

Request for Proposal: Trekking and Expedition Support Services for the Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment (MHRA) and Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) Learning Exchange Field Visit — Haa River Basin, Bhutan

Date of Issue:	17 July 2026
Submission Deadline:	23 July 2026
Submission Email:	procurement@icimod.org

1. Background

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is a regional intergovernmental knowledge and learning centre serving the eight member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region — Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. ICIMOD's primary mission is to promote sustainable and resilient mountain development through science-based solutions and regional cooperation.

ICIMOD's programmatic areas include climate change adaptation and mitigation, water resources and cryosphere monitoring, air quality research, biodiversity and ecosystem management, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable mountain livelihoods.

ICIMOD, under the ADB BARHKH Technical Assistance, is organizing a Learning Exchange Visit and field-based training on Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment (MHRA) and Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWS) for Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) officials in the Haa River Basin, Western Bhutan, from 03–18 August 2026.

The visit combines (i) a high-altitude field segment (03–13 August 2026), involving multi-day trekking and camping from Haa Damthang up to approximately 5,300–5,600 m a.s.l., and (ii) a low-altitude segment (14–16 August 2026) for community engagement in accessible areas of Haa.

To facilitate the high-altitude segment of the visit, ICIMOD requires a qualified and experienced service provider to deliver comprehensive trekking and expedition support services.

2. Objectives of the Assignment

ICIMOD seeks to engage a service provider to deliver trekking and expedition support for the high-altitude segment (03–13 August 2026) of the visit. The specific objectives are:

- To ensure safe and timely transport/trekking support of 7 participants (2 ICIMOD staff, 5 RGoB officials) from Thimphu/Haa Damthang through the trekking route (up to ~5,600 m a.s.l.) and back.
- To provide qualified guides, porters/mule handlers, and cooks for the trekking segment.

- To manage high-altitude camping, catering, and welfare facilities at each campsite in the itinerary (Section 4).
- To support the team in obtaining the mandatory Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) travel clearance for the upstream Haa area (minimum one week to process).
- To implement safety, risk management, and emergency response protocols suitable for a mixed-experience trekking group.
- To ensure compliance with applicable Bhutanese laws and environmental regulations.

Note: Support is required only for 03–13 August 2026. The low-altitude segment (14–16 Aug) and travel on 17–18 Aug are self-supported and outside this RFP's scope.

3. Scope of Work

The selected service provider shall be responsible for the full operational management of the expedition. The scope encompasses the following areas:

3.1 Logistics and Transportation

The service provider shall arrange and manage all transportation requirements for the expedition, including:

- Vehicle transport for the Thimphu – Haa (Damthang) route and return, for 7 participants, camping equipment, and personal luggage.
- Porter and/or mule transport for camping equipment, food, and personal luggage along the trekking route: Haa Damthang – Chala Dophu – GOZATSA – Day 5–9 campsite – Day 10 campsite – return to Haa Damthang.
- Optional airport transfer in Paro on 17 August (separately priced).

3.2 Field Support and Staffing

The service provider shall furnish adequately trained and experienced personnel, including:

- Experienced, licensed trekking guides familiar with the Haa upstream route and high-altitude terrain.
- Porters and/or mule handlers for camping equipment and luggage.
- Cooks and kitchen helpers meeting high-altitude culinary requirements.

3.3 Catering Services

Catering shall be provided for approximately 7 participants. The service provider shall:

- Record the nationality and dietary preferences of all participants at the outset of the expedition.
- Ensure all meals fully accommodate individual dietary requirements, cultural restrictions, and nutritional needs.
- Maintain the highest standards of food hygiene and quality throughout the expedition.
- Provide continuous access to safe drinking water (both hot and cold) at all times.

The daily meal schedule shall be as follows:

Time	Meal	Items
07:00	Breakfast	Milk, tea/coffee, eggs, bread, muesli, cornflakes, oatmeal
11:00	Morning Tea	Tea/coffee with biscuits or light snacks
13:00	Lunch	Vegetarian/non-vegetarian main course, seasonal vegetables, rice, salad, fruit
16:00	High Tea	Tea/coffee with biscuits or light snacks
19:00	Dinner	Vegetarian/non-vegetarian main course, rice, chapati, dal, salad, fruit

3.4 Camping and Accommodation

The service provider shall arrange and manage all camping facilities, including:

- Individual sleeping tents for each participant (subject to logistical feasibility at high altitude).
- Dedicated dining tent with adequate capacity for the full team.
- Sanitation tent(s) with appropriate facilities.
- Fully equipped high-altitude kitchen setup, including all necessary cooking equipment and utensils suitable for operations up to 5,300 m a.s.l.
- All camping equipment must be in good operational condition and appropriate for the prevailing environmental conditions.

3.5 Technical and Safety Equipment

The service provider shall supply and ensure the operational readiness of all requisite safety and technical equipment, including:

- Fully stocked first-aid kits sufficient for the expedition team size.
- Portable oxygen cylinders with appropriate delivery equipment.
- Satellite phone(s) and/or walkie-talkie communication devices to ensure reliable communication throughout the route (optional – to be separately priced).

- Solar-powered charging devices for mobile phones and laptops during the entire expedition duration.
- Snow boots and protective helmets for all participants where terrain and conditions require (optional – to be separately priced).
- Sleeping bags for all participants.
- Trained staff capable of safely operating all technical and safety equipment.

3.6 Risk, Safety, and Environmental Management

The service provider shall develop, submit, and implement:

- A comprehensive Risk and Safety Management Plan covering altitude sickness, adverse weather, emergency scenarios, terrain hazards, and medical response protocols.
- A clearly defined Emergency Evacuation Plan, including designated evacuation routes and communication procedures.
- An Environmental and Waste Management Plan ensuring minimal ecological footprint, responsible waste disposal, and compliance with Bhutanese environmental regulations.
- All operations shall adhere to Leave No Trace principles and applicable national environmental guidelines.

4. Indicative Field Itinerary

The following itinerary is indicative only. The service provider must remain operationally flexible and adapt in accordance with actual field conditions. ICIMOD shall confirm the final departure date in writing no later than one (1) week prior to mobilisation.

Date	From	To	Mode	Remarks	Support Required
3 Aug (Mon)	Thimphu	Haa, Damthang	By car	Orientation at Haa; halt at Damthang	Yes
4 Aug (Tue)	Haa Damthang	Chala Dophu (Day 1 campsite)	By foot	Trek commences	Yes
5 Aug (Wed)	Chala Dophu	GOZATSA (Day 2 campsite)	By foot	Continued ascent	Yes
6 Aug (Thu)	GOZATSA campsite	Site P2 and back	By foot	Field visit from campsite	Yes
7 Aug (Fri)	GOZATSA campsite	Day 5–9 campsite	By foot	Relocate to base for extended field work	Yes
8 Aug (Sat)	Day 5–9 campsite	Site P4 and back	By foot	Field visit from campsite	Yes

Date	From	To	Mode	Remarks	Support Required
9 Aug (Sun)	Day 5–9 campsite	Site P1 and back	By foot	Field visit from campsite	Yes
10 Aug (Mon)	Day 5–9 campsite	Site P2 and back	By foot	Field visit from campsite	Yes
11 Aug (Tue)	Day 5–9 campsite	Other sites	By foot	Field visit from campsite	Yes
12 Aug (Wed)	Day 5–9 campsite	Day 10 campsite	By foot	Travel to next campsite	Yes
13 Aug (Thu)	Day 10 campsite	Haa Damthang	By foot	Descent; overnight in hotel at Damthang	Yes
14 Aug (Fri)	Haa	Haa Gechhu area	By car & foot	Low-altitude community engagement (KII/FGD)	No
15 Aug (Sat)	Haa	Haa Yangthang area	By car & foot	Low-altitude community engagement (KII/FGD)	No
16 Aug (Sun)	Haa	Haa Lower area	By car & foot	Low-altitude community engagement (KII/FGD)	No
17 Aug (Mon)	Haa	Thimphu / Paro	By car	Return journey	No
18 Aug (Tue)	Thimphu/Paro	Kathmandu, Nepal	By air	Travel back to Nepal	No

Note: Participants: 2 ICIMOD staff (including a Cryosphere Specialist leading the visit) and 5 RGoB officials (representing DLGDM, NCHM, DGM, Haa Dzongkhag Administration, and MoIT — nominees to be confirmed). Total participants may vary marginally; the service provider must confirm per-person rates where possible to allow final cost calculation based on confirmed numbers.

5. Deliverables

The service provider shall deliver the following upon award of contract:

- Complete expedition logistics management, including all transport arrangements (vehicle and animal/porter).
- Catering services for all participants for the full duration of the expedition.
- Fully equipped camping facilities at base and high camp.
- Technical and safety equipment as specified in Section 3.5.
- Implemented Environmental and Waste Management Plan.

- Emergency transport and safety support throughout the expedition.
- Full compliance with all applicable Bhutanese laws, local regulations, and ICIMOD's operational requirements.

6. Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested service providers must submit a complete proposal package comprising three components:

6.1 Company Profile and Legal Documentation

- Valid company/firm registration certificate.
- Tax registration and current tax clearance certificate.
- Valid trekking and/or tourism operating licence(s).
- Any other permits required for operations in the relevant areas of Bhutan.

6.2 Technical Proposal

The technical proposal shall address, in detail:

- Proposed approach to logistics and transportation, including contingency arrangements.
- Staffing plan — names, roles, qualifications, and relevant experience of key personnel.
- Risk and Safety Management Plan covering altitude sickness, adverse weather, medical emergency, and evacuation.
- Communication plan for the expedition duration.
- Equipment inventory, including safety and camping gear.

6.3 Financial Proposal

- The financial proposal must present a fully itemised cost breakdown. Bidders must clearly indicate:
- Per-person cost (mandatory) — used to calculate final cost based on confirmed participant numbers.
- Vehicle transport costs (Thimphu–Haa Damthang–Haa Damthang).
- Porter/mule transport costs for the trekking route (Haa Damthang–Gozatsa–campsites–Haa Damthang).
- Catering costs (per person per day) for 03–13 August 2026.
- Camping and accommodation costs, including hotel nights at Haa Damthang.
- Equipment and safety gear costs.
- Staff costs (guides, cooks, porters/mule handlers).
- RBA clearance/permit facilitation costs, if any.
- All applicable taxes and levies.

- Optional services — satellite phone/radio communication, airport transfer in Paro — separately priced.
- All costs must be quoted in US Dollars (USD), inclusive of all applicable taxes, unless otherwise specified.

6.4 Relevant Experience and References

- Documented experience in similar high-altitude trekking and expedition support assignments, preferably above 4,000 m a.s.l.
- Minimum two (2) verifiable client references with contact details.
- Summary profile of at least two comparable past projects.

7. Evaluation Criteria

All compliant proposals will be evaluated on a combined technical and financial basis. The evaluation criteria and relative weightings are as follows:

#	Evaluation Criterion	Max. Score	Weight
1	Technical approach, compliance with scope, and quality of methodology	30	30%
2	Relevant experience and demonstrated capacity for high-altitude expeditions	25	25%
3	Safety and risk management capacity and plan quality	20	20%
4	Financial competitiveness and value for money	15	15%
5	Environmental responsibility and sustainability approach	10	10%
	TOTAL	100	100%

ICIMOD reserves the right to conduct clarification interviews, request additional information, or undertake reference checks as part of the evaluation process.

8. Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically by the specified deadline. Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Submission Email	procurement@icimod.org
Email Subject Line	<i>RFP Submission – Trekking and Expedition Support Services for the MHRA and MHEWS Learning Exchange Field Visit – Haa River Basin, Bhutan (Company Name)</i>
Submission Deadline	23 July, 2026
Queries / Clarifications	Queries must be submitted to procurement@icimod.org at least three (3) working days before the submission deadline.

Proposals must be submitted as PDF or Word documents and must include all components outlined in Section 6. Proposals received after the deadline, or that are incomplete, will be disqualified from consideration.

9. General Terms and Conditions

- ICIMOD reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, cancel or modify the RFP process at any stage, and is under no obligation to award a contract as a result of this process.
- Submission of a proposal does not guarantee award of contract.
- ICIMOD may seek clarifications from any bidder without this constituting acceptance or rejection of the proposal.
- All proposals shall remain valid and binding until the assignment is fully completed.
- Payment shall be made within thirty (30) days of satisfactory completion and acceptance of deliverables, or as specified in the final contract.
- Any additional costs incurred beyond those specified in the agreed financial proposal must be pre-approved in writing by ICIMOD.
- In the event of any addition or reduction in service requirements, the quoted unit rates above shall apply to calculate the value of the added or removed service. ICIMOD reserves the right to increase or decrease the scope of services at the agreed unit rates, and the final payable amount shall be adjusted accordingly.
- The service provider shall not assign or subcontract any part of the engagement without prior written consent from ICIMOD.

10. Liability and Insurance

- The service provider shall bear full operational and legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of its own personnel.
- The service provider must maintain adequate insurance coverage for all staff and equipment throughout the engagement, including liability insurance and, where applicable, medical/evacuation insurance for high-altitude operations.

- ICIMOD bears no liability for any personal injury, equipment loss, or other damages arising from the service provider's operations.
- The service provider shall indemnify ICIMOD against any claims arising from its staff, subcontractors, or equipment.

11. Confidentiality

- All information shared by ICIMOD in connection with this RFP, including technical specifications, field itineraries, and equipment details, is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to any third party without prior written authorisation from ICIMOD.
- The service provider shall not use ICIMOD's name, logo, or project information for promotional, media, or public communication purposes without explicit written approval from ICIMOD's authorised representative.
- This confidentiality obligation shall survive the conclusion or cancellation of the engagement.

12. ICIMOD's Rights

ICIMOD reserves the right, at its sole discretion and without obligation to provide justification, to:

- Accept or reject any proposal, in whole or in part.
- Cancel this RFP at any stage.
- Enter into negotiations with one or more bidders.
- Request clarification or additional documentation.
- Award a contract in the best interest of the organisation.

All costs and expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation and submission of proposals, including but not limited to site visits, technical assessments, documentation, and provision of securities, shall be borne solely by the bidder.

This RFP is issued for solicitation purposes only and does not constitute a commitment, contractual or otherwise, on the part of ICIMOD to award a contract.