



Project Overview



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South Asia, comprising 8 countries including Bangladesh, the Maldives and Nepal, is affected by a range of natural disasters including floods, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), storm surges, droughts, cyclones and heavy precipitation. These disasters take a huge toll as they displace thousands of people every year. The impact of natural hazards is amplified by the following facts: most countries in the region lack strong economies and infrastructure, majority of the population and the industries depend on land resources, and large proportions of the population live in environmentally vulnerable areas. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has predicted that slow onset disasters and sudden onset disasters will increase in severity and frequency, threatening lives and livelihoods across the region. The IPCC also speculates that though current movements are driven by economic and social factors, the environment will have a significant impact on migratory flows in the future.

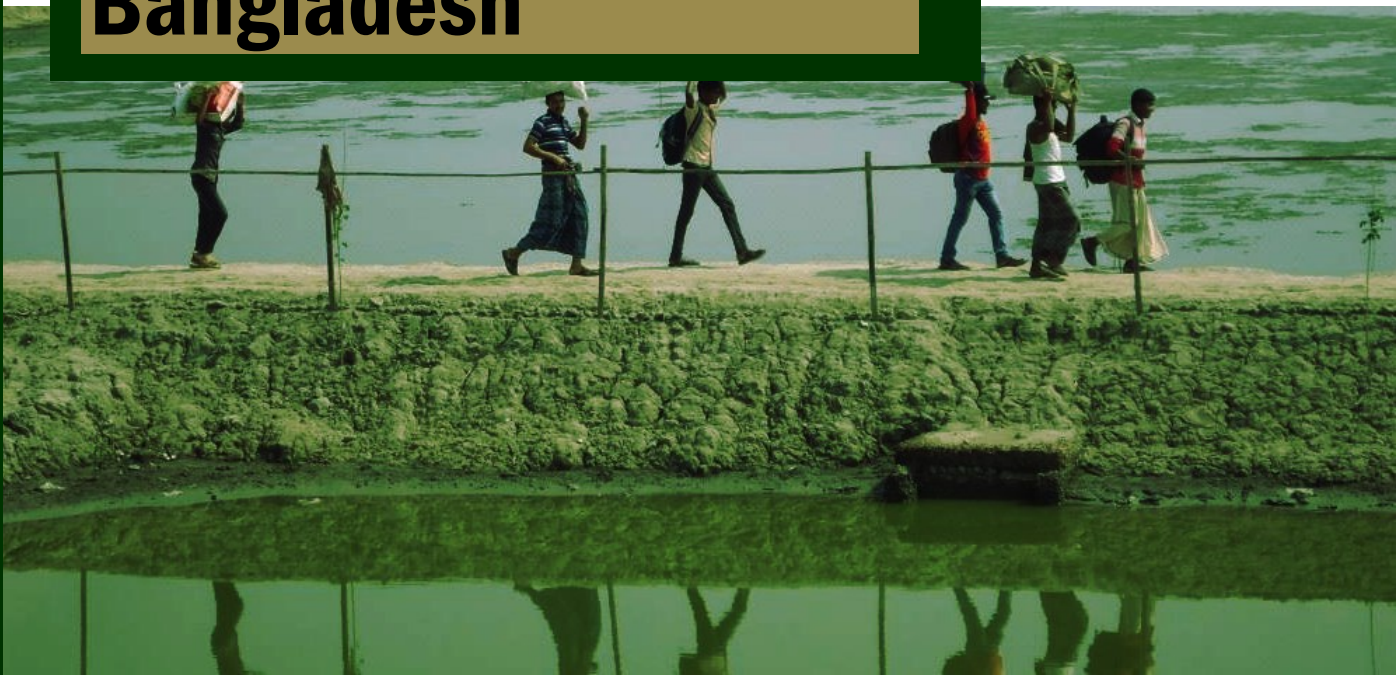
In order to assess the climate change, environmental degradation and migration nexus in South Asia, IOM will undertake a related study, field research and national consultations in Bangladesh, the Maldives and Nepal to share the findings of the research and raise awareness on the subject. The project will culminate in a regional level dissemination meeting. Bangladesh, the Maldives and Nepal have been selected for this project for their commonalities including high rates of urbanization and international migration (though the

Maldives is an exception as it witnesses net immigration) and their high exposure to diverse climatic events. The experiences of these three countries will serve as lessons for the whole region, as they all face similar challenges due to environmental degradation and climate change.

Through this project, IOM aims to contribute to national and regional policies which address the expected impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on migration and displacement. The project activities thus include:

1. **Assessing existing evidence of the linkages** between climate change, environmental degradation and migration through a policy and literature review and a field study in Bangladesh, the Maldives and Nepal.
2. **Drafting a regional strategy framework and model national action plans** (NAP's) based on a consultative process and linked to existing action plans/policies.
3. **Organizing a regional dissemination** meeting for policymakers to present the assessment study, model NAP's and regional strategy framework.

Bangladesh



Bangladesh’s vulnerability to climate change and environmental degradation is manifested all over the country. Southern Bangladesh is subject to cyclones and storm surge, salinity intrusion, coastal erosion, water logging, and potential sea level rise; the northern part is vulnerable mainly to droughts, riverine floods and flash floods. Riverbank erosion is also a common occurrence.

Population: 156.6 million

International Migration: 600,000– 700,000 people annually

No. of people displaced by natural disasters between 2008-2014*: 4.7 million

*Global Estimates by IDMC

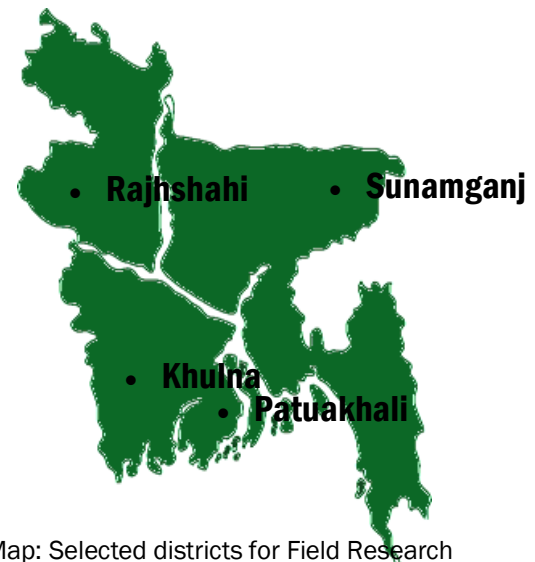
As these environmental events make traditional occupations in agriculture difficult, internal and international migration has been increasing. This is in fact considered a driving factor for Bangladesh’s transition to a middle-income economy.

To assess the evidence of the linkages between climate change and migration, the project will undertake a field survey of 320 households, key informant interviews and focus group discussions in four distinct districts of Bangladesh, vulnerable to specific environmental events and representing high rates of out-migration.

Project Advisory Committee*

Ministry of Environment & Forests	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief	Planning Commission
Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)	International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCAD)
BRAC University	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RRMRU)
DFID	EU
Centre for Population, Urbanization and Climate Change (ICCDR,B)	

* Representatives of the following organizations are members of the project advisory committee in Bangladesh



Map: Selected districts for Field Research

Nepal



Nepal is a geographically diverse country with three key ecosystems – mountains, hills and the Terai/plain. Agriculture, the mainstay of the population, is dominated by traditional practices in the mountains and the gradual introduction of modern tools in the lower hills and the Terai.

Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change. Rapidly melting glaciers result in the risk of glacial lake outbursts and degradation of agricultural land. Shifting climate patterns affect the agricultural productivity on which two thirds of the population base their livelihoods. It also poses a challenge on mobility as shrinking livelihood options in the local and national labor market coupled with the risk of disasters accelerates movement.

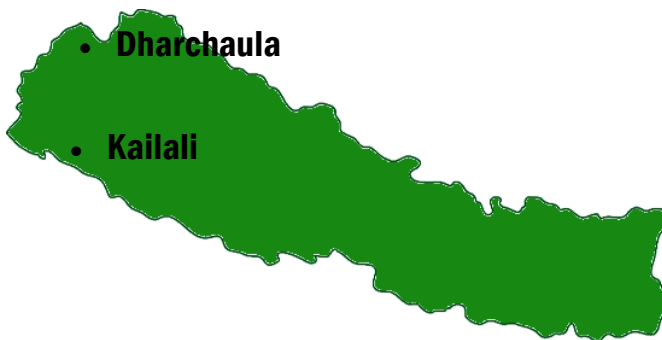
Nepal is one of the major labour-sending countries in the region, and in return receives a staggering amount of remittances. In 2014, the World Bank estimated that remittances contributed to over 25% equivalent of the country’s GDP.

Population 27.8 million

Approximately 4 million Nepali migrants work abroad

No. of people displaced by natural disasters between 2008-2014*:
411,000

*Global Estimates by IDMC



Map: Selected districts for Field Research

Through this project, IOM will conduct a household survey amongst 300 households, focus group discussions and key informant interviews in the hilly district of Dharchaula and in Kailali, in the Terai region to map the impact of climate change on migratory movements. Both regions are prone to climatic vulnerabilities and have a high rate of out migration.

Project Steering Committee	
Ministry of Labour and Employment	Ministry of Population and Environment
National Planning Commission	ICIMOD

Maldives



- **Hanimaadhoo, Haa Dhaaru Atoll**
- **Hulhudhoo, Noonu Atoll**
- **Naifaru, Lhaviyani Atoll**



Male

The Maldives' are exposed to different vulnerabilities with regard to climate change. The Northern islands have the greatest exposure to sudden onset disasters such as surge hazards and cyclones; earthquakes, tsunamis, thunderstorms, flash floods and heavy rain, and prolonged dry periods have also been recorded in the recent years. However, the low elevation of the islands makes them most vulnerable to slow onset disasters, such as coastal erosion, sea-level rise, salinity intrusion, rising temperatures, changing rainfall and drought patterns, sea surface temperature rise, and change in monsoon patterns.

Population: 345,000
Additionally, approximately 115,000 international migrants work in the Maldives

There is a concern that these slow and sudden onset disasters will have an impact on human mobility in the Maldives, accelerating the pace of internal migration that is already taking place. With sea level rise making islands inhabitable, it is believed that migration will become a necessity. The impact of sudden onset disasters is already evident- the 2004 tsunami and tidal waves have forced people to migrate from the island of origin to other nearby islands. Over 15,000 people were displaced by the tsunami of 2004.

In order to determine the nexus between climate change, environmental degradation and migration, the project will undertake field research, including a household survey, key informant interviews and focus group discussions in four vulnerable atolls in coordination with key partners.

Project Advisory Committee	
Ministry of Environment and Energy	National Disaster Management Center
National Bureau of Statistics	Maldivian Red Crescent