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# 3<sup>RD</sup> INDUS BASIN KNOWLEDGE FORUM

## *MANAGING SYSTEMS UNDER STRESS: SCIENCE FOR SOLUTIONS IN THE INDUS BASIN*

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DATE: 31 MAY – 2 JUNE 2018 – VIENNA, AUSTRIA

### Background

The water resources of the Indus River basin are a key factor in economic development and the livelihoods of the more than 268 million inhabitants<sup>1</sup> who live in the basin, as well as forming the backbone of environmental integrity of the region. Global changes such as population growth, urbanization, climate change and urbanization, will exacerbate the basin's already stressed water resources for decades to come.

For several years, researchers, government officials and opinion leaders from all four countries of the Indus basin, i.e. Afghanistan, China, India and Pakistan, have been convening under various initiatives to share the work they are conducting. These initiatives have joined forces and convene together under the Indus Basin Knowledge Forum to advance collaborative efforts towards the sustainable management of the basin's resources in the light of climate change. With these initiatives and events, engagement and participation widens, encompassing an increasing number of disciplines that takes into consideration the multi-faceted complexities that decision-makers face when having to develop policies around integrated approaches to water-related challenges in the basin. This integration, between the multitude of disciplines as well as both upstream and downstream, working with a basin-wide approach, offers additional opportunities to develop and share knowledge and find solutions.

This Indus Basin Knowledge Forum will build on the outcomes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indus Basin Knowledge Forum that took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka in July 2017 and make further connections among those working in policy making, research and knowledge. The meeting is co-convened by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and the World Bank, therefore building on the earlier work of the Indus Forum, the Upper Indus Basin Network and other basin-level initiatives, noticeably the Global Environment Facility funded Integrated Solutions for Water, energy and Land project (ISWEL).

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<sup>1</sup> While various estimations have been made of the population of the Indus basin, this number has been calculated from analysis conducted by ICIMOD based on the dataset [“Gridded population of the world adjusted to UN country level population estimates for 2010 and 2015”](#) produced by the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Columbia University.

## Purpose

The series of Indus Basin Knowledge Fora have the primary focus to be a strategic platform for researchers, knowledge providers and other stakeholders working on water-related issues in the Indus basin to share knowledge and explore synergies to further coordination at the basin level. The objective is to facilitate the science/knowledge-policy connect by inviting a wide spectrum of stakeholders to enhance the understanding of national and regional priorities and challenges around the development of the Indus basin.

To continue making progress towards these ends, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indus Basin Knowledge Forum will have three main activities that will help continue progress science/knowledge and policy together:

- **Follow up on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indus Basin Knowledge Forum:** The principle outcome of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum emerged as a 10-point action plan that would strengthen the Indus basin knowledge landscape, building on opportunities for knowledge sharing and co-development, while at the same time making the knowledge that is already available more readily accessible. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum will take these points, check in on their progress and propose next steps for how to continue to advance these objectives in the context of trying to make better, more informed connections between the science and knowledge communities and policy makers.
- **Bring together researchers and research funders of water-related work in the Indus basin to facilitate interaction and potential collaboration:** Successive meetings have reinforced the value of collaborative research; and while there is clear appetite for such collaboration among researchers, funding avenues to support such initiatives are limited. This meeting therefore proposes a marketplace approach to enable spontaneous interactions among research teams with diverse disciplinary backgrounds as well as government/non-government agencies that could potentially fund these initiatives. Indus basin researchers will have the opportunity to present the work that they are conducting while research foundations and other funders can share with researchers what their funding priorities are, the conditions under which they are funding projects, to create a space where matchmaking between funder and researcher can take place. The meeting will produce a veritable marketplace of what is available for funders to finance.
- **Review the outcomes of a technical workshop for Indus basin scientists to engage in IIASA's Integrated Solutions for Water, Energy and Land (ISWEL) project:** The main goal of Integrated Solutions for Water, Energy, and Land (ISWEL) is to provide portfolios of cost-effective solutions and investment strategies to jointly meet future water, energy and land demands under different and contrasting climate and socio-economic pathways, whilst acknowledging regional constraints and opportunities. The project takes a global approach, with focus on two transboundary basins facing multiple development and environmental challenges: The Indus river basin in South Asia and the Zambezi river basin in South East Africa.

To accomplish this, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indus Basin Knowledge Forum will convene ~100 stakeholders from research, academia, government, foundations and the donor community to actively engage in discussions around scenario development for decision-making in the Indus basin as well as sharing research outcomes with policy makers, as well as with funders to explore potential collaboration to facilitate science and fact-based decision making to advance the sustainable management of the Indus basin.