

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Specialist- HI-CAS

(Project position)

Project: Integrated Climate Adaptation Solution for the Hindu Kush Himalaya Region (HI-CAS)

Strategic Group: Resilient Economies and Landscapes

ToR

About ICIMOD

The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region stretches 3,500km 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 up to two billion people and is a habitat for countless irreplaceable species. It is also acutely fragile and front-line to 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](#).

Background

The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Specialist is being hired under the *Integrated Climate Adaptation Solutions for the Hindu Kush Himalaya Region* (HI-CAS) project at ICIMOD, funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) – Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). The project aims to improve climate-resilient, nature-positive livelihoods while strengthening the leadership and agency of rural women and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.

The project will be implemented through the adoption of gender-responsive and locally tailored climate adaptation solutions—grounded in feminist and human rights-based methodologies—that place the rights, agency, and leadership of IPLCs at the centre. These evidence-informed Integrated Adaptation Solution Packages (IASPs) will combine springshed management, renewable energy technologies for power irrigation systems, and agrobiodiversity practices. They will be complemented by capacity building and knowledge sharing to drive institutional policy and action, and to attract sustainable investments in climate action and development—particularly in the water, energy, and agrobiodiversity sectors—with a strong focus on women’s and IPLCs’ leadership.

The HI-CAS project will be implemented in two gewogs (blocks) in Bhutan—Paro and Punakha; two upazilas (sub-districts) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh—Bandarban and Khagrachari districts; and two municipalities in Nepal—Roshi and Dhankuta. Over its four-year duration, the project aims to benefit approximately 40,000 IPLCs and other vulnerable groups by reducing their exposure and sensitivity to climate change impacts, while fostering ecosystem health and climate mitigation outcomes.

Position overview

The GESI Specialist will be responsible for supporting the delivery of results in line with the commitments ICIMOD has made in the HI-CAS Project Performance Measurement Framework, that is nested within our [Strategy 2030: Moving Mountains](#) and our [Medium-Term Action Plan V \(2023–2026\): Embracing Change and Accelerating Impact](#) and related Results Framework 2023-26. ICIMOD places GESI at the centre of its work, guided by its [GESI Policy 2024](#). This policy builds upon our long-standing commitment to gender issues within the changing context of the HKH, with more recent articulation of a proactive stance toward addressing social inclusion.

The GESI Specialist will serve as the main point of contact for all gender- and social inclusion-related components of the HI-CAS project and ensure effective coordination and support across all project activities and partners, while also working closely with all members of the HI-CAS team.

The GESI Specialist will play a critical role in promoting intersectionality and ensuring that the voices and leadership of women and IPLCs—central to the project’s outcomes—are meaningfully included. This position also offers a unique opportunity to lead and advance the integration of feminist, intersectional approaches to GESI and Indigenous Peoples (IP) in climate adaptation and resilience efforts across Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal, with a specific focus on springshed management, renewable energy technologies, and agrobiodiversity practices.

Rooted in Global Affairs Canada’s (GAC) Feminist International Assistance Policy, the role will generate knowledge and evidence on GESI dynamics and Indigenous knowledge systems to inform inclusive, rights-based policies, programmes, and investments. It will also support the implementation of ICIMOD’s commitments under the HI-CAS project by ensuring that women, Indigenous Peoples, and disadvantaged groups are not only meaningfully engaged but also empowered as agents of change and equitably benefit from project interventions.

Responsibilities

1. GESI Integration and Feminist Analysis

- Develop feminist approaches and conduct contextual, intersectional GESI analyses in the target countries to identify gender dynamics, Indigenous knowledge system needs, challenges, and opportunities for mainstreaming gender across HI-CAS project activities in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.
- Ensure that GESI analyses meaningfully integrate social inclusion in project activities by identifying and analysing the barriers faced by socially excluded groups—such as women and Indigenous Peoples—in accessing resources, services, decision-making processes, and project benefits.

- Lead GESI-related stakeholder mapping and analysis to identify potential collaborators and strengthen project partnerships and influence.
- Develop a GESI strategy for the project along with a Gender Action Plan (GAP) aligned with the project's objectives and establish indicators to track progress and monitor implementation.
- Ensure project compliance with ICIMOD's safeguarding policies (social, child protection, and PSEA), incorporate assessments with clear mitigation actions, and track and monitor related risks.
- Conduct a human rights-based analysis (HRBA) to inform and guide the project, highlighting structural barriers, discriminatory norms, and systemic inequalities; continuously update the analysis and recommend strategies to empower women, Indigenous Peoples, and disadvantaged groups.

2. Capacity Building and Technical Support

- Develop and support the delivery of an integrated, intersectional feminist and GESI-responsive capacity-strengthening package (training curriculum, toolkit, and facilitation guides) tailored for HI-CAS partners and contextualised for women and IPLC groups in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal.
- Strengthen the institutional capacities of all HI-CAS implementing partners to integrate GESI—focusing on intersectional feminist approaches and safeguarding considerations—into project implementation.
- Establish and monitor safeguarding, reporting, and referral mechanisms to address risks.
- Provide technical inputs to the springshed and renewable energy teams to ensure GESI-responsive approaches. Co-design and document GESI-responsive IASP pilots, ensuring alignment with feminist and intersectional principles.
- Co-design and document GESI-responsive IASPs.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

- Support HI-CAS partners in facilitating participatory consultations and the engagement of women, IPLCs, and disadvantaged communities in planning, decision-making, and implementation processes.
- Empower women and IPLC networks by supporting partners to ensure their meaningful participation in community-based institutions and leadership roles (e.g., Water User Groups, Renewable Energy User Committees), enabling them to actively contribute to and benefit from project activities.

4. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

- Ensure that the project baseline includes sufficient information on women, IPLCs, and other socially excluded groups.
- Develop GESI-responsive indicators and contribute to the project's MEL framework, including baseline data collection tools and analysis methods that effectively capture GESI and IPLC dynamics.
- Track progress and report on gender equality and IPLC-related outcomes, disaggregated data, and lessons learned, in line with ICIMOD's GESI marker.
- Compile case studies and knowledge products highlighting GESI-responsive and feminist outcomes.

5. Policy Support

- Produce high-quality reports, learning briefs, and case studies that showcase GESI outcomes, transformative impacts, and lessons learned, ensuring visibility of Indigenous women's voices and leadership developed through project activities.
- Ensure the delivery of all GESI-related, intersectional feminist, and human rights-based commitments outlined in the agreement and project proposal between ICIMOD and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) – Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD).

Person specification/competencies

This position requires in-depth knowledge of feminist methodology (intersectional, participatory, rights-based, power-aware), an understanding of Indigenous groups' unique rights and knowledge systems, and expertise to ensure alignment with both Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy and ICIMOD's strategic objectives.

ESSENTIAL

- Minimum of a master's degree in social sciences or a related field (e.g., gender and women's studies, feminist studies, sociology, anthropology, development studies, environmental studies).
- At least 5 years of experience and demonstrated skills in applying GESI concepts, feminist and rights-based approaches, Indigenous Peoples' issues, human rights analysis, and relevant methods in research and/or development programs, particularly in the field of GESI.
- Experience in conducting qualitative and quantitative GESI research, applying feminist methods, field data collection, data analysis, and using tools for GESI integration.
- Experience working with a diverse range of stakeholders, including local communities, governments, the private sector, etc.

- Excellent writing and verbal communication skills in English.
- Strong skills in scientific, social, and feminist writing (e.g., technical reports, journal articles) and in preparing workshop reports.
- Motivated and willing to travel to remote areas of the HKH region whenever required.

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- Experience working in an international organisation with people from a wide range of cultures and nationalities.
- Working knowledge of, or interest in learning, the languages of the HKH region.

Reporting and supervising

The GESI Specialist will report to the Senior Project Coordinator-HI-CAS (primary supervisor) and ICIMOD's GESI Lead (co-supervisor). The Specialist will work in close coordination with the Head of Strategic Group: Resilient Economies and Landscapes and the team. It will also involve collaboration with other Strategic Groups and Units at ICIMOD.

Location

The GESI Specialist will be working in a cross-cultural, impact-oriented environment at ICIMOD's headquarters in Kathmandu, Nepal. Frequent travels within Nepal and to the project sites 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

Two-year fixed-term project contract with a probation period of six months; possibility of extension subject to the availability of HICAS project funding, the need for the position, and the staff member's performance.

Remuneration

This is an international position at ICIMOD. The starting annual gross salary for this position is **USD 40,121**. Gross salary comprises basic salary, provident fund, and family/post adjustment allowance. Salaries and benefits at ICIMOD are competitive compared with other international organisations. We offer a comprehensive benefits package which includes child/dependency allowances, insurances (medical, life and accidental), children's education grant for a maximum of 2 children below 18 years of age, severance pay, paid leave (30 holidays and 10 public holidays per year) and a 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 August 24, 2025 (11:59 pm Nepal Standard Time UTC+05:45) through the [ICIMOD Vacancy Application Portal](#).

Only shortlisted candidates will be notified.