

## 1. Mountain Ecosystem – special recognition of the Hindu Kush Himalaya

The mountain ecosystem of the Hindu Kush Himalaya is recognized as one of the most vulnerable ecosystem due to climate change. The key finding of recent much acclaimed report - Hindu Kush Himalayan Assessment and Monitoring by ICIMOD states that –

### The Future of the HKH Matters to Over Two Billion People

Urgent steps are required to sustain mountain environments and improve livelihoods in the [Hindu Kush Himalaya](#) (HKH) region. Extending 3,500 km over eight countries, from Afghanistan in the west to Myanmar in the east and crossing Pakistan, India, China, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, the HKH is one of the world's greatest mountain systems: home to the world's highest peaks, unique cultures, diverse flora and fauna, and a vast reserve of natural resources. The HKH directly supports the livelihoods of over 240 million people living in its hills and mountains, and it yields many benefits to the 1.65 billion people living downstream. As the source of 10 major Asian rivers, the HKH provides essential resources, especially water and biodiversity, to 1.9 billion people. It feeds the grain baskets of Asia.

The HKH is a vital regional lifeline—but human drivers and climate change pose immediate threats to the region's livelihoods, biodiversity, and ultimately sustainability. Changes on the rooftop of the world are having and will continue to have major consequences, not only for the region but globally. Local, national, regional and global actions are urgently needed to sustain this global asset, ***focusing on substantially increased investments and more robust regional cooperation for sustaining mountain environments and improving livelihoods in the HKH and concerted action to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees by 2100.***

### The Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment: Mountains, Climate Change, Sustainability and People

The Hindu Kush Himalayan Monitoring and Assessment Programme ([HIMAP](#)) is a long-term, integrated science-policy initiative coordinated by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). Under HIMAP, more than 350 leading researchers, practitioners, and policy specialists working on the HKH came together to develop the first [HKH Assessment Report](#), published in early 2019 by Springer, to assess the state of the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region and consider its future prospects. The common purpose of the assessment has been to collate and assess knowledge of the mountainous areas of the HKH, and to promote awareness and appreciation of the HKH as a global asset with unique human and economic value for both mountain and downstream people. While more information and data will lead to better decision-making, the HKH Assessment concludes that we know enough to take action, and its findings show that action is urgently needed now.

The HKH Assessment and the resulting HKH Call to Action reflect five years of research, review and analysis by more than 350 researchers and policy experts, from 22 countries and 185 organizations. The HKH Assessment was drafted in response to requests from governments in the region—meeting a demand for a comprehensive assessment of the region's mountains, environments and livelihoods, today and tomorrow.

The HKH Assessment Report consists of 16 chapters, which comprehensively assess the current state of knowledge on the HKH region, increase the understanding of various drivers of change and their impacts, address critical data gaps and develop a set of evidence-based and actionable policy solutions and recommendations. The assessment addresses the social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainable mountain development, and will serve as a basis for evidence-based decision-making to safeguard the environment and advance people's wellbeing. To provide a roadmap for action, an HKH Call to Action has been developed based on the key findings of the HKH Assessment Report and being discussed with ICIMOD member countries. The summary and full report can be accessed at [www.icimod.org/himap](http://www.icimod.org/himap).

**In view of above, ICIMOD would like to request GCF to have specific outcomes on mountain ecosystem and give a special attention to the mountain ecosystem of the Hindu Kush Himalaya.**

Please note that with the increasing evidence of climate change impacts on mountains, mountain ecosystems and mountain communities, mountain-specific goals have been specified in the Nagoya Protocol (2010), United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015, Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement 2015 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Targets 2030.

## **2. Regional Transboundary Project**

ICIMOD has been engaging with river basin and transboundary landscape management approaches to work across borders and achieve shared goals. The Centre's river basin approach takes into account a range of concerns – monitoring and assessment of water resources, water-induced disaster risk management, and climate change impacts and resilience building with a particular focus on the poor and vulnerable. Our engagements in river basins have shown that integrated water resource management and nexus approaches are essential. The management and sustainable use of water and land resources for livelihoods, the impacts on environment, and the pressing need for disaster risk reduction and management of water related hazards in river basins must be taken into consideration. Approaches to address upstream-downstream linkages as well as the links between natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods have ramifications for the prosperity and stability of the entire region and beyond. There are many examples of landscape level transboundary conservation initiatives in HKH. These initiatives have been implemented in the Terai Arc Landscape, the Kangchenjunga Landscape, the Sacred Himalayan Landscape, and the Kailash Sacred Landscape in India and Nepal. Most of these landscapes are home to the last remaining natural forests, alluvial grasslands, and subtropical deciduous forests in the Himalaya, and these extend beyond country borders.

We view that climate change impacts transcend national boundaries. Climate Change in the Hindu Kush Himalayas will seriously compromise food, nutritional and energy security in the region and downstream, severely challenging abilities of nations to achieve the SDGs. There is an urgent need for collective action and a fundamental step should be to foster a regional cooperation, drawing on nations within the region and downstream to tackle the impacts of climate change. Hence there is a need for collective climate action within the region through regional adaptation and mitigation projects. Our experience with developing a regional project bringing together multiple countries and their respective NDAs have proved very challenging.

**We would like to strongly recommend GCF to institute appropriate regional mechanism to support regional projects for climate resilient development through organizations like ICIMOD in the HKH region.**

## **3. Regional Readiness programme**

ICIMOD with a mission for resilient and sustainable mountain development has a comprehensive portfolio on climate change to enhance resilience and to support adaptation by vulnerable mountain communities and ecosystems in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region. ICIMOD has been implementing many climate change adaptation and mitigation projects through regional collaborative efforts and interfacing with a strong network of partners in eight member countries of the HKH region. Capacity building of its member countries is one the prime objectives of ICIMOD. Given ICIMOD's core competencies, ICIMOD could play a role to strengthen member countries in making a strong climate rationale through evidence based data and science, help GCF

feasibility study and project proposals and climate investments. As such, ICIMOD has been providing technical support to FAO, UNDP, IFAD and many others. Additionally, ICIMOD can provide a regional platform for mutual learning and sharing among the member countries for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

**We would like to strongly recommend GCF to institute appropriate regional mechanism to support regional readiness programme through organization like ICIMOD in the HKH region.**

#### **4. Private sector engagement and climate financing**

There is a need to ensure that the climate financing/investment reaches to the marginalized and vulnerable populations such as mountain communities to help them prevent from ecological, economical and social damages and adapt to rapid climate and social changes, and have them contribute to mitigation. Besides the public sector effort, it is essential to engage private sector to tackle the climate change for following two reasons. a) Meeting the 2 degree Celsius target and UN-SDGs in the HKH will require longer-term investment and stronger movement towards a low-carbon development pathway and green growth, where we see a bigger role of private sector. b) ICIMOD's comprehensive climate change portfolio and innovative development solutions can provide pipeline of green projects which have potential for scaling-up and scaling-out by the private sector.

**We would like to strongly recommend GCF to support the engagement of private sector especially targeted to mountain areas, reaching to the unreached - vulnerable mountain communities.**

#### **5. Accreditation process**

Despite our effort, the accreditation process has been somewhat challenging in the GCF. This is partly due to lack of understanding by the respective NDAs and their support for endorsement as a regional entity. However, we have made good progress in the accreditation process in the adaptation fund and we hope to fast track our accreditation in the GCF once we get accredited into adaptation fund.

**We would like to strongly recommend GCF to support the accreditation process for organization like ICIMOD. Also, help support readiness programme as ICIMOD has been endorsed as a delivery partner.**