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Himalayan Agroecology Initiative



Towards a Common Roadmap for Sustainable Food Systems

In a nutshell

The Himalayan Agroecology Initiative is a joint international endeavour, aiming to facilitate the improvement of livelihoods and sustainability within the Himalayan region, with specific emphasis on India, encompassing the Indian Himalayas Region (IHR) including states such as Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, as well as Nepal and Bhutan.

The initiative contributes to the Indo-German Lighthouse Initiative on Agroecology and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and is financed by the Germany Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which both are core partners of this project.

Through close collaboration with governments in the region, support from a broad group of stakeholders in the Agroecology Himalaya Task Force, the World Future Council (WFC) and IFOAM – Organics International, as well as assistance from renowned implementing entities (Biodiversity-CIAT, UNDP India, UNDP Bhutan and LI-BIRD), the Himalayan Agroecology Initiative is a multi-stakeholder process in the Himalayan Region focused on the development and implementation of a roadmap for sustainable food systems, contributing to strengthening farmers, farmer producer organizations and other key players so that they can better benefit from government policies that support sustainable agriculture such as organic and natural farming.

Background

Vast areas of the Himalayan Region remain predominantly untouched by the disruptive effects of the Green Revolution and traditional agriculture still represents the main occupation. Agriculture in the region is largely rainfed, making it prone to the vagaries of the weather and highly vulnerable to climate variability and climate change, even more so as the region is a climate

hotspot. These have an escalating adverse impact on farming-based livelihoods, with declining agricultural yields, income, and employment opportunities as well as increasing risks of food and nutrition insecurity.

Conscious of these conditions and challenges, policymakers have increasingly recognized the need to strengthen food and nutrition security, climate resilience and rural job creation while preserving the region's diverse ecosystems and its natural resources. More and more governmental schemes on national and state level have been directed towards addressing these issues in their complexities, including investing in extension services for organic and natural farming, developing Participatory Guarantee Systems, fostering market access for small-scale producers and more, approaches which are increasingly summed up under the term 'agroecology'.

Towards a Common Roadmap

To leverage these ongoing governmental efforts, the 'Agroecology Himalayas Task Force' has been established in early 2023 with participants from Bhutan, India and Nepal, with the vision to advance the development of a comprehensive Roadmap for Sustainable Food Systems for the Himalayan region. Members of the Task Force are committed to make the Himalayan region a global flagship region with a systemic vision on sustainable food systems.

Funds from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have been secured by the World Future Council (WFC) and IFOAM – Organics International for a 4-year period (May 2023–April 2027) to advise governments in the region and at the national level to facilitate a multistakeholder process with the goal to develop and start the implementation of a roadmap for sustainable food systems, in cooperation with implementing entities in Bhutan, India and Nepal.



As a first step, based on a series of interviews and desktop research, a Roadmap Background Report, a detailed Stakeholder Map and a Draft Roadmap have been produced. As a second step, the Agroecology Himalayas Task Force seeks support from all stakeholders, particularly policymakers at various levels, to join in this endeavour to further enhance and finalize the Roadmap for the Himalayas with a view to launch it at a high-level event in autumn 2024 in Delhi, India. After the Roadmap launch, the Task Force, WFC and IFOAM will work with select implementing entities to develop a medium-term strategy and offer capacity-building for stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of key recommendations from the final Roadmap.

Renowned Implementing Entities

At the close of 2023 and after a comprehensive evaluation process, the Himalayan Agroecology Initiative team has finalized on the implementing entities for each country. The distinguished organizations comprise:

- In Bhutan: UNDP Bhutan
- In India: Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT - India Office and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP India), as well as
- In Nepal: Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD).



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Key Upcoming Milestones

- **January-February 2024:** Meetings with stakeholders, particularly policymakers, to speak about their support, the roadmap process and timeline. Project Inception Meeting with the teams from the three countries at United Nations India, to discuss the collaborative approach to the roadmap, encompassing the structure and content, and establishing the foundational elements for the roadmap process and its subsequent timeline.
- **February to May 2024:** Development of the roadmap through consultations and research.
- **June 2024:** Submission of the final draft of the roadmap to stakeholders for review. Finalizing date for roadmap launch in autumn 2024
- **Summer 2024:** Finalizing roadmap based on stakeholder feedback.
- **Autumn 2024:** International launch of the roadmap in Delhi, followed by national events in Nepal and Bhutan.
- **From November 2024:** Collaborative development of the medium-term strategy with Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT - India Office and UNDP India to facilitate the implementation of selected roadmap measures.
- **January 2025:** Financing for UNDP Bhutan and LI-BIRD Nepal ends and follow-up funding to facilitate the implementation of selected roadmap measures recommendable.
- **From January 2025 until December 2026:** Facilitation of implementation of selected roadmap measures in India, and - dependant on follow-up funding - in Bhutan and Nepal.
- **2024-2026:** Development of training materials, trainings of stakeholders from local organizations and government in the three countries as well as the application of the train-the-trainer approach.
- **2024-2026:** Development of a series of knowledge products and related events to spread agroecology knowledge in India, regionally and internationally

More Information

IFOAM – Organics International:

www.ifoam.bio/himalayan-agroecology-initiative

World Future Council:

www.worldfuturecouncil.org/scaling-up-agroecology-himalayas-project/