

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

**Independent Evaluation of ICIMOD's
Capacity Building Approaches and
Outcomes**



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](#).

ICIMOD is seeking consultancy services from established consulting firms for conducting an independent evaluation of its Capacity Building Approaches and Outcomes.

Consultancy Overview

The institutional capability pathway is one of four impact pathways outlined in [ICIMOD's 2023–2030 strategy](#), which aims to ‘enhance the understanding, awareness, skills, and capabilities of relevant institutions, partners, and communities’. Capability-building focus is central to our [5th Medium-Term Action Plan \(MTAP-V\)](#). Through this plan, ICIMOD strengthens the capacity and capabilities of partner institutions, emerging researchers from our Regional Member Countries (RMCs) and beyond, as well as mountain communities in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region. We achieve this through a range of activities embedded in our MTAPs, including hands-on trainings of varying durations, exposure visits, workshops, internships, facilitation of action research, and the placement of scholars and volunteers. During MTAP IV and V, ICIMOD organized over 192 training events, more than 195 workshops, and 28 exposure visits.

In this context, evaluating ICIMOD's capacity building approaches against best practices and assessing their outcomes is essential to gain a deeper understanding of what has been effective and what can be improved, including about ICIMOD's organisation capacity building set-up, staffing and processes that support capacity building efforts, ensuring that they are optimized for greater outcomes, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence and sustainability. The evaluation will be conducted according to [ICIMOD Evaluation Policy](#), the ICIMOD evaluation principles including intentionality, independence and impartiality (Evaluation Policy, Box 2).

Objectives

The primary objective of this evaluation is to assess ICIMOD's capacity building approaches and their outcomes and identify areas of strength, areas needing improvement, and opportunities for enhancing capacity building effectiveness.

Specific objectives include:

- To ascertain what approaches (capacity building paradigms, strategies, methods, and processes) does ICIMOD employ for capacity building with its partners?
- To collect evidence on how successful ICIMOD's approaches to capacity building of individuals and partner organizations has been in achieving strategic aims and objectives?
- To learn lessons from successful and less successful experiences and approaches, including in achieving outcomes?
- To generate recommendations to improve ICIMOD's future capacity building approach, both outward-facing (e.g. partner relations, needs assessments, training approaches) and inward-facing (e.g. on management, incentives and internal capacity needed)?

Scope of work

The evaluation will cover the period from 2018-2024 [MTAP IV](#) and [V](#) periods and encompass the following key areas:

- The evaluation scope includes all individual and ICIMOD's institutional capacity building activities intended to help develop individual and institutional/partner capacity and capability. This includes capacity building activities directly performed by ICIMOD as well as those (co-)commissioned by ICIMOD from capacity building providers or conducted by partner organizations (e.g. to communities).
- Internally: ICIMOD staff incentives, capacity and training, and resources allocated to capacity building.
- Partnership: Assessment of demand and need, partner inputs and partner involvement in follow up and monitoring.

The scope excludes: Capacity building work by SANDEE and HUC, which have been the subject of an evaluation in 2023.

Methodology

The inception phase will further define the scope in more detail. During the inception phase, the successful bidder for this evaluation will propose a specific methodological approach to further elaborate and answer the major evaluation questions. However, the evaluator should include a focused and highly relevant literature review of established capacity building frameworks used in the areas relevant to ICIMOD which can help evaluators to focus and design the evaluation questions and approaches. Evaluators will also carry out desk review of all relevant sources of information that for evidence-based assessment, key informant interviews with ICIMOD staff, ICT based survey of ICIMOD partners and training

participants, and deep dive case studies. The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful. The successful bidder is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with relevant staff at ICIMOD, ICIMOD senior management, beneficiaries of ICIMOD's capacity building interventions, and other key stakeholders.

Additionally, the inception phase will include mapping of ICIMOD's main capacity building modalities employed during [MTAP IV](#) and [V](#) periods, unpacking approaches and outlining how each aspect will be addressed and mapping available data and potential informants. The inception report will feature an evaluation matrix which describes how each question and sub-question will be answered, highlighting any challenges or caveats identified during the inception phase, and suggests any (minor) necessary modifications to evaluation questions. The evaluators will cover a variety of capacity building interventions and geographic areas (mainly virtually). Challenges may include poor record-keeping of capacity-building information during certain periods.

Key evaluation questions

1. What approaches (capacity building paradigms, strategies, methods, and processes) does ICIMOD employ for capacity building with its partners? **(Approach)**
2. To what extent has ICIMOD CB been relevant to partner needs and complementary to other capacity building efforts? **(Relevance and coherence)**
3. To what extent have ICIMOD capacity building approaches and methods been effective and efficient in terms of achieving individual capacity and institutional capability aims? **(Effectiveness and efficiency)**
4. How effectively are relevant cross cutting issues integrated into the planning, execution, monitoring and follow up of capacity building? **(Cross cutting issues)**
5. To what extent have ICIMOD's capacity building interventions been designed and managed for impact? **(Impact and sustainability)**

The evaluation will include three main questions on cross cutting issues:

1. How the relevant cross cutting issues are (or are not) integrated into the planning, execution, monitoring and follow up of capacity building.
2. How GESI is considered in the selection of individuals involved in capacity building activities, and what are the effects of this, both on individuals and organizations.
3. What type of training and support have ICIMOD staff received to integrate different types of cross cutting issues in capacity building?

The inception phase will define/add quality standards for cross cutting issues, such as, relevance to the GESI policy commitment/other cross cutting areas, effectiveness - quality

of the capacity building to contribute to the intended results, strategic - logically follow or contribute to a sustainable process. Additionally, inception phase will define the sub-questions vis-à-vis objectives of this evaluation and major evaluation questions.

Deliverables

The Consulting Firm will accomplish the following deliverables:

Flow/Deliverables	Timeline
1. EoIs received from interested evaluation firms	24 Oct 2024
2. Final inception report to the highest satisfaction of ICIMOD including detailed work plan, methodology, refined evaluation questions vis-à-vis the scope of evaluation, and timeline for the evaluation (prepared following a format agreed during inception phase).	25 Nov 2024
3. Implementation phase	25 Nov 2024 to 15 Feb 2025
4. A comprehensive draft evaluation report (prepared following a reporting format agreed during inception phase).	15 March 2025
5. Final evaluation report incorporating feedback from stakeholders on the draft report and final recommendations for ICIMOD.	15 April 2025
6. A presentation to ICIMOD Senior Management Committee (SMC) reviewing the main conclusions and recommendations.	20 April 2025

Reporting and Supervising

The successful bidder will report to the Chief of Evaluation and Learning Unit. The evaluation team lead will work closely with the senior evaluation specialist and provide regular updates on the progress. The final deliverables will be submitted in both hard and soft copies.

Duration

Based on the successful bidding process, the evaluation inception phase will begin in October 2024. The consulting firm will submit the final deliverables by April 20, 2025.

Budget

Up to USD. 50,000/- inclusive of all taxes and all other expenses. Payments will be made in instalments upon completion of deliverables as per the contract terms.

Evaluators Specification/Competencies

We are looking for consulting firms/organization that brings together the right mix of experience and expertise, with a senior evaluator as team leader. The evaluation team leader must have extensive experience in conducting evaluations of capacity building approaches and outcomes for international or regional organizations in the climate change adaptation, environment, and development sector. Other team members should have relevant experience and expertise in evaluation of complex programmes in development sector including capacity building. Excellent written and spoken English is required by all team members. We would highly encourage to have a right mix of gender balanced team from the HKH region and outside of the region.

ESSENTIAL

Thorough understanding of theories governing capacity building, capacity building paradigms, frameworks and approaches. Extensive experience in conducting evaluations of capacity building approaches and outcomes for international or regional organizations, preferably in the climate change adaptation, environment, and development sector.

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- Expertise in qualitative and quantitative research methods, including experience with document analysis, comprehensive literature reviews, interviews, surveys, and case studies.
- Excellent understanding of the best practices in capacity building approaches, outcomes, capacity building management and evaluation.
- Excellent analytical, communication, and report writing skills.

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.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and safeguarding

ICIMOD's bidders/consultant 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.

Any questions – please address them to spme@icimod.org.