

# International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, the 'Mountain Partnership'

## ORGANIZATION, MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The basic concept and guiding principles of the Mountain Partnership are a result of a consultative process that took place during the preparatory sessions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The core document (known as the 'Bali Document') was finalized at the Fourth Session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Bali, Indonesia, 27 May - 7 June 2002).

The International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions (hereinafter referred to as the 'Mountain Partnership') is an evolving alliance of mountain stakeholders<sup>1</sup>, to promote, *inter alia*, joint initiatives based on paragraph 42 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and other related instruments.

## VISION

The Mountain Partnership envisages the improved well-being, livelihoods and opportunities of mountain people and the protection and stewardship of mountain environments around the world.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Mountain Partnership is a voluntary alliance of interested parties committed to working together with the common goal of achieving sustainable mountain development around the world. The Mountain Partnership addresses the challenges of mountain regions, by tapping the wealth and diversity of resources, knowledge (including traditional knowledge), information and expertise, from and through its members, in order to stimulate concrete initiatives at all levels that will ensure improved quality of life and environments in the world's mountain regions.

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<sup>1</sup> Mountain stakeholders are defined, as in the 'Bali Document', as: "National governments, local and regional authorities, intergovernmental organizations, non governmental organizations, the academic community and as appropriate private sector and other major group representatives working together to improve livelihoods, conservation, and stewardship throughout the world's mountain landscapes".

## **PRINCIPLES OF THE MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP**

The core Principles are:

- a) The Mountain Partnership operates through a democratic process, allowing all members to maintain their identity and autonomy to enjoy equal rights and design their own future.
- b) The Mountain Partnership is demand-driven, responding to identified needs and supported by shared values, common interest and mutual respect.
- c) The Mountain Partnership is dynamic and flexible, striking a balance between flexibility at the operational level -- allowing the Partnership to continuously adapt to a dynamic, changing context -- and continuity at the level of objectives, values and principles, which builds trust and a long-term perspective.
- d) The Mountain Partnership fosters transparency and accountability, reaching clear agreements on values, objectives and principles through consultations among members.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

The Mountain Partnership stimulates long-term action in sustainable mountain development by facilitating and promoting concrete thematic, geographic and institutional initiatives. A key element in this process is to maximize the use of relevant existing networks, groups and institutions working in mountain and mountain-related issues around the world.

The Mountain Partnership creates awareness of the importance of sustainable mountain development, and its members are determined to share knowledge, exchange experience, foster mutual assistance and co-operation to achieve lasting development in mountain regions around the world. It will be essential to link local, national, regional and global efforts for long-term sustainable development through joint activities that are duly supported by co-operation and resources mobilization.

## **STRUCTURE**

The Mountain Partnership consists of:

1. Members
2. Governance mechanism
3. Secretariat

The structure of the Mountain Partnership is non-hierarchical and decentralized. This structure allows equal participation and optimal connectivity between members. Within

the structure, Partnership initiatives are developed and implemented by the members concerned.

## **MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA AND COMMITMENTS**

The membership of the Mountain Partnership is open to all governments, including local and regional authorities, and to intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the academic community and, as appropriate, the private sector, whose objectives and activities in this regard are consistent with the vision and mission of the Mountain Partnership, and who fulfil the criteria for membership. Individuals cannot become members of the Mountain Partnership.

Interested parties may apply to become members of the Mountain Partnership. Each member of the Partnership will be required to provide a brief description of its intended contribution/s and action under the Mountain Partnership.

The members of the Mountain Partnership are expected to fulfil the following core roles and responsibilities:

- Initiating and/or participating in collaborative activities and joint initiatives with other members, including identification and, whenever possible, the mobilization of funds to promote investments in mountain areas;
- Sharing information, expertise and experiences through various channels. This could include providing links to the Mountain Partnership Web site/s; contributing success stories, case studies, good practices, and/or lessons learned to the Mountain Partnership database/s; participating in virtual discussions and electronic conferences;
- Playing an active advocacy role for mountain and mountain-related issues within their sphere of influence.

The criteria for membership of the Mountain Partnership include:

- Endorsement of the general principles, values and objectives of the Mountain Partnership;
- Active involvement in sustainable mountain development;
- Formal entity, with a proven level of stability in terms of funding and organizational capacity;
- Capacity to fulfil the membership roles and responsibilities, as defined by the Mountain Partnership;
- Access to the information and communication technologies required (e.g. computer, e-mail and Internet access) to participate effectively in Mountain

Partnership activities, as well as access to resources within the organization to act as an active Partnership member.

Members are required to indicate their commitment to the Mountain Partnership and to support its activities by making an annual contribution.

- The choice of the form of member contribution -- cash, in-kind or both -- is at the discretion of each member. In general, organizations from OECD member countries<sup>2</sup> are invited to pay the membership fee.
- The list of contributions is made available by the Secretariat for the Mountain Partnership, as well as through regular reporting on the status of the activities made from these contributions.

## **GOVERNANCE**

The governance of the Mountain Partnership is based on the principles of democratic participation of all members, accountability, responsiveness, consensus, transparency and flexibility. Issues of major importance, such as the workplans of the Secretariat or the expansion of the roster of initiatives, would necessitate a vote for all members, with a simple majority prevailing.

The conference of the partners is the supreme governing body of the Mountain Partnership and, whenever possible, it will meet face-to-face every two years and/or in response to expressed interests, needs and available funding, as appropriate. Members might also envisage holding face-to-face meetings at the regional level, or in the specific context of any given initiative under the Mountain Partnership.

In order to accommodate stakeholder interests and concerns to ensure the legitimacy of decision-making, the governance structure will take a direct democratic approach, in which each member has a voice in the decision-making process of the Mountain Partnership through e-polling, e-conferencing and devoted discussion lists.

Such an e-governance structure could help ensure that the Mountain Partnership develops within agreed principles.

## **SECRETARIAT**

The Secretariat for the Mountain Partnership will play a supportive role, providing services that link existing activities in mountain development and that foster synergies and complementarities to promote closer collaboration, avoid duplication and achieve

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<sup>2</sup> There are currently 30 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), namely: Australia; Austria; Belgium; Canada; Czech Republic; Denmark; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Iceland; Ireland; Italy; Japan; Korea; Luxembourg; Mexico; Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Slovak Republic; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; United Kingdom; and United States. (Source: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org))

greater coherence in development efforts. The main tasks of the Secretariat will be to provide communication and information services, knowledge management and brokering functions, and as such the Secretariat will act as a networking and liaison point for members of the Mountain Partnership. It will also promote the identification and mobilization of resources and investments for the sustainable development of mountains. The Secretariat will provide members with information about the availability of funds for mountain activities from all possible sources on an on-going basis. It will also identify and present to members for their consideration (by the end of 2005), options for possible financial mechanisms in order to assist them in carrying out partnership activities.

The Secretariat for the Mountain Partnership is supported through financial and/or in-kind contribution from the members and should have a multi-stakeholder composition. However, the Secretariat neither co-ordinates the actions of members nor assigns specific tasks and responsibilities to them.

The Secretariat is responsible for regular reporting on the status and activities of the Mountain Partnership to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), and other relevant bodies, as appropriate.