

Mountains Matter in the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report Cycle

Representatives from ICIMOD and the MRI to co-lead the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report's Cross-Chapter Paper on Mountains

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What happens in mountains directly affects one fourth of the world's population, and more than half of humanity relies on freshwater from mountains. However, decisions about mountain resources are often made outside of the mountains, and mountains have received limited attention in the global development agenda.

But things are changing. The Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will feature a Cross-Chapter Paper on Mountains. Philippus Wester from the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development ([ICIMOD](#)) and Carolina Adler from the Mountain Research Initiative ([MRI](#)) have been nominated to co-lead the process of drafting the Cross-Chapter Paper on Mountains as a part of the Working Group II contribution to AR6. As the lead authors of this chapter, they will be working with a team of seven IPCC authors to review the existing scientific literature on mountains, starting at the First Lead Author Meeting in Durban, South Africa at the end of January 2019.

[Wester](#) currently leads ICIMOD's regional programme on Mountain Knowledge and Action Networks ([MKAN](#)), and coordinates the Hindu Kush Himalayan Monitoring and Assessment Programme ([HIMAP](#)), which brought together some 350 scientists, policy experts and practitioners from the region and beyond to produce the first comprehensive assessment of the HKH region. The report, to be published soon by Springer, is titled [The Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment: Mountains, Climate Change, Sustainability and People](#).



[Adler](#) is the Executive Director of the MRI, and a Lead Author of Chapter 2 – 'High Mountains' – of the IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, which will be finalized in September 2019 and will serve as part of the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Cycle. She is also guest editor of two special issues on climate change in mountains for the journals [Regional Environmental Change](#) and [Mountain Research and Development](#). The MRI is supported by the [Swiss Academy of Sciences](#), and is tasked with coordinating scientific research and networks on global change in mountain regions around the world.



Earlier this year, the IPCC announced the [selection of experts](#) nominated to work on AR6 – the next comprehensive evaluation of the science related to climate change. Among them are ten researchers from ICIMOD and three representatives of the MRI.

AR6 will serve to bring international knowledge on climate change up to date, examining the impacts and risks and outlining potential options for mitigation and adaptation. The report will be developed by the three IPCC Working Groups: Working Group I will deal with the physical science basis of climate change; Working Group II with impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability; and Working Group III with mitigation.



Carolina Adler and Philippus Wester at the World Mountain Forum held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Photo credit: MRI

Commenting on the importance of a Cross-Chapter Paper on Mountains in AR6, Adler said: "Like a canary in the mine, mountains offer a unique context in which to observe complex and dynamic global change phenomena, such as climate change, manifesting in rapid and tangible ways. There are many processes of change, their drivers and feedbacks that still require monitoring to improve our understanding of climate change impacts in mountains, including the underlying factors and conditions for adaptation and resilience-building in mountain social-ecological systems. The IPCC's focus on mountains in AR6 is a unique opportunity for us as a research community to make steadfast efforts for research collaboration and connection on this global topic of much importance."

Responding to the development, Wester said: "It is very encouraging to see this increased attention for mountains in the IPCC process. This is important as mountains tend to warm faster than the global average and are home to around 915 million people. I'm looking forward to working with a range of people in the coming years to bring the mountain voice to this important global assessment."

For more information about the IPCC and its 6th Assessment Report, please see <https://www.ipcc.ch/>

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