

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

Economist – Air Quality

Action Area B: Stimulating Action for Clean Air

Strategic Group 1: Reducing Climate and Environmental Risks



ToR

About ICIMOD

The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region stretches 3,500 km 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 around two billion people and is a habitat for countless irreplaceable species. It is also acutely fragile and at the frontline of 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](#).

Position overview

This position will be housed within Action Area (AA) - Stimulating Action for Clean Air under Strategic Group 1 - Reducing Climate and Environmental Risks. This Action Area focuses its attention on the significant impacts of air pollution on human health, economic development, climate change, and the environment. Air pollution levels are high across the HKH and air pollutants travel without respecting borders. At the same time, there are huge gaps between the actual air quality outcomes being currently achieved in the HKH region and regional and international goals and targets. This is partly due to the lack of cost-effective and implementable solutions, as well due to a lack of understanding on which solutions to prioritise. Improving air quality may impose costs on society due to the implementation of measures, but it brings considerable benefits in terms of avoided costs related to health, ecosystems, and infrastructure. Numerous studies demonstrate that the benefits, particularly in relation to health, far exceed the costs involved.

This role involves assessing investment baselines and developing approaches and strategies to increase investment in air quality across ICIMOD's Regional Member Countries (RMCs). The Economist will conduct economic analyses and provide recommendations for integrating mitigation actions into policies and budgets, supporting broader adoption and implementation. Aligned with the ICIMOD's Strategy 2030 and the Medium-Term Action Plan (MTAP) V (2023-2026), the role also includes facilitating dialogues and capacity-building programmes aimed at enhancing the RMCs' capacity to understand and effectively engage with climate finance related to air quality.

This Action Area has been collaborating with the World Bank and government representatives from 24 institutions in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan to create a 'road map' for joint action on air pollution mitigation. The first meeting to advance this initiative took place from 14–15 December 2022, with a science-policy dialogue (SPD) in Kathmandu. The dialogue focused on the urgent need to apply localised and region-specific air quality monitoring mechanisms, management measures, and policy tools to address the critical issue of transboundary air pollution. A second SPD was held in Thimphu, Bhutan, from 26–27 June 2024, where representatives from the Indo-Gangetic Plains and the

Himalayan Foothills agreed to establish a coordinated framework, drawing on international initiatives and regional frameworks. These are positive steps towards creating an enabling environment and mobilising the necessary investments to implement effective air pollution mitigation policies and practices.

ICIMOD aims to take a leading role in promoting evidence-based policy and practices on clean air in the HKH region, increasingly focusing on air pollution mitigation. This effort involves identifying relevant technologies and practices, and designing initiatives and projects to implement cost-effective solutions. The Economist will closely work with the Air Pollution Mitigation Specialist to analyse the economics, and cost effectiveness of these solutions, considering both the implementation costs and the avoided costs in terms of human health, agricultural yields, and infrastructure.

This Action Area is organised around two interrelated work areas, known in ICIMOD as interventions:

1. Strengthening institutional capacities for policymaking, air pollution monitoring, and targeting the most polluting sectors to improve air quality.
2. Promoting the adoption of cleaner, socially responsible solutions and investments for the effective reduction of air pollutants, including short-lived climate forcers (SLCFs) and greenhouse gases.

Responsibilities

The Economist will be responsible for delivering results in line with the commitments we have made in our [Strategy 2030: Moving Mountains](#) and our [Medium-Term Action Plan V \(2023–2026\): Embracing Change and Accelerating Impact](#), as well as the associated [Results Framework 2023–26](#).

As a recognised expert in the field of Air Quality and Economics, the Economist will be responsible for:

1. **Supporting the implementation of solutions to improve air quality:**
 - Contribute to the design and implementation of activities aimed at identifying and accelerating climate and clean air innovations by undertaking comprehensive economic assessments and cost-benefit analyses, in a way that supports decision-making around clean air solutions and increases investments in the most relevant activity sectors.
 - Develop conceptual frameworks and methodologies by providing intellectual expertise in air quality management from an economic and investment perspective, including the development of conceptual frameworks, methodologies, and principles.
 - Provide recommendations from an economic/investment perspective for the integration of mitigation actions into policies, supporting their wider implementation.

2. Identifying and convening key stakeholders for the uptake of solutions and to leverage new investments:

- Deliver expert advice and lead specific components of initiatives related to air quality and economic analysis.
- Develop strategies to increase investments from various sources to improve air quality in the RMCs. Conduct economic analyses to evaluate the feasibility and impact of proposed mitigation actions.
- Collaborate with research networks and institutions: Reach out to scientists and researchers in regional and global universities, institutes, and research networks (e.g. SANDEE), including partner research institutes, to identify and develop opportunities for economic research on air pollution. Integrate research coming out of the SANDEE network into the action area's activities.

3. Building a robust, evidence-based economics system for cost-effective air strategies:

- Reach out to scientists in regional and global universities and institutes, including partner research institutes, to identify and develop opportunities for research on economics of air pollution mitigation strategies and solutions.
- Conduct comprehensive needs assessments to understand specific requirements, and develop databases of costs related to the impact of air pollution and the cost of implementing mitigation measures.
- Prepare research reports and publications on air pollution economics. Contribute to the identification of new funding opportunities and offering expert input for the development of proposals.

4. Planning, monitoring, and reporting (PMR):

- Ensure that all technical contributions facilitate the delivery of the Action Area's results, milestones, and targets.
- Provide expert inputs to periodical PMR processes as required by ICIMOD.
- Make effective and evidence-based contributions to all reporting requirements, both institutional and for donors.
- Ensure that all agreements with partners have results frameworks (logframes) that support ICIMOD in meeting its targets.
- Contributing to any evaluation processes when required.

5. Building strong regional and global networks:

- Network with regional and international organisations, participate in professional bodies, and represent the organisation at external events.
- Contribute to communication, outreach and engagement efforts.

6. **Strengthening capacity:**

- Design and deliver capacity-building activities on air pollution economics, leading to the development of mitigation actions.
- Suggest capacity development strategies for partners and other stakeholders.
- Build expertise in air pollution economics among partners and stakeholders.
- Provide expert inputs for developing proposals related to regional programmes and initiatives focused on reducing air pollution.

Person specification/competencies

ESSENTIAL

- A postgraduate degree (MSc or PhD) in a relevant field, such as Environmental Economics, Energy Economics, and other relevant subjects with at least 10 years of experience or a PhD in those subjects, with **at least five years' experience** in the South Asian region.
- Demonstrated experience in designing, developing, and implementing effective air quality improvement solutions, integrating economic analysis to ensure sustainable and impactful outcomes.
- At least five years of relevant work experience, preferably in the HKH region.
- Proven experience (at least two years) in the assessment and development of Air Quality Plans.
- Excellent project management and coordination skills, with a proven track record of managing large-scale programmes, including budgeting and financial management.
- Experience working in multicultural environments, demonstrating cultural sensitivity and adaptability.
- A well-established professional network regionally and internationally.
- Outstanding problem-solving skills and a proactive approach to seeking solutions.
- A strong commitment to integrating and advancing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) aspects in and across all workstreams.
- Strong research and analytical skills, particularly in the context of environmental economics, energy economics, and air quality.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to present complex information clearly and concisely to diverse audiences.
- Proficiency in using relevant tools for data analysis, project management, and reporting.

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- Strong understanding of opportunities and challenges facing the HKH and other mountainous regions.
- Knowledge of integrated assessment methodologies.
- Experience integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) into programming and/or applying inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary approaches.
- Experience communicating to diverse audiences (e.g. media, conferences, funders).

COMPETENCIES

- **Teamwork and cooperation:** Provide information to and share resources with other team members; lead junior staff with different skill sets through collaborative decision-making processes at various institutional levels.
- **Result orientation:** Contribute to help the organisation achieve its short- and long-term goals leading to increased outcome and impact.
- **Leadership:** Optimise resources around long-term plans and programmes while setting high standards.
- **Networking and stakeholder management:** In agreement with the Intervention Manager, identify relevant stakeholders and partners and engage them at strategic levels.

Reporting and supervising

The Economist will report to the Intervention Manager. The Economist will also work in close collaboration with other Action Areas, where relevant.

Location

You will be working in a cross-cultural, impact-oriented environment at ICIMOD's head office in Kathmandu, Nepal. Frequent travel in the HKH region and occasional travels outside the HKH region will be required.

Kathmandu is a lively and exciting place to live. People are friendly, living costs are comparatively inexpensive, food is delicious (with a range of local and international cuisines), and there are good local and international schools and a low crime rate. Nepal offers amazing trekking trails, white water rafting, and safaris, combined with a rich culture and charming yet lively nightlife.

Duration

Until December 2026, with a probation period of six months. There is a possibility of extension subject to performance and ICIMOD's future funding levels.

Remuneration

This is an international position at ICIMOD. The starting annual gross salary for this position is **USD 39,723/-** (negotiable based on experience and qualifications). Gross salary comprises of basic salary, provident fund, family/post adjustment allowance, and child/dependency allowances. Salaries and benefits at ICIMOD are competitive compared with other international organisations. We offer a comprehensive benefits package which includes insurances (medical, life and accidental), children's education grant for maximum 2 children below 18 years of age, severance pay, paid leave (30 holidays and 10 public holidays per year) and day care facility.

For expatriates, there is a tax exemption in Nepal; they are responsible for their home country's tax payments. Expatriate staff are entitled to housing allowance, annual home leave ticket, shipment of personal effects, and an installation and repatriation allowance.

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 human resource 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.

Method of application

Applicants are requested to apply online before **October 13, 2024** (11:59 PM Nepal Standard Time) through the [ICIMOD Vacancy Application Portal](#).

Only shortlisted candidates will be notified.