



Integrated
Mountain Initiative (IMI)



Sher-e-Kashmir
University of Agricultural Sciences
& Technology of Kashmir
Main Campus, Shalimar, Srinagar, Kashmir 19001, India-190025



SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT (XIII) 2026

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



DATES
October 12–14, 2026
(3 Days)



VENUE
SKUAST-K, Srinagar,
Jammu & Kashmir

JOINT ORGANIZERS

Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI)

&

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and
Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K)

Sustainable Development Summit (SDMS) is Integrated Mountain Initiative's annual flagship event that started in 2011 at Nainital and had traversed across the Indian Himalayan region. SDMS engages various stakeholders to come together and take part in an informed dialogue on themes of specific relevance to the mountain communities and regions of India. SDMS brings together distinguished legislators, central and state government representatives, civil society, practitioners, academicians, industry leaders, media and communities to deep delve on issues and to sensitize and advocate with national policy makers and practitioners. Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) as a civil society oriented initiative for recognizing the value of mountain regions and enabling people to realize its potential by integrating the knowledge and experiences of multiple stakeholders.

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology is a premier institution in Kashmir Himalayas dedicated to advancing education, research, and innovation in agriculture and allied sciences. Established with the mission to empower rural communities and enhance food security, SKUAST offers cutting-edge academic programs, state-of-the-art research facilities, and extensive field outreach. With a vibrant community of scholars, scientists, and students, the university fosters sustainable farming practices, agri-entrepreneurship, and technological advancements tailored to regional and global needs. Beyond academics, SKUAST-K nurtures holistic development through extracurricular activities, skill-building initiatives, and industry collaborations shaping graduates into leaders of agricultural transformation.

Global Context and Unresolved Challenges

Despite the landmark United Nations Report (2025) on Sustainable Mountain Development coordinated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) alongside the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, UN agencies, and civil society, global mountain region remains under severe stress. Covering approximately one-quarter of the Earth's land surface, mountain's act as the planet's "water towers," regulating the global water cycle and hosting rich biodiversity. However, they face compounding pressure from climate change, land degradation, socio-economic challenges (poverty and food insecurity), and natural disasters. While international projects aim to build resilience, a significant gap remains between policy frameworks and the real-time, daily on ground challenges faced by mountain communities.

Climate Change Impacts and Vulnerabilities (IPCC Consensus)

Building on the IPCC's Fifth and Sixth Assessment Reports (AR5 and AR6), climate change impacts in mountain regions are unequivocally attributed to human influence. These impacts have accelerated in recent decades, causing serious consequences for both people and ecosystems. ecologically, lower-elevation species are migrating upward, causing more homogeneous vegetation patterns and threatening mountain-top species. Cryospheric shifts have altered the water cycle, disrupting the timing of glacier melt and snowmelt stream discharge. This directly affects river flow regimes and increases landslide risks, putting billions of dollars of energy infrastructure particularly hydropower at risk. Furthermore, climate hazards like flash floods, damage downstream infrastructure, worsen water insecurity, and exacerbate social injustices. Meanwhile, adaptation responses remain highly fragmented in scope, funding, and execution speed.

The Indian Himalayan Context

The Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) states Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya) and Union Territories (including Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, serves as the water tower of Asia, a global biodiversity hotspot, and the cultural anchor for over 50 million mountain dwellers. However, the region stands at a critical juncture. Accelerated climate change, fragile geological structures, erratic monsoon patterns, rapid urbanization, and increasing anthropogenic pressure threaten both the ecosystems and the livelihoods dependent upon them. The **Mountain Sustainability Summit** serves as a vital platform to unite policymakers, scientific researchers, grassroots innovators, community leaders, industry pioneers, and young changemakers. Framed specifically around the ecological and socio-economic realities of the Indian Himalayan Region, the summit aims to move from dialogue to establishing actionable

roadmaps, policy frameworks, and market linkages that harmonize environmental conservation with economic prosperity.

Point of Departure for SMDS 2026

The current reality of the IHR is defined by frequent natural disasters, regular forest fires, water scarcity, shrinking agricultural land, and vulnerable border villages. Massive infrastructure investments and unregulated mass tourism are devastating the fragile landscape through heavy soil erosion, landslides, mining, and waste dumping. This directly threatens traditional, carbon-neutral, and nature-respecting agroecological ways of life. While a new paradigm centered on "resilient Himalayan green growth" is gaining traction via progressive state programs (organic farming, watershed conservation), the underlying "Landscape Approach" has yet to be executed at a horizontal or vertical scale that yields measurable impacts.

Therefore, SMDS 2026 is designed as an integrated platform to resolve the triple challenge of sustaining human populations, maintaining water flows, and preventing biodiversity loss amidst climate change. The summit aims to understand the multifunctionality of mountain ecosystems, analyze sectoral trade-offs, and design tailored, landscape-specific solutions. By emphasizing participatory planning, the summit seeks to empower marginalized groups and ensure that high-level policies finally align with local norms, practices, and indigenous knowledge.

Summit Themes

Theme I: Climate Resilient Natural Resource Management

- Climate resilience in Himalayas through Sustainable Forestry and Rangelands, Agriculture and Horticulture
- Disaster risk reduction and preparedness
- Rangeland management and wetland conservation
- Carbon sequestration and Green Credit Program
- Urban ecosystems/Architecture, Waste management and nature-based solutions

Theme II: Green Economy and Sustainable Tourism

- Carrying capacity and tourism in Himalayas
- Standardization of community-based tourism
- Green infrastructure and low impact mobility
- Green Economy Models for mountains

Theme III: Livelihood and Resilient Value Chain

- Best practices in Agroecology (Traditional Systems, Organic Agriculture/Horticulture)
- Traditional/Niche crops for health and nutritional security
- Commercialization of Medicinal and Aromatic plants (MAPs)
- Value chain, Branding and Marketing

Theme IV: Mountain Voices

- Border village resilience
- Empowering Himalayan Youth and Women
- Mountain community incentivization/Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)
- Phytoremediation and well-being of mountain ecosystems
- Safeguard of Himalayan Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK)
- Mountain Business conclave

Theme V: Himalayan Research Champions

- Ecology and Biodiversity in Himalayas
- Climate resilient agroforestry
- Himalayan wetlands and conservation
- Herbal farming for Himalayan economy
- Mountain VCs Conclave

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The summit is open to scientists, academicians, researchers, extension personnel, industry professionals, policymakers, postgraduate and budding scientists working on sustainable development of Himalayas. For theme I to IV (Climate Resilient Natural Resource Management; Green Economy and Sustainable Tourism; Livelihood and Resilient Value Chain and Mountain Voices) the abstract submission is open for eminent scientists, policy makers, lead strategists and industry professionals. For (Theme V: Himalayan Research Champions) the abstract submission is open to research scholars/budding scientists working on sustainable mountain development in context of above given themes.

Abstracts with clear strategies specify **What to do? Who will do? Where to do? and Time lines** (maximum 500 words) should be prepared in MS word using times New roman, 12-point font, single spacing (Use template while submission) and to be submitted to The Organising Secretary by 01st September, 2026. Accepted Abstracts/papers will be published in the final compendium of the conference. Invited Keynote presentations would be announced separately. For further details and regular updates, kindly visit the conference website: <https://www.smdsummit2026.in> for further updates about the summit

TECHINICAL SESSIONS & KEYNOTE LECTURES

A series of keynote addresses, plenary lectures, invited talks, and panel discussions by internationally acclaimed scientists and distinguished experts from premier institutions across India and abroad is planned as an integral part of the conference, highlighting recent breakthroughs and transformative innovations in sustainable Himalayan landscapes.

IMPORTANT DATES

1 st September, 2026	Call for abstract submission
20 th September 2026	Last date for submission of abstracts
30 th September 2026	Notification of acceptance of abstracts
5 th October 2026	Payment of Registration fee by the invited research scholars

CLIMATE & ATTRACTIONS

- The Kashmir Valley is at its scenic best during October-November, with pleasant weather, clear skies and vibrant autumn colours. Daytime temperatures range from 10-22°C, with nights of 2-10°C; warm clothing is advised. Delegates can visit Dal Lake, Mughal Gardens, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg, and the historic sites of Srinagar, with the autumn colours of the Chinar trees providing a spectacular backdrop

Contact

- Dr. Rajan Kumar Kotru, Councillor IMI, Email: rajan@rest4all.com
- Prof. Arshad Hussain Mughal, Dean, Faculty of Forestry SKUAST-K; Email: deanforestry@skuastkashmir.ac.in;
- E mail for Abstract/Other SMD Summit 2026 related correspondence: smdsummit2026@gmail.com

Join us for science experience Kashmir's autumn brilliance