

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

Senior Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Specialist

[Project Position]

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 region is vital for the food, water, and energy security of nearly two billion people and hosts unique ecosystems and biodiversity. It is also acutely fragile on 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), headquartered in Kathmandu, Nepal, is an international organisation established in 1983, working to make this critical region greener, more inclusive and climate resilient. For more information, please refer to our [Strategy 2030](#) and institutional [website](#).

Position Overview

The Senior Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Specialist will provide strategic leadership and technical oversight for all matters related to MEL, primarily for ICIMOD's two Adaptation Fund projects: Green, Resilient, and Adaptive Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) Economy in [Bangladesh \(GRACE\)](#) and the Sustainable Actions for Ecosystems Restoration in Pakistan ([SAFER Pakistan](#)), but also providing senior oversight for ICIMOD results work.

The GRACE LoCALplus is implemented in partnership with UNCDF, and it marks a significant initiative to build climate resilience in the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh. It will support the restoration of critical water sources, enhance climate-resilient infrastructure, and strengthen sustainable agriculture practices in Rangamati, Khagrachari, and Bandarban. Through the LoCALplus mechanism, GRACE will channel climate finance directly to local governments via performance-based grants, ensuring transparency and equity in fund distribution. The project aligns with the National Adaptation Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SAFER Project is implemented in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Pakistan and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Pakistan and aims to enhance climate resilience in vulnerable regions of Pakistan through risk preparedness, integrated water resource management, and ecosystem-based adaptation. The project addresses six key climate-related risks faced by communities in Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh provinces, including cryosphere hazards, drying springs, water pollution and reduced access to clean water.

As both projects enter critical implementation stages, the Senior MEL Specialist will ensure robust systems are in place for tracking outcomes, assessing impacts, and supporting adaptive management across implementation cycles.

While housed within ICIMOD's Strategic Results, Partnerships and Business Development (SRPBD) Unit, this position will provide overall senior technical oversight for ICIMOD's results work, whilst also overseeing MEL for these two Adaptation Fund projects. The SRPBD Unit is responsible for strengthening institutional approaches, methods, and standards for results planning, coordination, partnerships, and resource mobilisation. Locating this position within SRPBD ensures adherence to institutional MEL quality standards, while also supporting the day-to-day implementation of GRACE and SAFER.

Responsibilities

The Senior MEL Specialist is responsible for ensuring project results are delivered in line with ICIMOD's commitments under GRACE and SAFER Results Frameworks. These projects are embedded within ICIMOD's Institutional [Strategy 2030: Moving Mountains](#) and [Medium-Term Action Plan V \(2023-2026\): Embracing Change and Accelerating Impact Institutional Results Framework](#).

The Senior MEL Specialist plays a critical role in strengthening systems for results-based planning, management, monitoring, and reporting within both the GRACE and SAFER projects — with a strong emphasis on adaptive learning, performance delivery, and the tracking of impacts, outcomes and outputs, whilst also ensuring full compliance with the Adaptation Fund and ICIMOD's MEL policies and procedures. Some time will also be dedicated to oversight for ICIMOD's overall results approaches.

This position requires relevant qualifications and senior experience in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning, with demonstrated expertise in results-based management. It will require close working with the Senior Project Management Specialist (SPMS) for the Adaptation Fund at ICIMOD, as well as the ICIMOD Country Project Managers (based in Pakistan and Bangladesh, respectively) and Adaptation Fund projects' Executing Entities (UNICEF, UN Women and UNCDF). The role also demands strong familiarity with the Adaptation Fund's approaches to results, or experience with climate MEL in any Adaptation Fund, GEF or GCF-funded project.

The Senior MEL Specialist shall fulfil the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Strategic Planning and Results-Based Management

- Work with the GRACE and SAFER project teams, UN partners and relevant government agencies to ensure planning, MEL activities, and reporting align with each project's Results Frameworks.
- Provide strategic leadership on MEL approaches, methodologies, data systems, and analysis.
- Ensure planning, M&E, results-based management and reporting are fully compliant with our contractual obligations with the Adaptation Fund, including adherence with AF and ICIMOD's policies, standards and requirements, including for independent evaluation.
- Work closely with the GRACE and SAFER project teams and partners and relevant government agencies to ensure that each project's MEL is fully integrated into and aligned with both projects' planning and budgeting, implementation and reporting cycles and outputs.
- Work with the project teams to ensure the annual work plans and budgets are outcome-focused, aligned with the Adaptation Fund core outcome indicators and result framework milestones and reflect adaptive management principles.

2. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

- Design, roll out and oversee the implementation of the projects' MEL Plans, ensuring alignment with projects' Results Frameworks and integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI).
- Lead on preparation, maintenance and oversight of MEL Frameworks and core MEL tools, including results frameworks, theories of change, log frames and performance indicators.
- Support baseline survey designs (where relevant), developing indicator metadata sheets, ensuring data quality protocols, and producing semi-annual updates in the prescribed Programme Performance Report (PPR). Ensure that baseline and periodic data enable completion of the Adaptation Fund Results Tracker and outcome-level indicator reporting. Coordinate the timely submission of the tracker to the AF Secretariat.

- Work closely with all project Executing Entities MEL leads (UNICEF, UNCDF and UN Women) to develop a shared set of data collection tools, defined indicators and reporting calendars, and organise joint refresher trainings as required so that all partners apply the same MEL standards and adhere to the Adaptation Fund's and ICIMOD's MEL requirements.
- Plan and manage field-based monitoring missions in all project regions, ensuring data collection is responsive to both the project's needs and cycles.
- Prepare annual expenditure plans for MEL activities, monitor expenditure rates, and justify reallocations where required in line with the Adaptation Funds guidelines.
- Coordinate with ICIMOD's Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) to ensure timely commissioning of mid-term and terminal evaluations and integration of findings into project work plans.
- Commission, in liaison with ICIMOD's Independent Evaluation Unit, any internal evaluations that are not independent, that might be required for a specialised deep dive on a matter or for learning.
- Facilitate reflection sessions and learning reviews to adapt implementation strategies and to inform work plans based on monitoring data and stakeholder feedback.

3. Reporting, data systems and Accountability

- Support preparation and review as well as submission of all required project reports, including annual reporting, and the Mid-Term and Final Evaluation Reports - ensuring quality, timeliness, and compliance with AF requirements, including the Annual and Final Project Performance Reports (PPRs), Results tracker updates, Environmental and social safeguards reports and financial audits.
- Ensure delivery of high-quality reports from executing entities (EEs) by developing and disseminating reporting templates aligned with AF reporting formats and guidance, communicating reporting procedures and providing technical review and consolidation.
- Compile and consolidate Project Monitoring Reports (PMRs), integrating technical, environmental, social and gender data submitted by the ICIMOD teams, partner entities and stakeholders. Ensure consistency with Adaptation Fund formats for submission to the Project Steering Committee (PSC).
- Support the commissioning process for baseline assessments, in collaboration with the SRPBD and IEU, ensuring alignment with the results tracker, and strengthening institutional and local MEL data systems.
- Work with teams and the Data and Information Specialist to validate project data and evidence, and update ICIMOD's Results Dashboard and performance-based climate resilience grants (PBCRG)-linked results platforms.
- Respond to audit requirements and evaluation queries by compiling and submitting necessary documentation.
- Ensure data protection, privacy, and ethical standards, particularly in relation to sensitive and disaggregated data collected for GESI-responsive MEL. Ensure compliance with relevant data protection regulations and ICIMOD policies throughout the data lifecycle, from collection and storage to analysis and dissemination. Promote secure data management practices among partners and stakeholders, and ensure informed consent, confidentiality, and the dignity of all participants are safeguarded.

4. Capacity Building and MEL Technical Support

- Provide expert technical assistance to project teams and partners on results-based planning, monitoring, and reporting frameworks, ensuring compliance with PBCRG requirements and alignment with donor expectations, in close collaboration with UNCDF
- Deliver guidance for GRACE (HDCs, Upazila-level stakeholders) and SAFER partners on AF-compliant results-based planning, monitoring, and reporting approaches, including

preparation of PPRs, Results Tracker inputs, and environmental and social monitoring requirements.

- Develop practical tools, templates and guidance materials to standardise MEL processes in line with donor requirements and tailored to the local adaptation contexts of the SAFER and GRACE projects.

5. Integration of Cross-Cutting Themes

- **Mainstream GESI and Environmental MEL Considerations:** Ensure that gender equality, human rights, social inclusion, climate resilience, and biodiversity are embedded in each project's design, monitoring and reporting, and consistent with the Adaptation Fund's Environmental and Social and Gender Policies.
- **Provide strategic leadership on the integration of GESI within all MEL processes.** Work in close collaboration with ICIMOD's project management team, implementing partners, and other key stakeholders to ensure that GESI principles are effectively embedded in MEL frameworks, methodologies, data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- **Foster a shared understanding of GESI-responsive MEL across the project to support inclusive, evidence-based decision-making.** Track progress against the Gender Action Plan indicators, ensure regular monitoring of Environmental & Social Management Plan measures, and incorporate findings into project progress tracking and reporting.
- **Engage Stakeholders:** Facilitate the meaningful participation of disadvantaged groups, women, youth and other key stakeholders in project design, monitoring and evaluation processes.
- **Support the implementation and monitoring of the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM),** ensuring that all grievances are documented, addressed, and reported in line with AF requirements.

6. Knowledge Management and Dissemination

- **Capture and Share Learning:** Document lessons learned, best practices, and success stories and facilitate learning events informed by evidence and learning from the GRACE and SAFER projects to inform current and future implementation. Ensure documented lessons feed into ICIMOD's institutional learning reviews and the learning agenda of the Adaptation Fund.
- **Support Knowledge Sharing Platforms:** Contribute to knowledge products, case studies, and synthesis reports for submission to the Adaptation Fund Knowledge Exchange Platform, ensuring that project learning informs future AF programming and contributes to the global adaptation evidence base.

7. Collaboration with the SRPBD Unit

- **Work Across Teams:** Collaborate closely with ICIMOD's 'Strategic Results, Partnership, and Business Development' team members and other ICIMOD programme staff to strengthen project-level results, business development and partnerships.
- **Contribute to Proposal Development:** Provide inputs on results frameworks and MEL plans for new funding proposals and concept notes, drawing on the lessons and systems from GRACE and SAFER.
- **Respond to Evolving Requirements:** Undertake additional MEL-related tasks as assigned by the Project Coordinators and other project team members, including responding to evolving Adaptation Fund guidance and MEL system requirements.

Person Specification/Competencies

ESSENTIAL

- Master's degree in climate, environment or natural resources, development, policy studies, social sciences, economics, or a related field.
- At least 10 years of senior-level experience in results-based approaches, including the integration of monitoring, evaluation and reporting, in international, multicultural or research settings.
- Proven experience in designing and implementing MEL systems tailored to diverse donor requirements.
- Ability to train and mentor staff in planning and reporting processes.
- Expert knowledge of project management and planning tools (e.g. Microsoft Project, Google Sheets) and digital monitoring platforms.
- Strong facilitation, interpersonal and advisory skills for working across teams and institutions and the ability to work independently and collaboratively in a fast-paced environment.
- Background or experience in sustainable development, climate change, resilience programming, or other related fields
- Understanding how to integrate GESI, climate and biodiversity into monitoring and reporting.
- Excellent English communication skills, both written and verbal.
- High degree of cultural sensitivity, maturity, and discretion.

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- Experience working in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) and/or broader South Asian region.
- Experience in managing or providing MEL technical support for an Adaptation Fund project or similar.

Reporting and supervising

The Senior MEL Specialist reports to the Head of Strategic Results, Partnership and Business Development (SRPBD) and participates in SRPBD team-related activities. The role also works closely with the Senior Project Management Specialist and Country Project Managers for the GRACE and SAFER projects. The specialist will also work in close collaboration with the specified teams and partners.

Location

You will be working in a cross-cultural, impact-oriented environment at ICIMOD's head office in Kathmandu, Nepal. Frequent travel to Pakistan and Bangladesh 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

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

Remuneration

This is an international position at ICIMOD. The annual gross salary for this position is **USD 67,175**. 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, insurance (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 before **5 December 2025** (11:59 PM Nepal Standard Time) through the [ICIMOD Vacancy Application Portal](#).

Only shortlisted candidates will be notified.

Annex:

About Adaptation Fund Projects

The Adaptation Fund has recently awarded ICIMOD two substantial grants to implement two new strategic projects: The [Green, Resilient, and Adaptive CHT Economy \(GRACE\)](#) project

and the [Sustainable Actions for Ecosystems Restoration in Pakistan \(SAFER Pakistan\)](#) project.

The GRACE LoCALplus is implemented in partnership with UNCDF, and it marks a significant initiative to build climate resilience in the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh. It will support the restoration of critical water sources, enhance climate-resilient infrastructure, and strengthen sustainable agriculture practices in Rangamati, Khagrachari, and Bandarban. Through the LoCALplus mechanism, GRACE will channel climate finance directly to local governments via performance-based grants, ensuring transparency and equity in fund distribution. The project aligns with the National Adaptation Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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Working in partnership with diverse stakeholders, the GRACE and SAFER projects will be implemented in **Bangladesh and Pakistan**, respectively. These are the first ICIMOD projects funded by the Adaptation Fund, each with defined deliverables and management responsibilities. These projects demand strong project management, coordination, oversight, and cross-team collaboration.

As the **Implementing Entity (IE)**, ICIMOD is responsible for ensuring that both projects are executed in accordance with the Adaptation Fund's operational policies and fiduciary standards. The IE serves as the formal link to the Fund's Board, overseeing overall results delivery, financial management, environmental and social safeguards, gender integration, and outcome monitoring. When working with **Executing Entities (EEs)**, the IE must ensure they have the necessary capacity, comply with Fund requirements, and deliver timely and accurate technical and financial reports.

In these projects, selected UN agencies and government partners act as EEs, while ICIMOD, in addition to its role as IE, also leads on specific technical components and provides strategic and operational guidance. This dual role (as IE and EE) requires ICIMOD to oversee the delivery of its results, as well as to ensure that the administrative, human resource, fiduciary responsibilities and technical execution are also delivered according to plan, budget and contractual obligations by the EEs.