

## ICIMOD DATA POLICY<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Mission

ICIMOD, as an intergovernmental regional learning and knowledge sharing centre, is committed to its mission of enabling sustainable and resilient mountain development for improved and equitable livelihoods through knowledge sharing and regional cooperation. To achieve this important mission, the Centre serves as an interface between research and development activities on mountain ecosystems and the people of the region.

### 2. Rationale for managing and sharing data<sup>2</sup>

2.1 ICIMOD believes that access to timely and high quality data and information by its member countries and the wider regional and global community would inform, promote, and accelerate learning on the challenges facing mountain ecosystems and their people; enable independent research and scientific enquiry; catalyse the development of knowledge products and innovations that improve the wellbeing and livelihoods of mountain communities; and empower critical and urgent decision making and efforts at times of emergency, disaster, and humanitarian crisis.

2.2 The rapid expansion of online technologies and computing capacities holds the promise of greater peer examination and review of conclusions or analyses based on experimental or observational data in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. The ability of subsequent users to make new and unforeseen analyses of the same data, either in isolation or in combination with other data, may potentially bring novel ideas and cutting-edge technologies that would benefit the mountain population.

2.3 ICIMOD recognizes the substantial benefits to science, the economy, and society that are or could be derived from global movements toward universal and open access to data. ICIMOD therefore seeks to align its data management and sharing policy with initiatives that promote open and free access to science information and knowledge.

### 3. Partnerships in managing and sharing data

3.1 ICIMOD is aware of the challenges in documenting, curating, and preserving high quality data and works closely with its partners, regionally and internationally, to ensure that valuable data relating to the Hindu Kush Himalayan region are both accessible and useful to its member countries, partners, and the global community.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy shall be read and interpreted as a complement to, and consistent with, other ICIMOD policies including its Intellectual Property Rights and Publications Policy.

<sup>2</sup> Definitions

- Data are distinct pieces of information. When data are processed, organized, structured or presented in a given context so as to make them useful, they are called information.
- Research data is 'all data and information collected, produced, or analysed in some way in the context of scientific or scholarly research'. It includes primary or raw data derived from empirical research, observation, or measurement; and secondary data derived from sources created previously. Research data can be both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Examples of research data include facts, statistical information, and survey results, which may be presented in the form of text, numbers, images, maps, or audio/video recordings.

- 3.2 Recognizing the importance of the availability of good quality data, ICIMOD will invest its financial and human resources in managing and sharing data and will encourage its member countries and partners to similarly do so. ICIMOD will ensure that its organizational structure and management recognize the importance of managing and sharing data and will put in place mechanisms for implementing data management and sharing within its projects.
- 3.3 In addition to making data directly available to users, ICIMOD will invest in the development of knowledge products derived from data, including interactive maps, models, publications, decision applications, and value-added products and services to make data more useful for policy makers, scientists, and the general public.
- 3.4 ICIMOD understands that it will benefit greatly from collaboration with its member countries and partners in terms of skills, expertise, and resources in managing and sharing data and will leverage external resources, where available, to minimize duplication and maximize accessibility and use.
- 3.5 ICIMOD will also build partnerships with other international organizations involved in promoting good data management and sharing practices, especially for the benefit of developing countries, in order to learn from and share experiences with such organizations.

#### **4. Managing and sharing data with member countries and partners**

- 4.1 ICIMOD appreciates that sharing of data by regional member countries and partners with ICIMOD, and vice versa, requires all parties to assess needs, build a relationship of trust, and demonstrate mutual benefits over time.
- 4.2 In collecting, acquiring, managing, and sharing data, ICIMOD respects and abides by related international and national laws, third party intellectual property rights, confidentiality obligations, and contractual terms and conditions of use imposed by the provider of the data.
- 4.3 Whenever possible, ICIMOD will negotiate with data providers for the widest possible access to use and disseminate data shared for the benefit of further scientific enquiry and analysis. If data shared with ICIMOD cannot be further disseminated in their original form for any reason, ICIMOD will only distribute value-added research data, which has been further analysed or combined with other data. In such cases, ICIMOD will encourage data providers to make the metadata of the restricted data publicly available.
- 4.4 ICIMOD may enter into data sharing agreements with data providers at the outset of an activity to specify and detail both parties' rights and responsibilities in using and disseminating data.
- 4.5 In projects funded by international donor organizations and governments, receipt of public funds by ICIMOD may require the provision of free and unrestricted access to data collected, generated, and analysed by ICIMOD and its partners to the public. In such instances, ICIMOD will strive to provide open, expeditious, and equitable access to all third parties requesting data from ICIMOD without discrimination. ICIMOD and its partners may agree on delaying the release of research data up to one year after the end of a project to enable the preparation and submission of

publications using the research data. Any extension in timing of the release will require express approval from ICIMOD.

- 4.6 To ensure good data management within projects, ICIMOD and its partners will prepare and incorporate data management plans into their project management cycles that contain details such as the types of data in the project, their ownership, their terms of use and dissemination, and related metadata.

## **5. Citation, attribution and acknowledgement of data**

- 5.1 When utilizing data belonging to its member countries or partners or from external sources, ICIMOD will provide appropriate attribution and acknowledgment of the source and the contribution of partners at all times. ICIMOD will adopt citation standards, where available, to ensure that providers of data and funding sources are expressly cited and able to track the use of the data they shared with ICIMOD.
- 5.2 Similarly, ICIMOD expects users to cite and acknowledge ICIMOD when using its research data. Citation standards for ICIMOD research data will be developed and included in contracts or terms of use of institutional databases to ensure that ICIMOD is able to trace and evaluate the use of its data by others.
- 5.3 ICIMOD will encourage co-authorship with scientists from its member countries or partners who have shared research data with ICIMOD.
- 5.4 Where ICIMOD has collected, used, or published traditional knowledge, it will abide by international best practices in citing and acknowledging the traditional knowledge providers. Traditional knowledge providers may also be included expressly as authors in publications.

## **6. Dissemination of data and adherence to international standards**

- 6.1 ICIMOD will use its best endeavours to ensure that only high quality data are shared and disseminated with member countries, partners, and the global community through its institutional repository. However, ICIMOD cannot provide any express guarantee of the quality of data shared through its repository, and data are shared on an 'as is' basis.
- 6.2 ICIMOD adheres to internationally accepted best practices for data preparation and documentation, which include abiding by globally accepted metadata standards such as the standards promoted by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for spatial data, the Data Documentation Initiative metadata standard, and the Dublin Core Metadata Specification. Whenever possible, ICIMOD will also document any weaknesses in the data shared to alert users to potential limitations.
- 6.3 When sharing data, ICIMOD will safeguard the confidentiality of information about individual respondents. ICIMOD will undertake processes aimed at protecting confidentiality such as removing, making anonymous, or aggregating direct and indirect identifiers from the data files.
- 6.4 When documenting and sharing traditional knowledge, ICIMOD will adhere to existing laws and international best practices and ethics. ICIMOD will work with its partners to share knowledge developed as a result of using traditional knowledge with the providers of traditional knowledge such as communities.

- 6.5 Increasingly, scientific journals are also demanding the publication of research data alongside published articles to allow for more transparent and critical analysis in the peer review process. Unless restricted by confidentiality or third party rights, ICIMOD will make available the research data used in its publications through its institutional repository or a suitable external repository.
- 6.6 Bearing in mind the fragility of mountain ecosystems and the potential impacts of climate change and other challenges on the Hindu Kush Himalayan region, ICIMOD agreements will specify that ICIMOD reserves the right to share data with all member countries and partners in the event of national or regional humanitarian and emergency crises adhering to international practices.

## **7. Revision and Updates**

ICIMOD is cognizant of the need to ensure that its data management and sharing policy is updated from time to time to reflect changes in international policies, laws, and best practices. Improvements and revisions to this policy will therefore be considered and made periodically and will be subject to the approval of ICIMOD's Board of Governors.