



LIVING
HIMALAYAS

2015

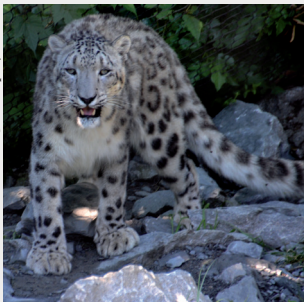


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WWF LIVING HIMALAYAS INITIATIVE



Location of the
Eastern Himalayas in
South Asia



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The Eastern Himalayas is home to 10,000 plant species, 750 birds, 269 freshwater fish and 240 mammals. Its mountains offer refuge to the magnificent snow leopards.

The Living Himalayas Initiative (LHI) is one of the 13 Global Initiatives established by WWF in 2009 to bring about transformational conservation impact in the three Eastern Himalayan countries of Bhutan, India (North-East) and Nepal through;

- CATALYSING environment for investments in the development of sustainable and climate resilient infrastructure that does not compromise freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems and their biodiversity and
- UPSCALING conservation efforts through continued and new partnership for an ecologically contiguous mosaic of conservation spaces of the freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems across the Eastern Himalayas.

The Eastern Himalayas is one of the world's most biodiversity rich regions. This biodiversity - along with livelihoods, traditions and ways of life of local communities - is underpinned by the ecological health of the major rivers that it feeds. According to WWF, one in five people on Earth depend on the fresh water that flows from the Eastern Himalayas.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Water is the currency: Impacts of climate change coupled with growing human needs and development are affecting the hydrology of the Himalayas creating water stress (too much or too little water). Eastern Himalayan rivers support life and livelihoods of half a billion people. These river basins are also set for large scale development initiatives to meet energy needs of growing economies. Bulk of the water in these rivers is fed by monsoon rains. Mountain ecosystems on Himalayan slopes harvest this water and feed its rivers through the seasons.

The need, therefore, is to secure the mountain ecosystems and maintain the environmental services these provide for the development needs and well-being of its people.



Increased regional action: The three governments come together and recognise the need for regional action to maintain the integrity and connectivity of ecosystems as the source of water in the Eastern Himalayas and also take concrete actions towards this end.

Sustainable financing mechanisms:

Development initiatives, particularly infrastructure related, should follow highest sustainability standards and develop financing mechanisms to maintain the ecosystem services they depend and have an impact on.

Transformation through Scale and impact:

Take national level success (of WWF and other partners) to a regional scale and ensure that it is cohesive and self-supporting.

LHI's Goal: By 2020, the biodiversity and viability of freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems in the Eastern Himalayas (EH) are being maintained at optimal levels for providing environmental services for the development needs and well-being of its people.

HEART OF THE MATTER

Transformational through scale and impact

Transformational Strategy 1: CATALYZE environment for investments in development of sustainable and climate resilient freshwater infrastructure that does not compromise freshwater and/or terrestrial ecosystems and their biodiversity in the EH.

Leverage resources at a regional scale for the three countries.



Climate Summit Framework of Cooperation and other regional frameworks.

Transformational Strategy 2: UPSCALE conservation efforts through continued and new partnerships for an ecologically contiguous mosaic of conservation spaces of freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems across the EH.

Lobby and built strategic partnerships with governments, donors and public sectors in support of funding and environmental stewardship in EH

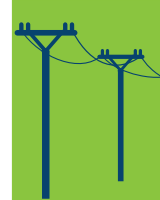
Support implementation of regional framework of cooperation adopted at the 2011 Climate Summit for Living Himalayas and other regional frameworks.

Build effective WWF teams and mechanisms leading to outstanding performance and conservation delivery of LHI goals and outcomes in the EH.

We are conducting Water Risk Assessment to study the major threats to the Ganges and the Brahmaputra basins in Eastern Himalayas. The study will identify future risks and recommend optimal approaches for economic development and ecosystem management in the region.



We are working with governments and partners to develop Critically Important Areas framework as a tool for sustainable infrastructure development across conservation spaces in the Eastern Himalayas.



We are working with governments and relevant partners on sustainable hydropower development and use of Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol (HSAP).



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

<http://www.wwf.panda.org/livinghimalayas>

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