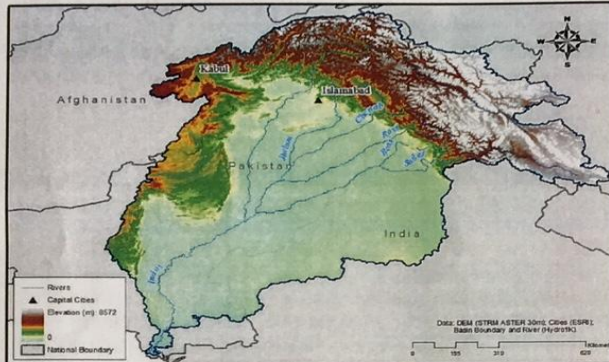


THE INDUS FORUM



Indus River Basin

Population: 300 million people.

Total Basin Area: 1.12 million km² spanning Afghanistan (6%), China (8%), India (39%) and Pakistan (47%).

Geography: The river rises in the Tibetan Plateau. Its tributaries feed from the Hindu Kush, Karakorum and Himalayan mountain ranges, flowing 3,610 km into the Arabian Sea.

Annual Precipitation: 100 mm to 500 mm in the lowlands and a maximum of 2,000 mm on mountain slopes. Snow melt and glaciers at higher altitudes (above 2500 m) accounts for most of the river runoff.

Hydrology: High inter- and intra-annual flow variability, with regularly reoccurring floods.

Key Challenges: Climate Change, especially given the receding trend of basin glaciers due to increasing temperature and decreasing snow precipitation. Other challenges include population growth and increasing water demand.

WHAT IS THE INDUS FORUM?

The Indus Forum is a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform, aimed at identifying strategic opportunities for collaboration related to the river's water resources, for inclusive development and climate resilience. It includes members from all four riparian countries i.e. Afghanistan, China, India and Pakistan and is now co-facilitated by the World Bank's South Asia Water Initiative (SAWI), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI).

THE ORIGIN

The Indus Forum has its origins in the South Asia regional Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) process, established in 2006, that brought together government officials and opinion leaders from the seven countries that share the rivers of the Greater Himalayas. In December 2012, at the sixth meeting of the ADD, participants decided to transition to a basin approach. Thus the Indus Forum was formed.

THE EVOLUTION

The first meeting of the Indus Forum was hosted by the government of Afghanistan in Kabul, June 2013. During these discussions, the Forum identified climate change research as an area for cooperative action.

Consequently, the second meeting in January 2014, was combined with a study tour to the *Adaptation to the Impact of Rapid Glacier Retreat in the Tropical Andes Project (PRAA)* in Quito, Ecuador. The objective was south-south knowledge exchange on innovative approaches to regional glacier monitoring and research within the context of climate change challenges. The meeting decided to form a Technical Working Group for the study of climate change impacts on the Indus basin.

The third annual meeting of the Indus Forum, convened in March 2015, under the theme *Climate Change and*

Vulnerability of the Indus Water Resources was co-hosted by the Government of Pakistan, the Water and Power Development Authority (WADPA) and the Water Environment Forum, Pakistan (WEF). As a result of this meeting, the Technical Working Group was mandated to develop a joint research proposal on 'Understanding the Impact of Climate Change in the Indus Basin'. The Working Group met in June of the same year in China to initiate the joint research proposal development, and again in May 2016 to further the proposal development.

The fourth Indus Forum Meeting was convened under the theme *Climate and Environment Change Impacts on the Indus Basin Waters* in February 2016 at ICIMOD in Kathmandu. The main aim of the international conference was to build better understanding of ongoing research and interventions related to climate change and adaptation, cryosphere and water in the Indus basin. The conference furthermore aimed at developing a framework to synergize the research and implementation efforts of various institutions and individuals active in the basin.

As a follow up to the Feb 2016 meeting and to further the work on the joint research proposal, the Indus Forum undertook a study tour to learn about regional glacier monitoring approaches in the European Alps (Switzerland).

EXPANDING THE NETWORK

In a bid to broaden its engagement on the Indus and operationalize decisions taken in the earlier meetings, the Forum decided to partner with ICIMOD and its Upper Indus Basin Network (UIB) as well as IWMI for two regional workshops – the first in February 2016, followed by one in May 2017. The workshops were designed to map synergies *vis-à-vis* the research work and build on the collaboration opportunities between the three institutions.

Attended by researchers, practitioners and decision makers, the workshops resulted in improved understanding of ongoing research and interventions on climate change, adaptation, cryosphere and water in the Indus basin; and an agreement to synergize the research and implementation efforts of various institutions and individuals.

As of July 2017, the Indus Forum is partnering with the Indus Basin Knowledge Forum scheduled to convene in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The objective of the meeting will be to assess the nature of existing knowledge and development challenges of the Indus water resources and identify coordination mechanisms that can potentially inform decision making to address those challenges. The Joint Research Proposal developed by the Indus Forum is expected to be presented at the Colombo meeting.

KEY MILESTONES

