

2026 Diálogos Regionales

PASTIZALES DE MONTAÑA Y PASTOR@S 2026

ICIMOD

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CONDESAN
Consorcio para el Desarrollo Sostenible
de la Ecorregión Andina



ADAPTACIONEN
LAS ALTURAS
En Acción por las Montañas



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo
y la Cooperación COSUDE

Distribution of yak in the world (the Asian Highlands)

- ~16 million (World)
- ~95% (China)
- ~10 Countries
- ~11 Mountain ranges

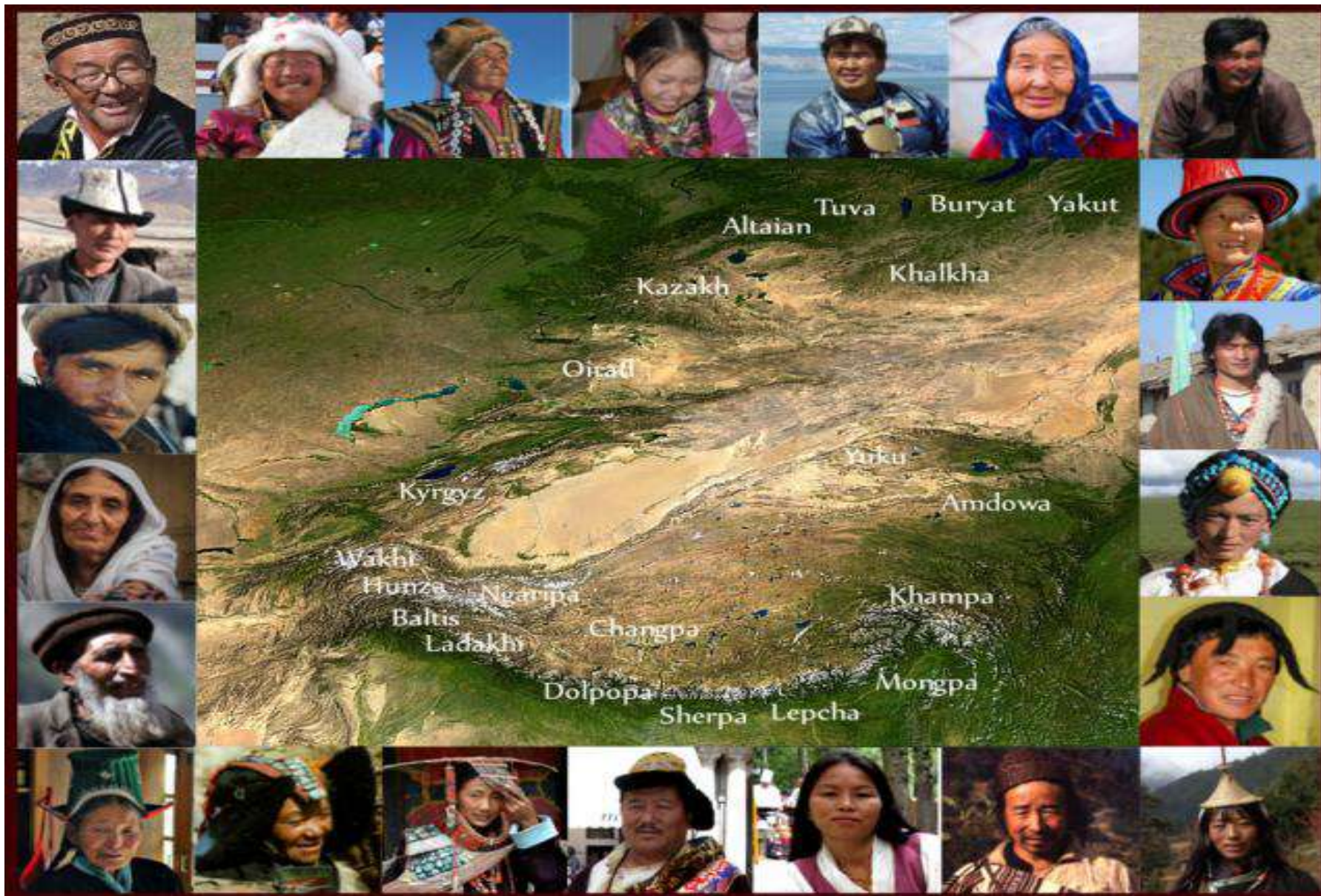


Yak supports over 31 Ethnic groups in the Asian Highlands

Over 10 countries in the Asian Highlands practice yak pastoralism.

Among which more than 31 ethnic groups domesticate yaks.

The yaks contribute over 50% of pastoral community's income in the Asian highlands.



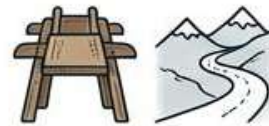
Role of Yaks – Lifeline for high altitude (2500-6000m) Himalayas communities



Nutrition:
Winter nourishment
& food security



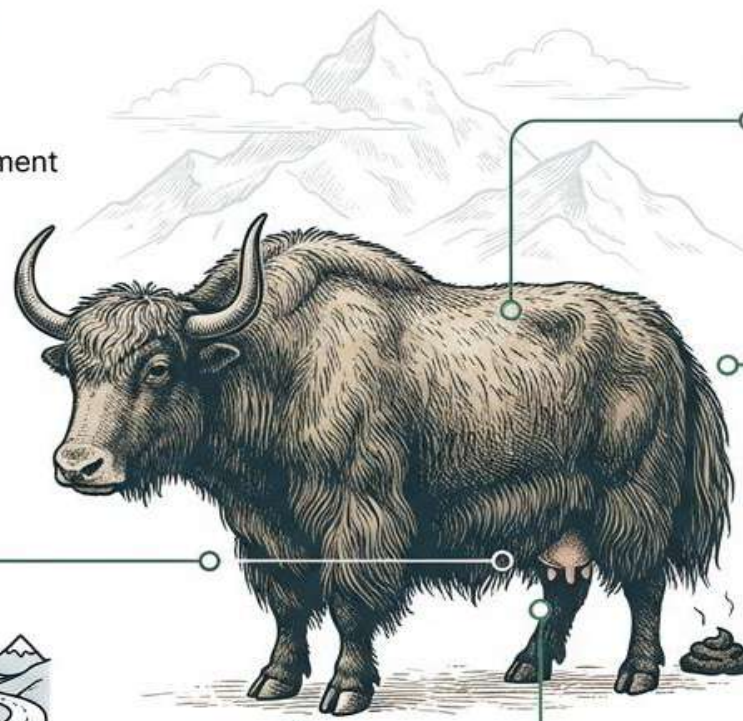
Daily Life:
Clothing, tents,
and textiles



Economy:
Transport for trade
between valleys



Energy:
Heating for homes
in treeless altitudes



The Keystone of the Highlands

Yak herding is more than an economic activity; it is the backbone of the high-altitude economy and ecology.



Livelihood & Nutrition

A primary source of income and essential nutrition for remote pastoral communities.



Cultural Heritage

The practice embodies deep-rooted traditions and identity unique to the region.



Ecological Stewardship

Herders act as custodians of fragile high-altitude ecosystems. Their grazing practices are integral to the landscape's health.

A Tradition Under Threat

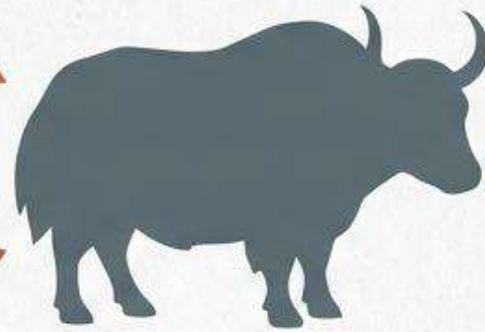
Despite its ecological importance, the very survival of yak pastoralism is jeopardized by a convergence of destabilizing forces.

1. Climate-Induced Challenges

Environmental volatility affecting grazing lands and herd health in high altitudes.

3. Socio-Economic Change

Rapid shifts leading to migration and economic displacement of traditional herders.

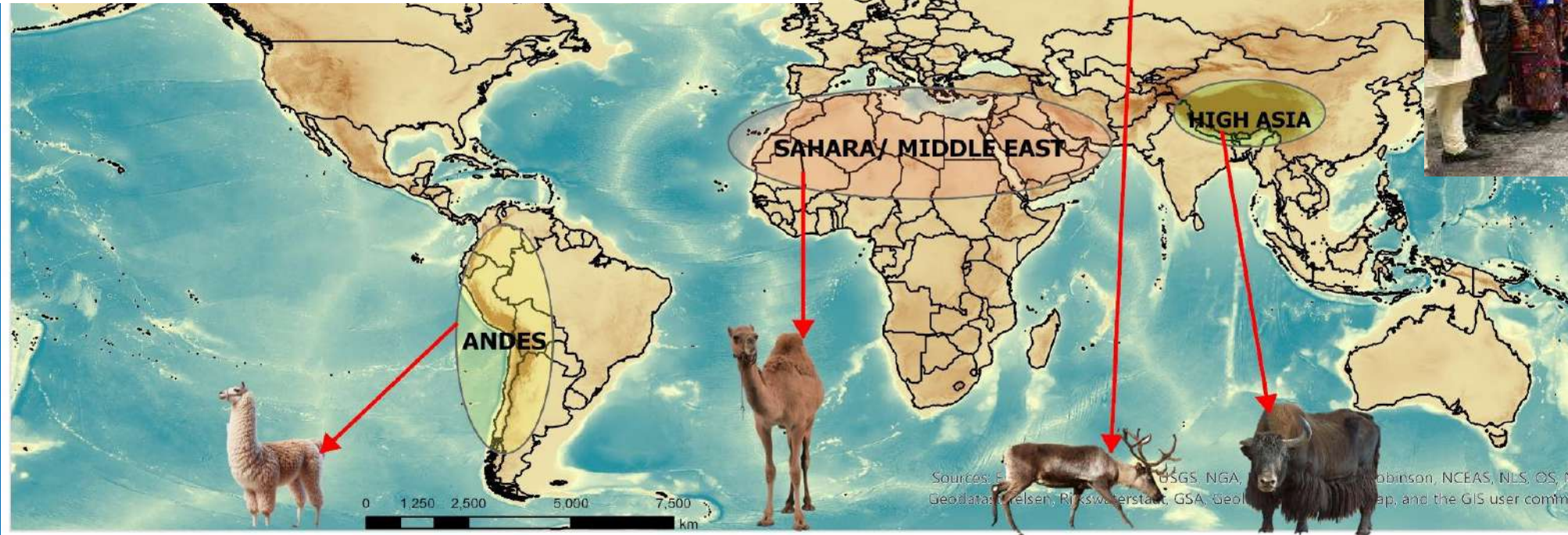


2. Policy Neglect

Historical lack of representation in national development agendas.

Without intervention, these pressures risk erasing a practice that sustains the highlands.

Networks for Key Livestock spp in other mountain regions of the World



Alpaca/Huacaya

Camel

Reindeer

Yak

????

International Camel Association, Saudi Arabia

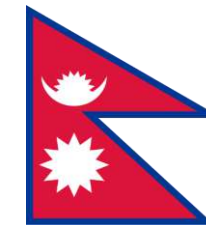
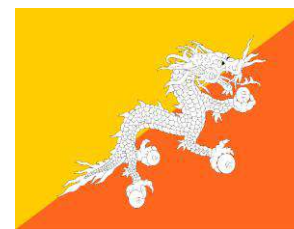
Association of World Reindeer Herders, Norway

???





Founding Member Countries (Bhutan, India, Nepal)



It is still an Informal Network !!!

Regional Hindu Kush Himalaya Yak Herder Network (HKH-YHN)

Five Pillars of Action

The network is a herder-driven platform envisioned to deliver on five specific mandates:



Safeguard

Protecting yak farming culture and genetic resources to ensure the continuity of traditional livelihoods.



Exchange

Facilitating knowledge transfer on value chains, technologies, and sustainable practices.



Advocate

Addressing grazing rights, markets, and climate issues through collective action.



Engage

Representing herders at national/global policy tables to secure investment.



Unite

Fostering solidarity and cultural pride through shared learning and celebrations.

Key Partners & Coordinator



India:

Yak Federation of India



Bhutan:

Bhutan Yak Federation



Nepal:

Yak-Chauri Herders Federation



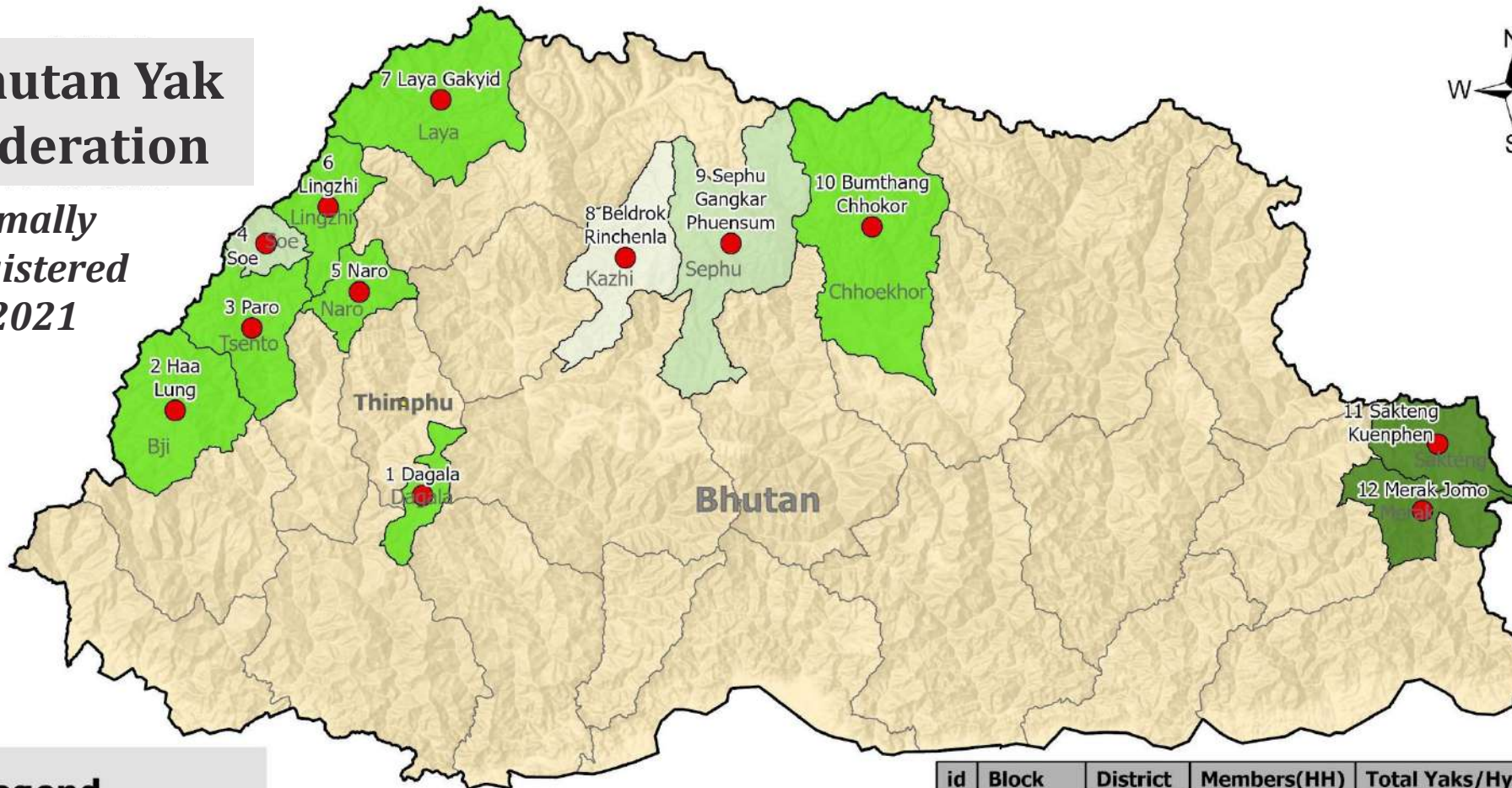
Coordinator:

ICIMOD

(International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development)

Bhutan Yak Federation

formally registered in 2021



Legend

● Cooperative (Lonar Nyamlay Tshogdey)

▭ Country Boundary

Total Yaks/Hybrids (No.)

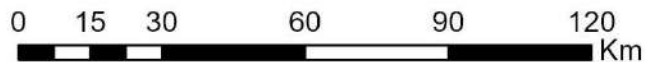
□ <1000

□ 1000 - 2000

□ 2000 - 3000

□ 5000 - 7500

□ Dzongkhag Boundary



id	Block	District	Members(HH)	Total Yaks/Hybrids
1	Dagala	Thimphu	44	2944
2	Bji	Haa	50	2550
3	Tsento	Paro	42	2473
4	Soe	Thimphu	29	1592
5	Naro	Thimphu	26	2244
6	Lingzhi	Thimphu	48	2765
7	Laya	Gasa	59	2494
8	Kazhi	Wangdue	33	535
9	Sephu	Wangdue	62	1712
10	Chhoekhor	Bumthang	40	2469
11	Sakteng	Tashigang	20	5244
12	Merak	Tashigang	27	7388

12

Registered Cooperatives

10

Highland Districts

480+

Member Households

~34,000

Yaks Managed

Yak Federation of India



526 Member Households | ~32,039 Yaks



Leh District

The Yak Herder Cooperative Ltd.
95 Households
15,000 Yaks

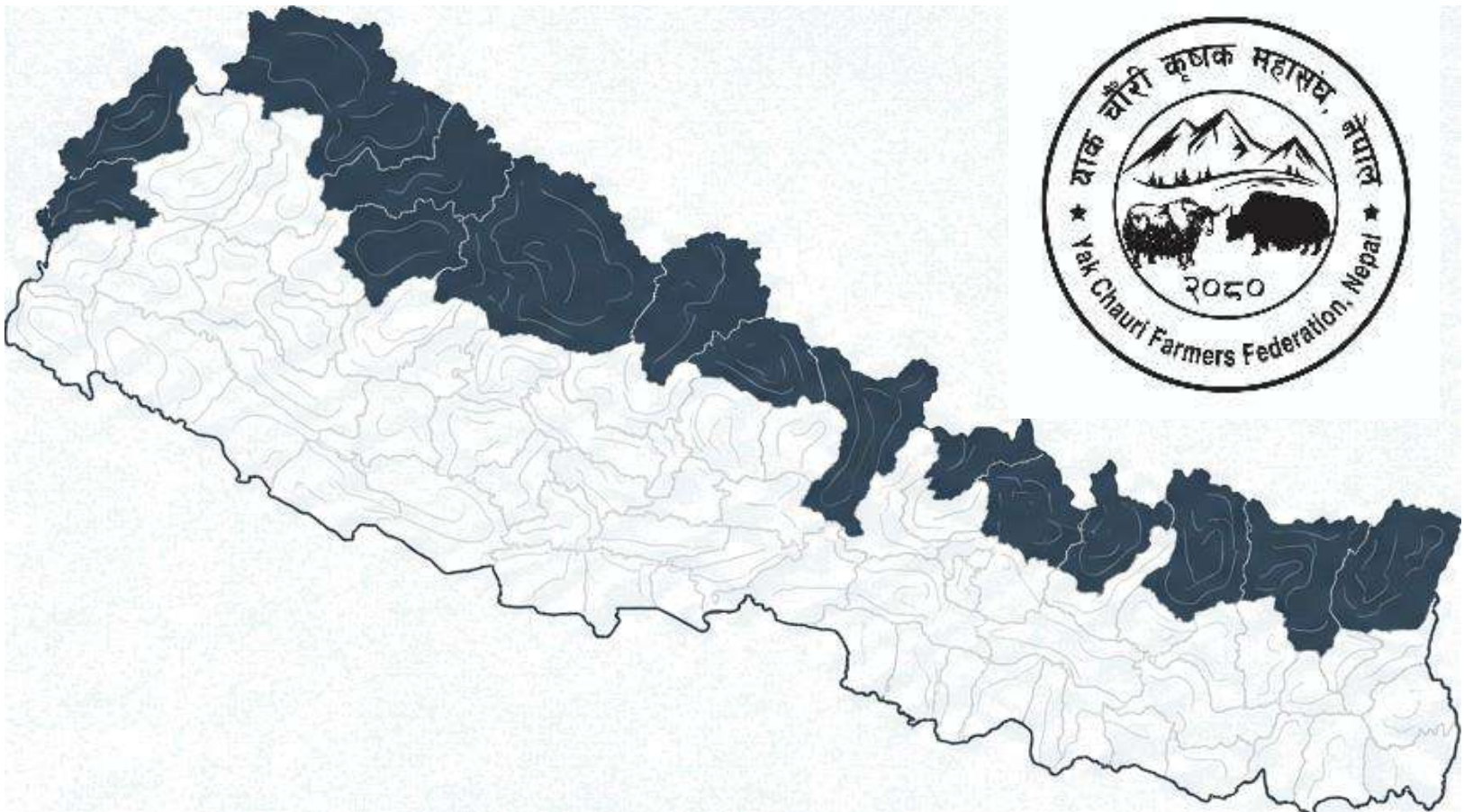
North, East, West Sikkim

Lachen, Yakdho, Yambong, Yuksom Cooperatives.
137 Households
7,647 Yaks

Tawang & Dirang

Ser Tso Yak Association, Product Dev. Coop.
294 Households
9,394 Yaks

The Yak & Chauri Farmers Federation of Nepal



17 Districts



3 Geographic Clusters
(East, Central, West)



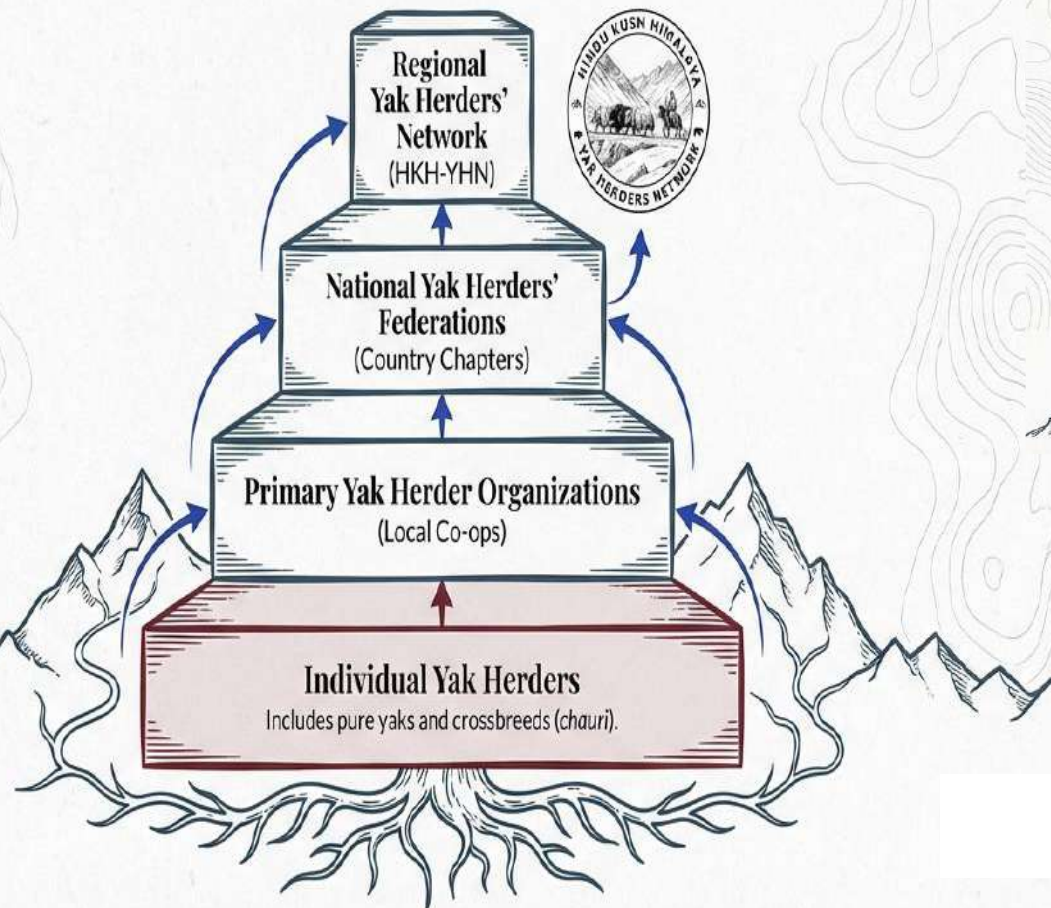
18+ Registered
Cooperatives

47350 Total Animals



Bottom-Up approach & Governance: Local, National, Regional

The Federated Ecosystem



The Regional Steering Committee (RSC)

The highest decision-making and coordinating body, responsible for strategy, policy advocacy, and resource mobilization.

The Troika Composition (Per Country)



President of National Federation



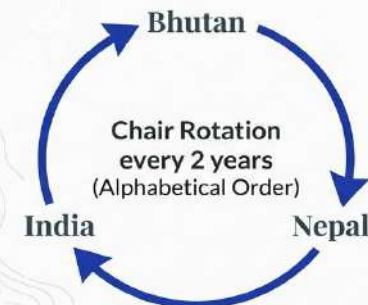
Secretary General of Federation



Government Representative (Anchor)

★ Observers (researchers/partners) may join upon consensus.

Leadership Mechanics & Decision Making



Chair is held by the President of the host National Federation.

The General Assembly

Meets annually (physically or virtually).

Consensus Model

Decisions are made by consensus. If consensus fails, a two-thirds majority vote is required.

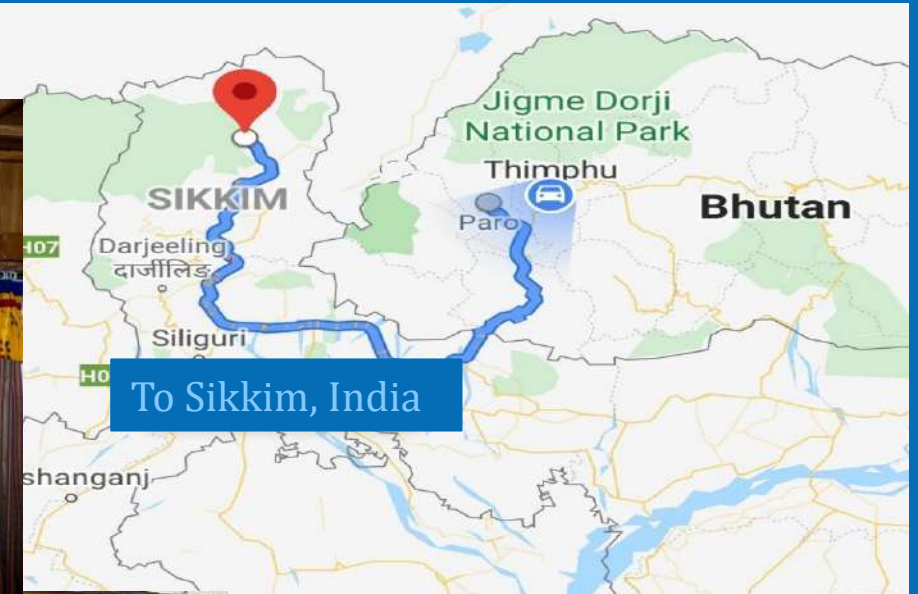
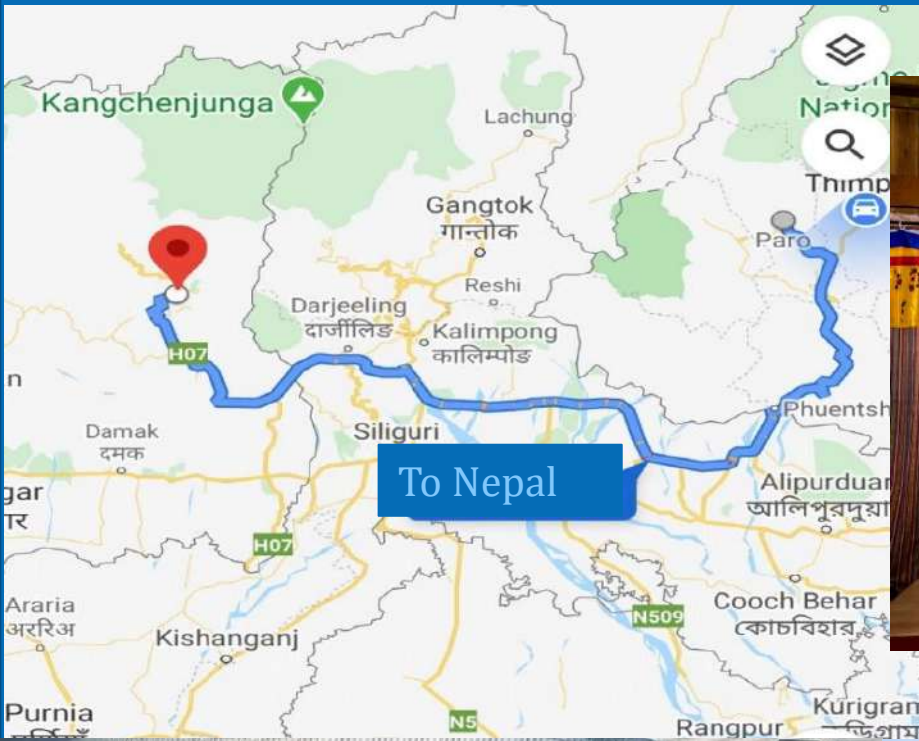
Emerging Benefits Along the Pathway

1. Strengthened Transboundary collaborations: Transboundary festivals, Exchange visits, Workshops, Exchange of breeding bulls



(people to people contact and building trust)

2. Facilitated Yak Germplasm Exchange: Bhutan-Nepal and India



3. Increased Policy support & Investment for Rangelands Restoration



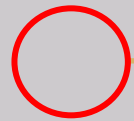
1. Clarity on Institutional roles for rangelands
2. Prescribed burning, Slash and burn to remove encroaching shrubs to open-up grazing areas
3. Weeds and invasive spp management, Water/Springs management
4. Mobile solar corral fencing to protect from wild predators



Conclusio: Progress and Lessons to date

1. Takes time, patience, investments: longer term planning & sustained efforts to establish community-based institution

2018



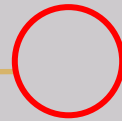
Himalayan yak–
Arctic Reindeers
dialogue;
HKH YHN idea
conceptualized

2019



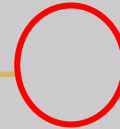
Transboundary Yak
Festivals; Exchange
yak germplasm;
Regional meet on
HKH YHN

2021–23



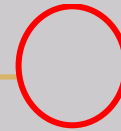
Bhutan & Nepal
federations
formed

2024



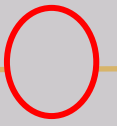
China
consultation
shared roadmap

2025



India federation
registered;
HKH YHN
governance
agreed

2026



Launch HKH
Yak Herders
Network as
IYRP2026
milestone

2. Local Leadership and Government Ownership: work with community champions/mandated agency

3. Concurrent Capacity and Trust Building Activities: integrate activities that bring quick benefits

THANK YOU !!

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