APN and the LAKI HKH Initiative (Phase II): Leveraging global change research to address adaptation knowledge gaps in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region

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Introduction

The Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative (LAKI, UNFCCC)

Launched at the UNFCCC 41st session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA41), December 2014, in Lima, Peru, the Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative (LAKI) is an action

LAKI in the Hindu Kush Himalayan subregion

In partnership with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the UNEP Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN), the LAKI HKH Initiative was launched at its priority-setting workshop in Colombo, Sri Lanka (October 2016) (UNFCCC, 2026). Forty-four adaptation knowledge gaps were identified and categorised into thematic areas by a twelve-member multi-stakeholder group, of which were refined and prioritised to seven priority knowledge gaps (PKG 1-7, UNFCCC, 2016). From 2017, LAKI was launched in a second phase to address the critical gaps in adaptation planning and implementation in the HKH region, with the aim to design and implement collaborative actions to close the sixteen PKGs in the subregion.

Engagements between APN and LAKI

The APN Secretariat has been a key knowledge partner with the UNFCCC NWP since 2015, with case studies on climate adaptation submitted to its Adaptation Knowledge Portal. For the current LAKI HKH initiative, the APN Secretariat has been involved since the commencement of its second phase in August 2023, after participating in its Pre-Forums Stakeholders Consultation at the 6th Asia-Pacific Climate Change Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea.

In 2024, the APN Secretariat has been engaged with the LAKI HKH initiative as a knowledge partner, following one-on-one engagements with APN and LAKI implementing teams (UNFCCC, 2026). The UNFCCC and ICIMOD jointly implemented seven regional knowledge partners, with the objective to discuss the outcomes of its stocktaking exercise, forge one-to-one discussions with the LAKI HKH implementing team (UNFCCC, UNEP and ICIMOD) inviting the participation of knowledge partners, including the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, in Incheon, Republic of Korea, including the leading Prof. Saleemul Huq (August 2023).

Methodology

Stocktaking exercise of existing initiatives and case studies addressing knowledge gaps in the Hindu Kush Himalaya

The stocktaking exercise in the LAKI HKH Phase II was first introduced through a one-to-one engagement with the LAKI implementing team on virtual channels. Utilizing a prescribed template of the LAKI HKH knowledge gaps, the stocktaking exercise sought to retrieve all relevant initiatives and case studies addressing the priority knowledge gaps in the HKH region (as relevant to the organisation).

Regional scope of stocktaking assessment

The countries covered by the LAKI HKH subregion include: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, and Nepal (ICIMOD, 2016). The entire territories of Bhutan and Nepal are considered in scope, while the remaining countries are only partially in scope, as aligned with the Hindu Kush Himalayan mountain ranges (ICIMOD, 2024). The APN Secretariat is available to provide input to all indicated countries, except Afghanistan as a country outside of APN’s designation of the Asia-Pacific region and Fiji’s 22 member countries.

Assessment of relevant initiatives and case studies

Due to time and budget constraints, APN Secretariat conducted a manual filtering of projects involving Bhutan and Nepal, as countries with the full territory in scope of the HKH region. All project objectives and outputs were extracted and assessed against the LAKI HKH knowledge gaps and the stocktaking exercise rubric.

Preliminary Results

APN contribution to the LAKI HKH initiative

APN has contributed largely to the documentation of LAKI activities in the HKH region through the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Initiative (AISA) Adaptation Information Platform (AIP), which includes a database of adaptation activities in the HKH region.

APN led a joint effort to mobilize case studies from a wide range of knowledge partners, including the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, in Incheon, Republic of Korea, including the leading Prof. Saleemul Huq (August 2023). Knowledge partners gathered together to address the outcomes of its stocktaking exercise, forge one-to-one discussions with the LAKI HKH implementing team (UNFCCC, UNEP and ICIMOD) inviting the participation of knowledge partners, including the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, in Incheon, Republic of Korea, including the leading Prof. Saleemul Huq (August 2023).

Participating in the LAKI HKH Stakeholders Consultation for the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, in Incheon, Republic of Korea, the Leading Prof. Saleemul Huq (August 2023).

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Feasible Project: Project Development of an adaptation communication framework for mainstreaming indigenous and local knowledge (ILK) for the HKH region

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Feasible Project: Inventory of glaciers and glacial lakes and the identification of potential glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) affected by global warming in the mountains of India, Pakistan, and China/Tibet Autonomous Region

With the aim to assess emerging risks and vulnerabilities, the data was compiled into a single database and integrated with climate projections, resulting in a high-resolution climate change adaptation education platform.

The mentor expert project focused on Bhutan and Nepal, providing education and awareness-raising initiatives to build community resilience through application of traditional and local knowledge systems.

Next Steps

As a knowledge partner of the LAKI HKH Phase II initiative, the APN Secretariat has committed to strategic action through repackaging and mainstreaming the LAKI HKH PKGs. The proposed actions are to disseminate the relevant outputs through existing knowledge-sharing platforms, such as the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Initiative (AISA) Adaptation Information Platform (AIP), traditions Knowledge Database and the NWP Adaptation Knowledge Portal.

APN will continue to engage with the LAKI HKH implementing team on virtual channels and provide input to the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, in Incheon, Republic of Korea, including the leading Prof. Saleemul Huq (August 2023).

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