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Developing the water resources of Western Nepal

A new project is being launched in Kathmandu that will help shape the future of water resources development in Nepal.

There is an urgent need to address the management and development of water resources in western Nepal. The region lags behind in terms of economic growth and is extremely vulnerable to the impact of climate change but it is rich in water resources and biodiversity. The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is hosting a meeting to launch a new research project in which it is participating. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) project ‘Sustainable, Just and Productive Water Resources Development in Western Nepal’, nicknamed “DIGO JAL BIKAS”, promotes sustainable water resources development in Western Nepal.

The meeting is on 26 October, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Yak and Yeti Hotel in Kathmandu, Nepal, and will be followed by the launching of the new book [The Ganges River Basin: Status and Challenges in Water, Environment and Livelihoods](#), and a subsequent cocktail reception.

The new [book](#), “The Ganges River Basin: Status and Challenges in Water, Environment and Livelihoods” *presents an overview of the challenges facing the critically important Ganges river as a water resource for 500 million people. It is the first comprehensive overview of the key issues and challenges facing the Basin region. “The Ganges is a transboundary basin primarily shared amongst Nepal, India and Bangladesh, with an estimated 4% of the catchment in China,”* said Luna Bharati, the lead editor, who is a principal researcher with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), based in the Center for Development Research (ZEF), Germany. “In this book, we have

made an attempt to comprehensively cover the various aspects of the Ganges basin from a biophysical, socioeconomic and political perspective.

The project is engaging relevant stakeholders to produce knowledge that supports decision makers in developing policies and plans to balance economic growth, social justice and healthy, resilient ecosystems.

The work of the project will focus on the basins and sub-basins within the mid-western and far-western development regions of Nepal. It includes a particular focus on the Karnali Basin, including the Mahana sub-basin in the Terai and the Mahakali Basin. Research and assessments will be conducted using a multi-tiered approach, i.e. at the national, basin/regional and local levels.

Duke University and Kathmandu University are partners in this project, providing hydro-economic modeling and environmental flows analysis, respectively. Support will also be provided by the Nepal Water Conservation Foundation (NWCF).

“Working on water futures is especially exciting in Nepal because water resources development is still in its infancy,” said principal researcher and project leader Luna Bharati. “This makes it a critical time to assess any basin level development through the perspective of river health, economic productivity, social equity and sustainability.”

This 3-year project and its findings will help shape the future of water resources development in Nepal. The inception meeting will include talks from key stakeholders, descriptions of the work packages from the research leaders, and dialogue among participants on challenges and opportunities.

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IWMI

The **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)** is a non-profit, scientific research organization focusing on the sustainable use of water and land resources in developing countries. It is headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with regional offices across Asia and Africa. IWMI works in partnership with governments, civil society and the private sector to develop scalable agricultural water management solutions that have a real impact on poverty reduction, food security and ecosystem health. IWMI is a member of the CGIAR System Organization, a global research partnership for a food-secure future, and leads the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE).

WLE

The **CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE)** combines the resources of 11 CGIAR centers, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and numerous national, regional and international partners to provide an integrated approach to natural resource management research. WLE promotes a new approach to sustainable intensification in which a healthy functioning ecosystem is seen as a prerequisite to agricultural development, resilience of food systems and human well-being. This program is led by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and is supported by the CGIAR System Organization, a global research partnership for a food-secure future.

CGIAR

CGIAR is a global research partnership for a food-secure future. CGIAR science is dedicated to reducing poverty, enhancing food and nutrition security, and improving natural resources and ecosystem services. Its research is carried out by 15 CGIAR centers in close collaboration with hundreds of partners, including national and regional research institutes, civil society organizations, academia, development organizations and the private sector.