarise conferences, workshops or key events
- Case studies of success stories or learning opportunities
- Post-project summary reports for bilateral projects.

New and modified publication types may be introduced on agreement by POP.

54. The management of the ICIMOD publications pipeline is summarised in the following paragraphs. Further detail will be given in Publications guidance, which will be kept updated, and in ICIMOD Standard Operating Procedures where relevant (e.g. for annual planning).

55. **Annual planning**: In the annual planning process, operational teams, supported by their Communications Officers, shall plan for publications, taking into consideration the full range of potential publication types and the topics and publication types that are most appropriate to contribute within ICIMOD's results framework. Annual publication plans from operational teams will be collated by the COs, SCOs, in coordination with the PCO, and reviewed by POP before approval, with the aim of improving the overall balance of topics

and publication types, investigating opportunities to improve partnerships and inclusiveness, and allowing planning of the central publication support needed during the year. It is not required that every publication should be pre-planned and included in the annual plan[16]; however, the publications pipeline will be monitored to see what proportion of publications is not planned in advance, with a view to better management of resources. Where possible, operational teams and their COs and SCOs will also plan General Publications.

56. Publication Proposals: Before drafting any publication, the lead/contact author[17] must submit a proposal digitally to the publications system using the appropriate template[18]. Exceptions may be made for urgent publications, if agreed by the PCO, SE or HOC. The line manager of the submitting author (or their nominee) will review and sign off the proposal, focusing particularly on issues of urgency, partnership and fit with the ICIMOD results framework. The proposal will then pass to the PCO or SE, who will make basic checks depending on the publication type, for example, ethical approvals. The PCO/SE can then authorise the proposal to proceed to drafting. Target times for approval of proposals (in the absence of any problems) are as specified in the Publication Guidance[19].

57. Publication drafts/manuscripts: Once a draft publication is ready for review, the lead/ contact author will submit a draft digitally to the publications system using the appropriate template. Rare exceptions may be made for highly urgent publications, if so agreed by the PCO, but the template must be completed at the earliest opportunity. The template is shorter and more straightforward for general and ephemeral publications.

58. For technical publications, as defined in the publication guidance, the submission template will include a self-assessment regarding all relevant dimensions of publication quality for the publication type (paragraph 26) . The line manager of the submitting author (or their nominee) will review and sign off the proposal, focusing on a limited range of issues[20]. The proposal will then pass to the PCO, who reviews the self-assessment and line manager assessment, and makes basic checks including authorship statements, originality/ plagiarism and other relevant issues such as prior ethics and methods approvals. The PCO loops the draft back to the authors if it fails on any basic criteria. If it passes, then the PCO decides on the QA required, based on publication type and any special characteristics of the publication e.g. urgency or partner roles. QA may include topic specialists, methods specialists, communications specialists and cross-cutting specialists as needed. The PCO coordinates the QA and loops back to authors for improvements as needed. Once the PCO is content that the publication is of sufficient technical quality for its type and urgency (including appropriate caveats), it will be passed to the editorial and

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[16] Flagship and other major publications, if required, must, however, be included in relevant annual plans.

[17] This will normally be the first author, although the author order may change during the process of development. For publications led outside ICIMOD, it will be the main contact author inside ICIMOD.

[18] Registration of the proposal is shorter and more straightforward for general and ephemeral publications, and more complex for longer technical publications.

[19] Target times are 1–10 days depending on the urgency and nature of the publication.

[20] These are: relevance to the results framework, value added to existing publications for this target audience, partner involvement, overall readability/ useability and potential sensitivities, and any other issues they wish to raise.

production team. All ICIMOD publications must conform to relevant production standards set out in Section 5 and Publication Guidance.

59. General and ephemeral publications will go through a similar process, with decisions being made by the SE, together with relevant CCU staff. Minimum checks include adherence to production standards (Section 5), clearance on potential sensitivities and availability of funding.

60. Unplanned publications will be given priority over the planned publication pipeline only with a clear rationale for the urgency and approval by senior managers and the PCO or SE. Details are in the Publications Guidance.

Externally produced publications

61. Other publication types published externally, to which ICIMOD authors contribute, include, but are not limited to:

- Peer reviewed journal articles and other items e.g. comments, opinions, letters
- Journal collections and special issues
- Chapters in externally managed books/reports
- Conference papers/abstracts
- Other partner-led publications, for example reports, guidance materials, blogs, op-eds, presentations, brochures and posters.

62. Proposals and drafts for externally produced publications must also be submitted through appropriate templates in the digital publication management system. QA required for externally produced publications will be decided by the PCO on a case-by-case basis, depending on publication type and the availability and quality of external QA. Further details are in Publication Guidance.

Dispute resolution

63. In the case of doubt or disagreement about PCO / SE decisions, PCO decisions will be referred in the first instance to the SE or HOC, and SE decisions will be referred to the HOC, and if they still cannot be resolved, to POP.

Efficiency measures

64. Each phase of publication approval has a defined target time in the digital system, that depends on publication type and urgency. Adherence to target times will be monitored and the results used, including by POP, to improve the system (paragraph 29) . The digital system s hall also incorporate design measures to avoid repeated entry of information and other inefficiencies.

7. Policy implementation and resourcing

65. ICIMOD will strive to develop and maintain, on its own or in partnership, the state-of-the-art resources needed to prepare diverse types of publications for a broad range of audiences. Access to these resources will be made available to ICIMOD staff, and insofar as possible to partners. Resources include adequate human resources; up-to-date hardware and software for production, dissemination, and archiving of all types of multimedia materials; and development and adaptation of new methodologies for knowledge management.

66. **Capacity development for authorship and publication**. Key concepts relating to publications and authorship will form a regular part of induction and continuing professional development for all professional staff, including, for example, developing publications, selecting publication types, partnership, writing and style guidance, ethics, navigating the publications system, QA and feedback skills, and the ten dimensions of publication quality. This training will include selected key partners where appropriate (if demand and resources exist). Details will be developed as part of the implementation of this policy.

67. **Resourcing:** This policy shall be adequately resourced, both centrally in the Communications Unit (for the PCO/POP secretariat) and in operational teams. Most publications will be managed and budgeted by operational teams, with technical support and QA managed by CCU. The budget for central flagship publications such as major reports on the HKH, will be allocated centrally. The central publications budget will also include adequate resources to monitor, reflect and report on the publications system (paragraph 69) .

68. For staff who are authors or who have roles in POP or QA, adequate time shall be allocated in their annual workplans, and their personal performance plans and reviews shall include their publication-related responsibilities. Operational teams shall also allocate sufficient financial resources to promote joint development of publications with partners and to promote transparency and accessibility of publications (open access, appropriate formats and languages).

69. **Implementation of this Policy:** Following approval by the Board, ICIMOD will develop an implementation plan for this Policy, including key expected policy outcomes, planned actions and outputs that contribute to these, and specific responsibilities. POP will take responsibility for interpretation of the Policy, via detailed guidance, and also for agreeing on any exceptions as needed, documenting the justification for these. Minor corrections may also be made by POP to the Policy to reflect minor improvements in content or clarifications in wording. The PAC will receive updates on progress with publications, publication systems and the Policy Implementation Plan through Annual Progress Report and as part of their routine reviews of ICIMOD's work (paragraph 27), drawing on publication monitoring data (paragraph 25) , and including aspects such as partnerships and GESI. Full implementation of this policy is expected to take several years, and its success will be evaluated in the overall periodic external review of ICIMOD.

Annexes – Publications Policy 2025

Annexe 1: Ten dimensions of quality for individual publications

The table below outlines ten dimensions of quality that will be checked for ICIMOD publications, as relevant, with examples of questions to be checked for each quality dimension. Specific questions will be piloted and the final versions will be included in guidance documents and self-assessment / review templates. Questions to be covered will vary depending on the type of publication and some may be waived in cases of urgency.

Dimension of publication quality	Examples of questions to be covered
1. Relevance of publication to ICIMOD results framework	How does the publication fit with the results framework – for example, what is the relevant MTAP 2026 Outcome Target and milestones, and how does this publication and the target audience fit with other ICIMOD activities to enable progress towards these?
2. Value added of the publication for the intended audience	Who is the specific target audience for this publication? Why was this publication type chosen to reach this audience? How does this publication complement or build on existing publications in this area, from ICIMOD and other organisations? Cite specific examples and give links. (For research): How does it complement or build on existing research and theory in this area?
3. Rigour and clarity of evidence and methods	Are the findings adequately evidenced? Does the analysis clearly reflect the findings? Do the discussion and conclusions clearly reflect the analysis? Are there clear and appropriate caveats on findings, analysis, discussion and conclusions which are not adequately evidenced? Specifically: Is the publication free of plagiarism (including, if relevant, 'self-plagiarism' – see footnote **9**) and does it cite previous work appropriately?

Dimension of publication quality	Examples of questions to be covered
	Is it being published in a credible outlet (not, for example, a predatory journal)? For primary and secondary research: Does this publication cover a clear research question? Is the research design appropriate? Is the sampling appropriate? Are the specific methods appropriate? Are the analytical and statistical methods appropriate for the data type and used correctly? Note: These questions should already have been covered during research planning and design, but they will be rechecked for draft publications.
4. Ownership/ leadership/ inclusiveness with partners	*If this is an ICIMOD-only publication*: Have opportunities for partnership been explored? Have checks been made for existing and planned publications by partners? Explain the decision to make this an ICIMOD-only publication. *If this is a joint publication* – Explain who has taken which roles in developing the publication and why, and the planned roles in finalising, sharing and using the publication. How widely spread is ownership and empowerment within the partner(s) – was anyone excluded and what are the implications? How will branding be managed? Are there appropriate disclaimers, if this is not an ICIMOD agreement? See also Q7 on authorship.
5. Coverage of relevant cross cutting issues	How is each major cross cutting issue integrated into the publication, if relevant? To be answered separately for Gender, Social Inclusion, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, and Biodiversity. See especially paragraphs **22-23** of the main text regarding the Principle on GESI.
6. Ethics e.g. for research with human and animal subjects, conflict of interest, commercial issues	Have the appropriate ethical checks been made during the work (including Institutional Review Board or equivalent, if applicable), and is there a statement and information on file to confirm this? Has all personal data been appropriately collected, handled and stored and in compliance with ICIMOD

Annexe 1-2

Dimension of publication quality	Examples of questions to be covered
	policies such as data policy and safeguarding policy[1]? Do any photos have appropriate permissions and credits? Has formal acknowledgement been made for the use of any materials from other sources, especially unpublished materials? Have all authors approved the conflict-of-interest statement?
7. Authorship fairness and credibility Authors may be individual or institutional, such as ICIMOD or a section	Provide a brief explanation of what each author has done to be included in the list of authors, and the order of authors, using the CReDIT framework (see main text, Paragraph **18**). Have authors and other relevant people signed off on author order? Are there any outstanding disputes? Have all authors signed off on the draft (and eventually final) version? Have others who have contributed been appropriately acknowledged and informed about the publication? (For scholarly works) Do all authors have an ORCID ID?
8. Potential sensitivities	Does the publication adequately reflect ICIMOD's commitment to regional neutrality? Have any potential political, cultural and religious sensitivities been reviewed and addressed?
9. Transparency and accessibility	How will this be made accessible to the intended audience(s), including GESI considerations such as language and translation, production and distribution costs and publication format? Where data is involved, is this handled in accordance with the ICIMOD Data Policy? Will it be published according to FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable)? For infographics/datavisualisations, will the underlying data be made available for reuse? (See also #3 re transparency on evidence and appropriate caveats.)

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[1] This includes: has all personal data, particularly that of children and vulnerable populations, been appropriately collected, handled, and stored in compliance with safeguarding and data protection policies? Do any photos, videos, or other media featuring children have permissions, informed consent, and credits, ensuring compliance with child safeguarding?

Dimension of publication quality	Examples of questions to be covered
10. Readability/Useability: Appropriateness, length, and clarity for intended audience	Is the language appropriate? Have draft and final versions been checked for useability/ readability for the intended audience(s)?

Annexe 2: Data Sharing and Intellectual Property Rights: Principles and Practices

This Annexe is extracted from MTAPV 2017 (Section 3.6), so that the important content will live in ICIMOD policy beyond that MTAP.

ICIMOD houses an institutional, open access, online repository of research data and knowledge products. Its data management and sharing policy and practice is based on the principle of open and free access and has both internal and external aspects. Internally, ICIMOD has put in place mechanisms for implementing data management and sharing within its programmes. The internal work-flow process, when research is designed and planned, and how data will be managed and shared during the research process by ICIMOD's regional programmes and initiatives, as well as how it will be shared externally is guided by the Operational Guidelines for ICIMOD Regional Databases.

Externally ICIMOD's Data Policy is designed to facilitate data sharing in the region and among the global community. ICIMOD is committed to continuing its financial and human resource investment in managing and sharing data and its derivative knowledge products—interactive maps, models, publications, decision applications, and value-added products and services designed to make data more useful to a diverse constituency of end-users—and will encourage its member countries and partners to do likewise. ICIMOD is also committed to continue building partnerships with other international organizations involved in promoting good data management and sharing practices.

Internal

Internally the Operational Guidelines for ICIMOD Regional Databases pertain to and cover:

Data Management Plan developed by each Programme/Initiative with technical inputs from the Regional Database Initiative (RDI) if required, shared with RDI, describing proposed datasets; data quality assurance procedures; management and archiving of collected data; data use restrictions if any; copyright and intellectual property rights of the data; and data management roles and responsibilities within the project team.

Data Generation and management by each Initiative according to agreed industry standards for improved consistency, quality, integration, aggregation, sharing, documentation, comprehension, updating and security using standard database design practices including conceptual data models, logical data models, defining data entities, attributes, relationship and cardinality and domain value rules.

Data Formats that are open standard and interchangeable, ensuring long-term usability, for organising, structuring, naming, unique versioning and authenticating the identity of master files.

Data Quality procedures, methods and protocols, such as instrument calibration, standardized interview formats, validation rules, date entry input masks, controlled vocabulary, code lists, and choice lists to be incorporated into project data management plans.

Data Documentation using international standards, such as ISO 19115 for spatial data, the Data Documentation Initiative metadata standard, and the Dublin Core Metadata Specification for creating metadata, developing templates for different thematic metadata and customizing tools for implementing metadata in the regional database management system.

Data Management through state-of-the-art geo-ICT infrastructure for storage and management of centre-wide database, use of Enterprise Database Server and Geo-database frameworks for non-spatial and spatial data, IT audit-compliant back-up for reliable data storage, and uninterrupted data services through Database Replica Server.

Data Access and Sharing within the programmes only, within the centre only or among the larger public, determined, as the case may be, by the Data Policy, its ownership and custody guided by ICIMOD's Intellectual and Property Rights Policy as well as partnership agreements, and the sharing facilitated through tools, such as metadata search engine, web map services and FTP services through ICIMOD's Regional Database System and Mountain Geoportal.

External

Externally the data sharing policy is based on the principle of free open access as laid out in ICIMOD's Data Policy. These pertain to and cover

Partnerships in managing and sharing data - ICIMOD is committed to working to maximizing accessibility and use of data and its derivative knowledge products and services through continuing investment in the necessary areas and the aggregation and development of skills and expertise through collaboration with regional country members and partners on the basis of trust, proper assessment of needs and the principle of mutual benefit

Managing and sharing data with member countries and partners - In collecting, acquiring, managing, and sharing data, ICIMOD respects and abides by the relevant international and national laws, third party intellectual property rights, confidentiality obligations, and the contractual terms and conditions of use imposed by providers of data, but negotiating whenever possible with data providers for the widest possible access to use.

Citation, attribution and acknowledgement of data - ICIMOD provides appropriate attribution and acknowledgment of the source and the contribution of partners at all times, following citation standards, where available, to ensure ethical use of data. Likewise, ICIMOD expects users to cite and acknowledge ICIMOD when using its research data

Dissemination of data and adherence to international standards – ICIMOD strives to ensure that only high-quality data are shared and disseminated and to this end will also document

any weaknesses in the data to alert users to potential limitations. ICIMOD adheres to internationally accepted best practices for data preparation and documentation, which include adherence to global metadata standards, such as the standards of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for spatial data, the Data Documentation Initiative metadata standard, and the Dublin Core Metadata Specification. When sharing data, ICIMOD will safeguard the confidentiality of information about individual respondents. When documenting and sharing traditional knowledge, ICIMOD will adhere to existing laws and international best practices and ethics. ICIMOD will work with its partners to share knowledge developed as a result of using traditional knowledge with the providers of traditional knowledge such as communities.

Data sharing and intellectual property rights policy

Intellectual property rights (IPR) protect the interests of creators by giving them property rights over their creations. IPR relates to items of information or knowledge which can be incorporated into tangible objects at the same time in an unlimited number of copies at different locations anywhere in the world.

Open data sharing necessarily involves issues of intellectual property rights. ICIMOD's Intellectual Property Rights Policy is consistent with and complements other ICIMOD policies and strategies including its Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy, Data Policy, Publication Policy, Partnership Policy, and Human Resources Policy.

Rationale for managing intellectual property rights

ICIMOD recognizes the substantial benefits to science, the economy, and society that are or could be derived from global movements toward universal and open access to research output and knowledge products. Given its emphasis on universal and open access to research output and knowledge products ICIMOD seeks to align its Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) to initiatives that promote open and free access to science, information and knowledge.

ICIMOD and intellectual property rights

ICIMOD will ensure that it is in full and complete compliance with Member States' and International IPR laws and regulations as they relate to its operations and programmes. ICIMOD will operate under the following policy principles in regard to IPR:

ICIMOD is fully committed to Open Access publishing and Open-Source deliverables and to making these deliverables fully accessible as an international public good at no cost.

ICIMOD shall not seek IPR protection on its own final research outputs and knowledge products, unless such protection is clearly beneficial in terms of ensuring public access to such research results or knowledge products. In the case of copyrights ICIMOD shall seek

such protection as appropriate and indicate that free use is permitted subject to appropriate citation.

ICIMOD adheres to the principle of unrestricted public access to its own final research output and knowledge products and will make such output freely available.

Works of literature, art, photographs, software, database, maps, etc. that are a direct result of data produced at ICIMOD or through its work or data produced by its staff either separately or in collaboration with others on assignment shall be the copyright of ICIMOD exclusively or jointly in the case of partnership.

Research output or knowledge products prepared on ICIMOD's behalf, that derive from Initiatives or activities implemented by or through ICIMOD, or are prepared by authors or partners commissioned by ICIMOD, are considered to be ICIMOD's. ICIMOD retains the copyright on material so produced and published and will follow the Creative Commons BY-NC (Non-Commercial) license and will clearly indicate this in all its research output or knowledge products. This license entails that the user is free to copy, distribute and transmit the work for non-commercial purposes and requires that the user attributes the work in the manner specified by ICIMOD.

Where ICIMOD has collected, used, or published traditional knowledge, it will abide by international best practices in citing and acknowledging the traditional knowledge providers.

ICIMOD will expect users to cite and acknowledge ICIMOD when using its research output and knowledge products.

ICIMOD agreements will specify that ICIMOD reserves the right to share research output and knowledge products with all member countries and partners in the event of national or regional humanitarian and emergency crises adhering to international practices.

ICIMOD may seek IPR on its own inventions and materials, including those obtained through research/partner collaboration, where such IPR is necessary to ensure free access to these materials or technologies. In the area of copyrights ICIMOD shall seek such protection as appropriate and in a manner that allows free usage of such materials with appropriate citation.

ICIMOD shall distribute all appropriate research materials and knowledge products together with a material transfer agreement (MTA) to ensure that recipients cannot seek IPR on these materials.

Partners and intellectual property rights

In agreements between ICIMOD and its collaborative partners, IPR provisions will adhere to the following objectives:

- protect the collaborator's own confidential information as required by the collaborator's own policies;

- ensure that access to the output of such collaborations is made available on a fair and equitable basis with minimum restrictions;
- allow for commercialization where it benefits the resource poor;
- require the collaborator to incur any costs associated with obtaining, maintaining, and commercializing any resulting IPR;
- ensure that all parties to the collaboration obtain a non-exclusive, irrevocable, world-wide, royalty-free right to use any resulting IPR;
- require the payment to ICIMOD of royalties based on the net profit of money earned on any resulting IPR;
- as from the date of acceptance of any deliverables, ICIMOD shall be free to use the report or manuscript and each and any related part thereof, including thereby, without any limitation, the right to use, edit, print, and/or publish all or part of the manuscript in any form in any language;
- if ICIMOD decides not to publish or use produced materials, the collaborator may publish or use these materials in adherence with Open Access and Open-Source principles; and
- the Collaborator shall take full responsibility for ensuring that the work produced by themselves, or anyone employed by them, respects intellectual property rights and does not use works protected by copyright law without permission prior to submitting the final report to ICIMOD.