



Integrated
Mountain Initiative (IMI)



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SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT (XIII) 2026

**Contouring Sustainable Himalayan
Landscapes with Inclusive
"Viksit Bharat"**

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR J&K

**A science-policy dialogue for resilient, inclusive and
ecologically secure Himalayan landscapes**



SPECIAL POLICY DIALOGUE

From discussing mountain challenges to shaping a governance framework for the mountains.

THE HIMALAYAS AT CROSSROADS

The Himalayas are among the world's most fragile, youngest and most dynamic mountain systems. They are also the source of rivers, forests, biodiversity, agriculture, livelihoods and cultural traditions that sustain hundreds of millions of people across the Indian subcontinent — from the mountains themselves to the plains far downstream.

Climate change and global warming are no longer distant projections for the Himalaya — they are the present reality. Rising temperatures, erratic monsoons, glacial retreat and cryospheric instability are driving cloudbursts, flash floods, glacial lake outburst floods and landslides that are becoming more frequent, more intense and more destructive across every Himalayan state, from Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh to Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

Jammu & Kashmir is particularly vulnerable. Its steep terrain, young and geologically active mountains, fragile slopes, seismicity, sensitive watersheds and biodiversity make development choices far more consequential than in conventional landscapes — and make it a representative case study for the wider Himalayan arc.

The region is already experiencing mounting pressure from climate variability, rapid infrastructure development, tourism, urbanisation, extraction and changing land-use patterns — pressures shared, in varying degrees, by every Himalayan state.

THE MOUNTAIN HAZARDS

- Cloudbursts, flash floods and cascading mountain hazards
- Landslides, slope failures and erosion
- Glacial and cryospheric change and changing water regimes
- Forest degradation, fragmentation and rampant extraction
- Unplanned construction and infrastructure in fragile terrain
- Increasing and sometimes unmanaged tourism and pilgrimage pressure
- Unmanaged solid waste, plastics and wastewater in mountain destinations
- Degradation of springs, streams, watersheds and natural drainage
- Loss of biodiversity and natural habitats
- Changing mountain agriculture, livelihoods and demographic pressures

NEED OF A SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT POLICY

India's Himalayan states each carry **sectoral policies and regulations** covering tourism, forests, environment, urban development, disaster management, agriculture and infrastructure. What is missing, is an overarching, mountain-specific policy framework that brings these sectors together around one central principle: the ecological fragility and maintenance of ecological security and developmental carrying capacity of mountain landscapes.

Jammu & Kashmir is proposed as the pilot and case study for this national effort. A draft Sustainable Mountain Development Policy for J&K will be placed before the Summit — the first such state-specific policy attempted in the country — as a model that other Himalayan states, and the Union Government, can study, adapt and take forward.

The proposed policy should make development terrain-sensitive, climate-responsive, risk-informed and compatible with the carrying capacity of mountain ecosystems.

FROM SUMMIT TO POLICY ACTION

THE NEPAL REMINDER

Recent Himalayan disasters are a stark reminder that risk is no longer a distant possibility. We are already late in making mountain development risk-informed, ecologically secure and resilient.

The challenge is not simply how to respond better after a disaster. It is how to reduce exposure, protect natural buffers, regulate high-risk development and build resilience before hazards cascade into disasters.

The Sustainable Mountain Development Summit 2026 will place a draft Sustainable Mountain Development Policy for Jammu & Kashmir at the centre of national expert deliberation. The draft is based on the policy / policies learning so far and is intended as a discussion document for rigorous scientific, institutional and policy review before being taken forward through the appropriate Government process.

WHAT THE POLICY SHOULD DELIVER

Conservation & Developmental Pathway	Sectoral Pathway
Mountain Zonation Identification of fragile, sensitive, vulnerable and suitable development zones.	Carrying Capacity Framework Scientific limits for tourism, construction, water use, waste generation and infrastructure.
Mountain-Sensitive Land Use Planning based on terrain, slope, geology, hydrology, biodiversity and hazard risk.	No-Go / Restricted Development Areas where ecological sensitivity or disaster risk makes development inappropriate.
Mountain Infrastructure Code Terrain-sensitive standards for roads, buildings, drainage, bridges, tunnels and other infrastructure.	Sustainable Tourism Framework Destination-specific visitor, water, waste and ecological management.
Mountain Waste Framework Special systems for remote, high-altitude and tourist destinations.	Watershed & Spring Security Protection and restoration of critical mountain water systems.
Disaster Risk & Early Warning Integrated monitoring of rainfall, landslides, floods, glaciers and cascading hazards.	Mountain Livelihood Strategy Conservation-compatible livelihoods, enterprise, value addition and local economic opportunity.

THE SUMMIT'S SPECIAL POLICY OUTCOME

The Summit will bring together experts from across the country, Himalayan institutions, policymakers, practitioners and community voices to examine, debate and strengthen the draft policy and to develop a consolidated set of recommendations for consideration by the Government of J&K.

A NEW ROLE FOR J&K

J&K can move from being a recipient of mountain policy to becoming a leader in mountain governance.

SUMMIT THEMES • CALL FOR ABSTRACTS • OUTCOMES

THEME I — ECOLOGICAL SECURITY & CLIMATE-RESILIENT MOUNTAINS - Mountain ecology, biodiversity and ecosystem integrity - Climate change, cryosphere and Himalayan hydrology - Forests, rangelands, wetlands and watershed/spring-shed conservation - Nature-based solutions and ecosystem restoration - Mountain disaster risk reduction and early warning THEME II — LAND, INFRASTRUCTURE & ECOLOGICAL CARRYING CAPACITY - Mountain-sensitive land-use planning and slope-risk assessment - Roads, tunnels, hydropower and resilient infrastructure - Carrying-capacity assessment and risk-informed development - Building standards and planning for mountain settlements - Urbanisation and hill-town planning THEME III — RESPONSIBLE TOURISM & MOUNTAIN ECONOMY - Carrying capacity of tourist and pilgrimage destinations - Sustainable, community-based and low-impact tourism - Waste, wastewater and low-impact mobility - Green and circular economy models for mountains - Ensuring tourism benefits mountain communities	THEME IV — MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES, LIVELIHOODS & NATURAL CAPITAL - Mountain agriculture, horticulture and agroecology - Livestock, pastoral systems and non-timber forest products - High-value mountain crops, medicinal and aromatic plants - Traditional ecological knowledge and community stewardship - Youth, women, entrepreneurship and payment for ecosystem services THEME V — SCIENCE, GOVERNANCE & POLICY FOR THE MOUNTAINS - Sustainable Mountain Development Policy and institutional architecture - Science–policy–community interface and mountain observatories - Geospatial monitoring, vulnerability mapping and mountain data systems - Policy indicators, financing, compliance and enforcement - Evidence-based and measurable pathways to sustainable mountain development
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CALL FOR ABSTRACTS / PAPERS

The Summit invites scientists, academics, researchers, extension personnel, industry professionals, policymakers, postgraduates, practitioners, civil society organisations, mountain communities and young professionals to contribute to the dialogue on the future of the Himalayas.

Contributions are particularly encouraged where research is translated into policy recommendations, regulatory frameworks, implementation mechanisms, technologies, institutional models and measurable action plans.

IMPORTANT DATES

1 September 2026	Call for abstract submission
20 September 2026	Last date for submission of abstracts
30 September 2026	Notification of acceptance of abstracts
5 October 2026	Payment of registration fee by invited research scholars

TECHNICAL SESSIONS & KEYNOTE LECTURES

Keynote addresses, plenary lectures, invited talks and panel discussions by distinguished experts from premier institutions across India and abroad will highlight recent breakthroughs, policy innovations and transformative approaches for sustainable Himalayan landscapes.

THE POLICY TEST

What to do? • Who will do it? • How to do? • How will outcomes & impact be monitored?

PATRONS

Prof. Nazir A. Ganai, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Kashmir & Shri Ramesh Negi IAS (Retd.), President IMI

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