

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

**Institutional consultancy for curriculum
review and co-develop learning resources for
Mountaineering Studies Program in Nepal**

ToR

About ICIMOD

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

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

Background

The Sustainable Mountain Tourism Component (SMTTC) housed under the *Livelihoods and Enterprises* intervention of the Action Area Economies and Strategic Group *Resilient Economies and Landscapes*, focuses on generating and sharing knowledge to support mountain tourism stakeholders for effective decision making in adapting and transforming livelihoods and economies in 8 RMCs of the HKH region. SMTTC and HUC have been collaborating in areas of promoting regional knowledge generation for policy and its uptake, through inter AAs/SGs collaboration.

ICIMOD is committed to promote a greener, more inclusive and climate resilient Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH), in support of the mandate of Regional Member Countries (RMCs) to address global, regional and local sustainable development mandates - Paris Climate Agreement, Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, Sustainable Development Goals, Moving Mountains 2030 Strategy, National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Mountain tourism is an important service industry, contributing to revenue generation, GDP growth, products and business development and attracting investments. It is an important source of livelihood opportunity for women, youths, and marginalized group, contributing to jobs creation, income generation and financial independence. However, major long-term trends, especially climate change and socio-economic change present new challenges for the tourism stakeholders of the HKH region. It will transform sector, destination, business, demand pattern and investment in the decades to come. Over the next decade,

tourism stakeholders will need to adapt and transform livelihoods and economies that is green, inclusive and climate resilient. In doing so, the RMCs are in great need to deliver dual mandates: first, address the SDGs and second, take climate action at scale and with speed to limit the global warming to 1.5°C.

Mountain tourism in Nepal is the most important growth sectors contributing to economic diversification, job creation and bring sustainable development. The sector is highly sensitive to the effects of two major challenges - climate change and overtourism. Mountain tourism and its stakeholders in the HKH region are facing multiple risks brought by increasing temperature and extreme weather events and overtourism. To the vulnerable stakeholders (local communities, government, business and service providers), the impacts are real and devastating. Increased tourism growth and activities are putting strain not only on key resource base (water, energy, biodiversity) and ecosystem services, but also increasing the greenhouse gas emissions.

In high mountain area, the increasing temperature is causing Himalayan glaciers to melt. This is an issue which is severely impacting mountain tourism professionals. The rapidly melting glaciers, unstable snowpack, increased rockfall and unpredictable weather patterns are some of the climate change related challenges. In the event of increasing such climate extremes, mountain tourism professionals e.g., mountain guides, are forced to adapt routes, shorten climbing season and in worst case scenario face life threatening accidents.

Long-term impacts of climate change and overtourism are not only damaging ecosystem and its services and overheating the atmosphere beyond 1.5 degree but are also threatening the lives and livelihood of mountain tourism professionals. This is an alarming situation, which will have strong bearing on carbon negative image of the country. Restoring and protecting ecosystems and services, alongside safeguarding biodiversity, business and livelihoods, along with enhancing capacity of the mountain tourism professionals will be crucial.

In Nepal, several policies (tourism and climate change policies) clearly acknowledge and highlight tourism as priority areas and stress on the need to climate resilient destination, low carbon tourism economy including enhancing knowledge and capacity of tourism stakeholders. However, the country suffers from availability of relevant knowledge resources (data and analysis, policies, plans, handbooks, manuals etc), and services adequate capability to use them to make informed decisions.

Objectives

The proposed initiative, ‘Bridging the knowledge-action gaps’ aims to co-generate and disseminate knowledge at the intersection of research and development for sustainable and climate resilient mountain tourism in Nepal. This initiative provides unique opportunities for multiple stakeholders (Research, Academia, Industry and Government) to come together for coordinated and collaborative actions, for effective knowledge co-generation, dissemination and implementation in Nepal.

Key objectives include

- Review curriculum to establish a baseline of the availability of the courses and on the topics of mountain tourism and environmental sustainability, mountain safety protocols for climate resilient mountaineering activities, transboundary cooperation and diplomacy.
- Develop comprehensive learning resources (teaching manuals) that address knowledge, skills and capacity gaps of prospective mountain tourism professionals (students, faculty members and mountain guides) by fostering leadership, professional growth, and multistakeholder involvement, ensuring resilience, adaptability to emerging academic and market discourses and trends, and sustainability of ecotourism.
- Identify potential uptake outlets of these learning resources among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Nepal.

Scope of the work

The proposed curriculum review and teaching manual co-development is a part of the broader initiative - ‘Bridging the Knowledge-action Gaps’ in 3 RMCs, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan. It aims to co-generate and disseminate knowledge at the intersection of research and development for sustainable mountain tourism and climate action.

The bridging knowledge-action gap initiative will be carried out informed by a holistic approach consisting of 3 key strategies – 1) knowledge co-generation, 2) knowledge brokering and 3) knowledge dissemination, enabled through capacity building of the key stakeholders (Figure 1).

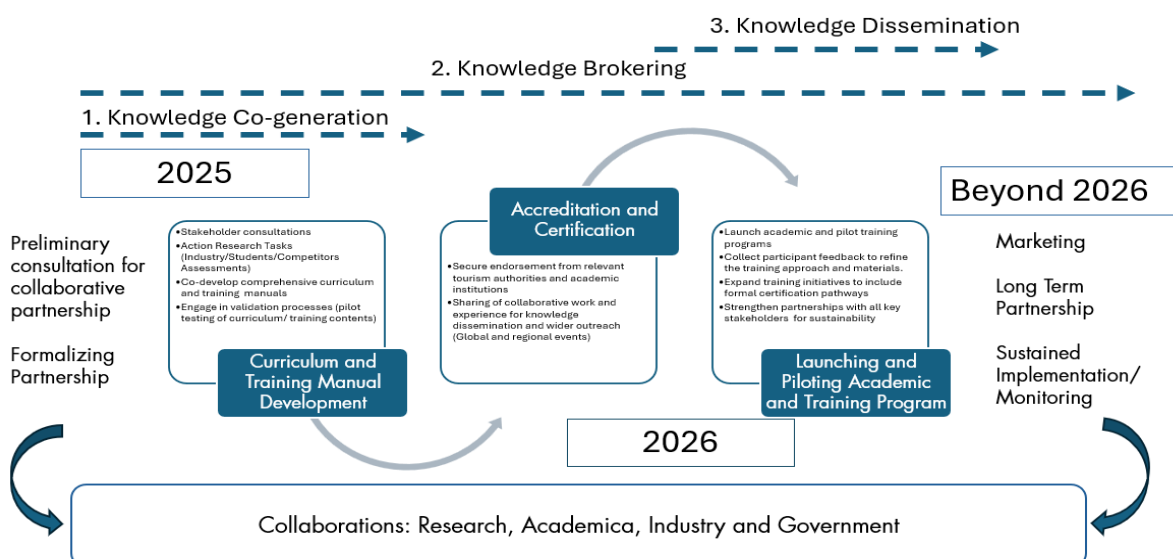


Figure 1: Approach and processes involved in bridging knowledge-action gap

1) Knowledge co-generation:

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing syllabus, emerging context and best practices.
- Consult and collaborate with Multiple stakeholders (government, industry, NTB, student and relevant academic/training institutions).
- Develop teaching manual for training of faculty members.

2) Knowledge brokering (2025-2026):

- Facilitate partnerships and collaborations among research, academic, industry, and government stakeholders.
- Establish a platform for knowledge sharing and exchange among stakeholders.
- Support the development of communities of practice around sustainable mountain tourism.

3) Knowledge Dissemination (2026):

- Secure endorsement and accreditation from the relevant educational body.
- Co-organize training of trainer (ToT) program for faculty members (Table 1).
- Launch reviewed course - 3rd Semester of Bachelor of Mountaineering Studies for implementation (Table 1).
- Utilize diverse dissemination channels (workshop, conference etc.) to reach target audiences.
- Develop tools and framework for monitoring and evaluation.

- Strengthen partnerships with all key stakeholders (government, industry, NTB and relevant academic/training institutions) for sustainability.

Detailed scope of work is provided in the Annex.

Table 1: Direct beneficiaries (Students and Faculty members):

Bachelor of Mountaineering Studies [BMS]	Average No. of Students per Semester who shall benefit*	Specialized Faculty that shall get training [ToT]
BMS 223: Mountain Safety Protocols	30-33 [around 15 % female]	1 [Male/Female]
BMS 224: Mountain Tourism & Environment	30-33 [around 15 % female]	1 [Male/Female]
BMS 278: Transboundary & International Cooperation	30-33 [around 15 % female]	1 [Male/Female]
Total	Average Students is 70-90 [around 15 % Females]	3 [Male/Female- Not defined yet]

Requirements

- PhD in tourism and environment or climate change with over 10 years of experience working in multidisciplinary fields (sustainable mountain tourism, climate change, mountaineering, transboundary cooperation and diplomacy) with a *deep understanding and experience of work related to mountain tourism pedagogy and curriculum/teaching material development*.
- Track record of working with global, regional and national academic, research and training institutes related to, mountain tourism and sustainability aspects from environment, climate change, professionalism and leadership development perspective.
- Experience in co-designing and co-developing extensive learning resources (curriculum and teaching manual, including training of trainers for faculty members) working with academic/research, industry and students
- Strong track record of working with mountain guides, mountain tourism professional and government educational department for traction at the community and policy levels.

Timeline and deliverables

The following are the timeline and deliverables:

S.No	Deliverables	Due Date	Payment
1	Consultancy contract	1 July 2025	15% of total payment
2	Submission and acceptance of Consultation Report	31 July 2025	15% of total payment
3	Submission and acceptance of draft manual (teaching materials)	15 September 2025	30% of total payment
4	Submission and acceptance of final manual (teaching materials)	28 November 2025	40% of total payment
5	Editing, Publication and Printing	Jan-February 2026	20% of total payment
6	Endorsement and accreditation of Course	March	20% of total payment
7	Training package development	March-April	60% of total payment
8	Facilitate Training of Trainers for Faculty Members (ToT)	April	

Proposal

Technical proposal

Applicants must include the following sections in the technical proposal:

1. Technical approach and methodology:

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

2. Work plan

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

3. Organisation and experts

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

4. Relevant past experience

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

Financial proposal

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

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

Evaluation criteria

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

Criteria	Maximum score	Details
Quality of the proposal, understanding and approach on the proposed tasks	10	Well-structured and comprehensive, demonstrated understanding of the requirements & explanation of path to review existing strategies, equip team with required skills & ensure clarity on implementation
Organisation experience	20	Past experience on similar communications and training projects
Human resources – qualification		
Team lead	5	Education qualification and years’ experience
Local coordinators	5	
Human resources – experiences		
Team lead	25	Training experience, published manual, field experience, have been experience in using ICIMOD’s training manual
Local coordinators	20	Local/provincial-level trainings conducted, worked with local and provincial levels

Proposed timeline and deliverables	5	Reasonability of proposed delivery; connection of timeline with task approach
Proposed management & operation plan	10	Schedule of the engagement process / approach for training / clarity of process to develop linkages among levels of plans / clarity of implementation plans & guidelines

The service provider will be selected on the basis of the highest-ranked technical proposal (60% weightage) and the lowest-cost financial proposal (40% weightage).

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

- Technical score = Score obtained based on technical proposal (total 100)
- Financial score = Score obtained based on financial proposal (total 100)
- Total score = 60% of technical proposal + 40% of financial proposal

The service provider scoring the maximum score based on the criteria will be awarded. However, the service provider should score at least 60 points in the technical proposal.

Duration

The duration of the contract is for 10 Months (1 July 2025 – 30 April 2026).

Reporting and supervising

The consulting institution/firm will report to Dr. Anu Kumari Lama, Tourism Specialist, and will work under the guidance of Mr. Abul Kalam Azad, Senior Intervention Manager, Livelihoods and Enterprises, ICIMOD.

ICIMOD's core values

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

Ethical consideration

The consulting institutions/firm will be required to take all the necessary actions to handle the collected data responsibly (see ICIMOD Responsible Data Policy) to ensure data privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. The firm needs to adhere to the in-country regulations while executing the project.

Our commitment to the prevention of sexual harassment

ICIMOD is committed to prevention and redressal of sexual harassment at the workplace and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults and expects all staff, consultants/consulting firms, volunteers to share this commitment. We will do everything possible to ensure that only those who are suitable to work within our values are selected to work for us.

Confidentiality/non-disclosure

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

During the performance of the assignment or at any time after expiry or termination of the Agreement, the consulting institutions/firm shall not disclose to any person or otherwise make use of any confidential information which s/he has obtained or may during this agreement relating to partner organisation/ICIMOD, the respondents or otherwise.

The consulting institutions/firm will be required to sign a non-disclosure / confidentiality agreement as part of their undertaking of this work.

Intellectual property, copyright, and ownership of all prepared information

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

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

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

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and safeguarding

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

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

Method of application

The completed proposal should be submitted through email to Consultancy.int@icimod.org by 6 PM (Nepal Standard Time), on 30 June 2025. Two separate files of technical and financial proposals should be submitted.

