



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP SECRETARIAT  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2021**



Mountain Partnership

**Cover and back cover photographs:**

**Monastery in India**

©Amar Paul Singh

MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP SECRETARIAT  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2021**

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

Rome, 2022

Required citation:

FAO. 2022. *Mountain Partnership Secretariat – Annual Report 2021*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0547en>

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ISBN 978-92-5-136415-4

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP SECRETARIAT



Rosalaura Romeo  
@Antonella Di Girolamo

**T**he past few years have witnessed an extraordinary show of resilience from around the world and from the mountain communities we so proudly serve. Although the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout 2021, many initiatives, processes and partnerships for mountains and mountain peoples forged ahead – a number of them still virtual, but nevertheless effective.

Let me start with the decision of the United Nations General Assembly to declare 2022 as the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development and to invite the Mountain Partnership (MP) to facilitate its observance. This is indeed a strong mark of recognition of your collective commitment and we are proud of our members. What a memorable way to end 2021.

During this past year, the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) has worked hard to connect the more than 440 members across different time zones and altitudes, including those with connectivity and those with less, in an effort to leave no one behind.

The stories in this report reflect our four pillars of work: advocacy, communications, joint projects and resource mobilization. They celebrate the main actors: mountain people – farmers, entrepreneurs, scientists and researchers – who have displayed a strong sense of adaptability and innovation in these challenging times.

In 2021, the MPS continued to support efforts to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda by actively promoting and supporting MP members' presence and voices at key global events, such as the United Nations (UN) High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York and the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. As always, we tried to diversify our activities to reach new audiences, with special sessions on sustainable mountain development organized at Expo 2020 Dubai and at the UN Food Systems Summit, held in New York. In partnership with members, we produced policy briefs and information notes to highlight the role of mountains in providing key ecosystem goods and services for people and the planet.



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Youth and children played an active role in many mountain-related events in 2021, by launching a call to action promoted by the Zero Water Day Partnership at COP26 and a manifesto on mountain education and innovation with Milan's Mountain University UNIMONT at Expo 2020 Dubai. Young people's commitment to climate action and to challenging the status quo in mountains is something that the MPS is keen to continue nurturing.

We have worked with women change-makers to build enterprises and financial autonomy. In Kyrgyzstan, ethical fashion designer Stella Jean collaborated with Topchu, a group of women mountain producers, to produce a fashion collection. It combined traditional Kyrgyz motifs and materials with the fashion designer's expertise. The collection was launched at Milan Fashion Week and created ripples around the catwalk and beyond, providing Topchu with broad media attention and, most importantly, access to new markets.

As a partnership, we greatly value the diversity and innovation of our members. In Peru, the rural association REDAR expanded a processing plant for transforming local biodiversity into value-added products to include new product lines and sell them online. Together with NaturaSi, Sapienza University's Botanical Garden of Rome and Ecobubble, the MPS installed a prototype rooftop farm on the terrace of the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, featuring an intelligent automated system that nurtures neglected species and crops at risk of extinction. Jyoti Patil from India won the 2021 GROW Summer School innovation contest with a proposal for encouraging the cultivation of agrobiodiverse trees and shrubs to produce fibres for rope-making, instead of relying on machine-made synthetic fibres.

The theme of International Mountain Day 2021 was sustainable mountain tourism. In the lead up to the day, we initiated a collaboration with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that resulted in the publication of a new report, *Mountain tourism - Towards a more sustainable path*. It features best practices and initiatives from around the world, as well as practical guidelines and recommendations for sustainable mountain tourism as a recovery mechanism.

As always, we count on your unwavering commitment and enthusiasm for the mountain cause.

**Rosalaura Romeo**  
Mountain Partnership Secretariat

An aerial photograph of a mountain landscape in Saudi Arabia, featuring terraced farms and a winding road. The terraces are arranged in concentric, curved patterns across the slope, showing various shades of green and yellow. A paved road with a white line curves through the landscape. In the background, more mountains are visible under a clear sky.

# Championing the global mountain agenda

Farms on top of Al-Soudah mountain, Saudi Arabia  
©Khaled Alharthy

“ The Mountain Partnership is the only United Nations voluntary alliance dedicated to mountains. In this crucial year for action, we call on the members of the Mountain Partnership to join us in ensuring that mountains are included in major upcoming processes to raise attention to mountain peoples and ecosystems. ”

**Roberto Natali**  
Mountain Partnership Steering Committee Chair



**A**lthough the COVID-19 pandemic continued in 2021, the many global summits and processes that had been postponed from 2020 were resumed, with global hybrid conferences becoming the 'new normal'.

Mountains maintained a high profile on the international agenda. Together with MP members, the Mountain Partnership Secretariat took every opportunity to promote the cause of mountains and their people in relevant global, regional and local fora and advocacy events and meetings.

Marking the second year of the UN Decade of Action, 2021 brought us another year closer to the conclusion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The importance of including mountains and leaving no one behind was globally recognized when the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2022 as the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development (IYM2022) on 16 December 2021, at the proposal of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The corresponding resolution was sponsored by 94 governments – an extraordinary number for a resolution of this kind. The MP was invited to facilitate the observance of this Year, in collaboration with relevant organizations.

Twenty years after the first International Year of Mountains and the founding of the Mountain Partnership (MP) in 2002, IYM2022 offers a unique opportunity to take stock of achievements, build on

the enthusiasm and commitment of MP members, and highlight the resilience of mountain people and the importance of protecting the crucial role of mountains for the future of the planet.



# 2022

## International Year of SUSTAINABLE **MOUNTAIN** DEVELOPMENT





## Forging partnerships and expanding global outreach at Expo 2020 Dubai

Expo 2020 Dubai brought together millions of visitors from around the globe for a sharing of culture and innovation. Following the Mountain Partnership Products (MPP) initiative's selection as one of 25 best practices to be featured in Expo's Global Best Practice Programme, the MPS was invited to co-curate the day-long event "Reaching for the stars: Sustainable and climate resilient mountain development", together with the Government of Italy and the Aga Khan Development Network. Mountain practitioners, policy-makers, scientists, the private sector and grassroots actors shared local knowledge and best practices to galvanize action in line with the SDGs and enhance the resilience of mountain communities, livelihoods and ecosystems.

Top: "Reaching for the Stars: Sustainable & Climate Resilient Mountain Development" talk, Expo 2020 Dubai  
©What If/Expo 2020 Dubai



Right: Mountain Partnership Secretariat hosted an International Mountain Day celebration at Expo 2020 Dubai  
©MPS

In December, a month-long exhibition based on the MPP initiative – one of only two FAO projects to be featured at Expo – was displayed in the Best Practice area of the Opportunity Pavilion. There, an event led by the MPS and held on 11 December to mark International Mountain Day (IMD) raised awareness about the importance of mountains, to highlight opportunities and challenges in mountain development, such as the promotion of mountain products and sustainable mountain tourism.







# Mountains and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A virtual event held on the sidelines of the 2021 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) offered an opportunity to address the global importance of policies supporting food security, poverty reduction and sustainable food systems in mountains for biodiversity conservation.

The event featured interventions by a number of MP members, including the Governments of Andorra, Italy, the Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, Switzerland and Uganda, as well as the Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The need to protect mountain forests to build resilient economies and achieve the SDGs was highlighted on the margins of the 16th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

The side event “Restoring mountain forests for recovered, resilient and sustainable mountain countries” was organized by the Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the UN in New York, on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mountainous Countries and in collaboration with the MPS.

Durmitor National Park, Montenegro  
©Simon Straetker



Woman farmer in Viet Nam  
©Hai Tran/Unsplash

## Strengthening scientific cooperation between mountain regions

The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention provided support to Science for the Carpathians (S4C) in organizing the online 6th Forum Carpaticum Conference from 21–25 June, and co-organized several sessions and workshops during the Forum. The Forum focused on linking the environmental, political and societal aspects of sustainability in the Carpathian mountain region.

A workshop on the theme “Towards a stronger role of universities in shaping sustainable development of the Carpathian region” was integrated into a plenary session to promote wider participation. It contributed to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities of strengthening the science-practice-policy interface in the region. Based on the results of this process, the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and the S4C were invited to discuss collaboration between the Convention and the S4C at several conferences and events.

The Secretariat co-organized a ceremony for the signing of a memorandum of understanding for



cooperation between the S4C and the Scientific Network for Caucasus Mountain Regions. The ceremony took place on 14 September during Forum Carpaticum, and included two discussions on concrete collaboration efforts between the networks.





## Mountain voices for a sustainable future

To protect and promote the rights of mountain communities, the Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC), The Mountain Foundation and Focus International, in partnership with the Nepalese Ministry of Forests and Environment (MOFE), National Planning Commission (NPC), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organized the virtual event “National symposium on mountain voices for a sustainable human future: Constraints and opportunities” on 15 September 2021. Some 387 representatives from 48 countries participated. The symposium issued a mountain declaration that was presented to the Government of Nepal before COP26.

Left-hand page: Professional telescope over forest and seashore  
©Tim Gouw/Pexels

Annapurna, Narchyang, Nepal  
©Giuseppe Mondì/Unsplash





# Advocacy for mountains

The following events were held in 2021, with MPS support, to advocate for mountain causes and people.

**Symposium on high mountain biodiversity and the Andean-Amazonian region** (virtual; 5 February)

**International Mother Earth Day webinar** (virtual; 22 April)

**Launch of Latin American and Caribbean Network for Research and Innovation in Mountain Environments (LACMONT)** (virtual; 17 May)

**UN Food Systems Summit independent dialogue** (virtual; 18 May)

**World Bee Day webinar** (virtual; 20 May)

**High-Level Political Forum side event** (virtual; 8 July)

**UN Food Systems Pre-Summit parallel session** (virtual; 19–28 September)

**High Summit COP26 international conference** (virtual; 24–25 September)

**Pre-COP26 event “Towards climate-smart Alpine forests”** (hybrid; 30 September)

**Expo 2020 Dubai “Reaching for the stars: Sustainable and climate resilient mountain development”** (hybrid; 7 October)

**Expo 2020 Dubai “Connecting youth and mountains, creating a lively future” with UNIMONT** (hybrid; 8 October)

**Origin, Diversity and Territories Forum round table** (hybrid; 15 October)

**COP26 satellite event “Transforming our world: Children’s voices for 2050”** (virtual; 4 November)

**COP26 official side event “Sustainable mountain tourism & food systems to support recovery from COVID-19 in mountains”** (hybrid; 5 November)

**COP26 official side event “Climate change, mountains and the future of humanity”** (hybrid; 11 November)

**Mountain Partnership Steering Committee meeting** (virtual; 16 November)

**International Mountain Day 2021 – Sustainable Mountain Tourism** (virtual; 10 December)

**Expo 2020 Dubai International Mountain Day event** (Dubai; 11 December)





Cooking boorsoks in Kyrgyzstan

©FAO/Mirbek Kadraliev

# Promoting mountain food systems as drivers of development

“To ensure mountain people are not left behind after the pandemic, sustainable food systems in mountains must be supported and developed in an integrated manner.”

**Rosalaura Romeo**

Mountain Partnership Secretariat

The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit aimed to identify sustainable solutions for the future of food as part of the Decade of Action. As a contribution to the discussions, the MPS, together with the Centre for Development and Environment, developed an information sheet highlighting the need to improve the situation of small-scale mountain farmers worldwide to achieve progress towards sustainable food systems.

An independent dialogue brought together more than 100 participants for a lively and constructive discussion on how to make food systems in mountain areas globally safer, stronger and more equitable. Participants agreed on a number of ways to strengthen food systems in mountains, such as protecting traditional and indigenous food systems, including

the impacts of climate change on mountains in policy, addressing land rights and tenure issues through policy and advocacy by bringing everyone to the table, and promoting specialized mountain products to build resilience.

During the Food Systems Pre-Summit, more than 130 participants took part in a parallel session hosted by the MPS, which highlighted the need for concrete solutions for mountain areas. The MPS was also chosen as one of the co-leaders of the Land-Freshwater Nexus Cluster to ensure that the role of mountains in the water cycle is fully incorporated. The Cluster proposes a systematic, collaborative approach to solving the food systems crisis and its work offers an opportunity to highlight the role of mountains as freshwater providers. It was launched at the UN Food Systems Summit alongside a video to which the MPS contributed.

Benguet mountain farmer in the Philippines  
©Adelino A. Tabangin





## Celebrating local traditional food crops in North Sikkim, India

Agricultural patterns have changed in the Himalayas – shifting from food crops to cash crops, and from subsistence farming to intensive commercial agriculture – leading to changes in local food cultures and diets. This has resulted in a loss of agrobiodiversity of the region, as well as the decline of traditional systems and practices. The Dzo Tyuim festival attempted to revive the forgotten food crops and farming culture of the Lepcha indigenous community. The festival was organized on 12–14 November by young people from Lingthem village in North Sikkim, India, who were supported by the Homestay Association of Sikkim and the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, which is a member of the Mountain Partnership. Highlights of the event included demonstrations of traditional paddy harvesting practices, local food stalls, games and cultural events. Such festivals can be effective tools for promoting local food crops and food cultures.

Local food crops of North Sikkim, India

©Pema Yangden Lepcha/ATREE



Dzo Tyuim festival in North Sikkim, India

©Pema Yangden Lepcha/ATREE

# Red, the colour of prosperity for Ulikan rice farmers

Nestled in the Cordillera mountain range of the Philippines are the Fummag Rice Terraces, well known for their superior rice production. Here, a unique red coloured, non-sticky, aromatic long grain rice called Ulikan is cultivated by women farmers. Native to the village of Pasil, Ulikan red rice has been grown since ancient times. Legend has it that when the great leader Likan of the Taguibong tribe went missing after a hunt, the Ulikan red rice variety grew from his remains. The tribe brought the seeds home and planted them in remembrance of their leader. The MPS, Slow Food and the Department of Tourism in the Philippines have implemented a project to connect small-scale producers with tourism service providers to tap into the potential of local food systems and products, including tours of the rice terraces.



Ulikan rice farmers in the Philippines  
©Lam-en Gonnay



## The challenge of land abandonment in Europe

A new publication by MP member the Federal Institute of Agricultural Economics, Rural and Mountain Research assesses past observations and future risk calculations for land abandonment in European regions, highlighting the particular risk for mountain areas. *The challenge of land abandonment after 2020 and options for mitigating measures* was commissioned by the European Parliament amid growing concern over increasing land abandonment in remote and mountainous regions of Europe. The research focused on assessing the pressures on sustainable land management systems and food security posed by this trend, together with potential action. The publication concludes that urgent policy shifts are needed to respond to the complex decision-making processes and trade-offs involved in addressing this issue.

Litzlalm alpine pasture in Weissbach  
Nature Park, Austria  
©Sandra Uschnig





# Tackling climate change in mountains

Laspur-Kumrat Trail in northern Pakistan  
©Shams Uddin

“ The climate crisis is making mountains and mountain communities ever more fragile. They must be at the centre of our decision-making processes. We need solutions and innovations that respect values, cultures and traditions. ”

**QU Dongyu**  
Director-General, FAO



The world turned its eyes to Glasgow in November as the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) marked the resumption of international climate change negotiations for the first time in two years. Mountain Partnership members came together during two official side events to ensure that mountains were included in the discussions.

On 5 November, the side event “Sustainable mountain tourism and food systems to support recovery from COVID-19 in mountains” highlighted the role of natural resource management, sustainable food systems and sustainable tourism for climate change adaptation in mountains.

Speakers included representatives from the Governments of Andorra and Georgia, FAO, the Fundación Agreste, Instituto de Montaña, International Centre for Environmental Education and Community Development and the Mountain Sentinels Collaborative Network.

The side event held on 11 November, “Climate change, mountains and the future of humanity”, addressed the role of mountains in combating and recovering from two current global crises: COVID-19 and climate change. Representatives of the Government of Nepal, Asociación Oikos, Clean Energy Nepal and the Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN) discussed the role of multistakeholder platforms and

non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in addressing issues of international significance.

In the lead-up to COP26, the MPS participated in a range of events and conferences organized by MP members to address the severe impact of climate change on mountain areas. During the Pre-COP26 Summit, JSC Mountain, together with the British Embassy in Italy and Land Tirol, conducted an event on the theme of “Towards climate-smart Alpine forests”. In September, Mountain Partnership member EvK2Minoprio, in collaboration with the Minoprio Foundation, organized the High Summit COP26 to spotlight solutions for building resilience in mountains.





## Promoting awareness of climate change in Alpine regions

There is an urgent need to foster awareness about the sensitive ecosystems of mountain regions, especially in the context of climate change. Knowledge gained by scientists about the complexity of our planet must be made accessible to the public, in order to create a more sustainable society. The Environmental Research Station Schneefernerhaus partnered with six environmental institutions in Austria and Germany to establish the Climate-Pedagogue programme. This provides background information on climate change in the Alps, together with a variety of innovative educational tools. Graduates of the programme will serve as ambassadors in their communities to motivate others to live a sustainable lifestyle.

Left: Albania  
©Petrit Imeraj



Schneefernerhaus Environmental Research Station, Germany  
©UFS GmbH

## Promoting opportunities for mountain climate action in the Hindu Kush Himalaya region

With the aim of promoting the mountain agenda, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) undertook several year-long engagements in the run-up to COP26, bringing together stakeholders, including national focal points for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from eight ICIMOD member countries from the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region, members of the HKH High-Level Task Force, and representatives from the COP26 Presidency. ICIMOD officially launched the #HKH2Glasgow campaign, amplifying mountain voices for climate action in the region.

At Glasgow, ICIMOD participated in several key meetings and organized a number of events at the Cryosphere Pavilion as part of the HKH Focus Day held on 9 November 2021, making the case for ambitious climate action in the HKH and launching a Mountains of Opportunity Framework. The framework – which aims



to scale up climate-smart investment in six mountain-specific priorities – was strongly supported by the Prime Minister of Nepal and high-level representatives of other ICIMOD regional member countries.

Top: Cryosphere Pavilion at COP26  
©Udayan Mishra/ICIMOD



## Strengthening resilience and regional dialogue for climate change adaptation in East Africa

East Africa's last glaciers will most likely disappear this century. In addition, rainfall patterns are changing, and erosion and drought are becoming more pressing challenges in mountain areas, with severe implications for water supply and local livelihoods. In September 2021, UNEP and the Albertine Rift Conservation Society brought together East African stakeholders at a side event of Africa Climate Week to learn what governments and the East African community are doing under the Adaptation at Altitude Programme to adapt to climate change and promote transboundary cooperation and regional dialogue. Working together with local organizations and regional stakeholders, more than 50 concrete mountain adaptation solutions in the East African countries were identified. Solution providers, ministry representatives and civil society highlighted the need to promote sustainable development, especially in rural mountain areas.

View of Kilimanjaro from Amboseli  
National Park, Kenya

©Sergey Pesterev/Unsplash



## An Andean mountain community heals its river

Involving communities on the frontlines of climate change is critical to finding concrete solutions to local problems. In the remote mountain villages around the Rio Negro (Ancash, Peru), glaciers have started to melt, leaving metal-rich rocks exposed to the air for the first time in thousands of years and turning the river rust red as a result. To restore the poisoned river water and the surrounding contaminated landscape, villagers collaborated with scientists from the Instituto de Montaña, as well as with academic specialists. Following training, they built a water purification system that collects the acidic river water in small ponds. Then, using local traditional knowledge, the villagers planted native plant species that could absorb metals from the water. This initiative attracted the highest number of votes during “BE.Hive: Behavioral Solutions to Water Pollution”, a virtual summit organized by international NGO Rare’s Center for Behavior & the Environment in September.



Top: Local researcher measuring water quality

©Instituto de Montaña

Bottom: Rust-red stones stained by polluted water

©Instituto de Montaña





# Hand-in-hand with youth for mountains

Schoolchildren playing in Nepal  
©Susheel Kumar Shrestha

“ Children are the future custodians of mountains, and empowering their role through education to be the main actors in addressing climate change is essential. ”

**Sara Manuelli**  
Mountain Partnership Secretariat

**C**hildren and youth around the world have hopes, dreams and ideas for the future of mountains. Their willingness to embrace innovation can be a driving force for building a better tomorrow.

Yet in many mountain regions, youth face a lack of decent employment, education and infrastructure. Many migrate elsewhere in search of better lives. Given the surmounting pressures of globalization and climate change faced by many young people living in upland regions, empowering youth to engage and fully participate in developing and implementing action to promote sustainable mountain development has never been more necessary.

In recognition of their potential to safeguard mountain environments, the Mountain Partnership aims to give young people the tools they need to lead and be effective change-makers in their communities through education, training and other capacity-building activities.

Girl and boy in the mountains of India  
©Vivek Sharma/Unsplash





## Children call for action to protect mountain areas against climate change

More than 1 600 participants representing 81 countries attended the online conference “Transforming our world: Children’s voices for 2050”, organized by the Zero Water Day Partnership (ZWDP) and hosted by the University of Glasgow on the sidelines of COP26. Pupils aged 9 to 15 from six global ZWDP partner schools presented alongside the MPS, UNEP, the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA) Mountain Protection Commission, Mountain Partnership Goodwill Ambassador Jake Norton, and President of the American Mountain Guides Association Angela Hawse. The event saw the launch of the “Mountains: the water towers of our world – Children’s call to action to protect mountain areas against the impacts of climate change”, promoted by ZWDP with support from the Mountain Partnership. Following the event, a member of the Government of Germany requested a meeting with ZWDP to discuss how to support climate action by targeting entire schools and communities in northern Germany.



Children’s call for action to protect mountain areas against the impacts of climate change

## Schoolchildren in Argentina visit mountain caves to learn about cultural heritage

In Jujuy province of northwest Argentina, on the Andean Plateau, the town of Barrancas is home to a remarkable number of caves with valuable pre-hispanic paintings. The Vicuñas, Camelids and Environment research group took primary schoolchildren from Barrancas to visit the Caravanner's Cave to learn about their biocultural heritage. Painted on the walls, the children saw figures including vicuñas, llamas and the figure of a man with a shield, or *unku*, which has been adopted as a local icon. Following the cave visit, the children developed narratives about the messages of the paintings, made their own rock art, and designed a sign to erect at the cave's entrance for the conservation of the heritage that it hosts inside.

Right: Group of schoolchildren in Argentina  
©Bibiana Vilá

Next page: Utah Valley University  
event for the CSW65 on Zoom  
©Liam Dowling

## A manifesto on mountain education and innovation

The University of Milan's UNIMONT Centre launched a youth-centred manifesto for the promotion of a sustainable and lively future in mountain areas globally. The Mountain Education and Innovation Manifesto was created through the international consultation series "Youth4Mountains", developed by UNIMONT and supported by the MP, Euromontana and Alparc.







## Utah Valley University students advocate for mountains

In 2021, Utah Valley University (UVU)'s inclusive student-engaged learning model continued to involve students, especially non-traditional learners, in advocating for sustainable mountain development. Through the Utah International Mountain Forum – a coalition of student clubs – the student-engaged learning model encourages UVU students to collectively solve real-world problems, with a faculty member serving as mentor. Jointly with peers from Osh Technological University, students organized the 12th annual observance of International Mountain Day at UVU. In addition, students advocated for mountain women by co-hosting a parallel event and co-sponsoring a written statement during the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in conjunction with fellow MP members the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences and Utah China Friendship Improvement Sharing Hands Development and Commerce.

More than 100 young people between the ages of 16 and 29 from 28 countries came together to discuss the main issues that characterize sustainability and life in mountain areas. The final manifesto was presented during the event “Connecting youth and mountains, creating a lively future”, hosted in the Italian Pavilion on 8 October at Expo 2020 Dubai.

“ UVU is proud to have been the first academic institution in North America to join the MP in 2006. Since then, UVU students have enjoyed the continued support of the MP in advocating for the empowerment of mountain women and the sustainable development of mountain communities in the state of Utah and globally. ”



# Restoring mountain ecosystems

Soudah, a mountainous area of Saudi Arabia

©Majd Saleh

“As a founding member of the Mountain Partnership, UNEP is honoured to be part of this global alliance of partners joining forces to preserve these precious ecosystems and their valuable goods and services for future generations.”

**Bruno Pozzi**

Director, UNEP Europe Office



**M**ountains cover 27 percent of the Earth's land surface and are biodiversity reservoirs hosting almost half of the world's biodiversity hotspots. The conservation of highly diverse yet fragile mountain ecosystems relies on the long-term maintenance of healthy and active mountain communities to prevent land abandonment and promote sustainable livelihoods.

However, the acceleration of economic and land-use changes combined with the climate crisis and the recent COVID-19 pandemic are making existing problems more acute. This is increasing mountain inhabitants' vulnerability to food insecurity and reinforcing the need for restoring and creating resilient and biodiverse food systems in harmony with natural systems.

Through global advocacy campaigns, scientific research, mountain-specific policies and on-the-ground projects, MP members address these challenges in an inclusive way that takes into account the needs of mountain communities, as well as the crucial role that mountain people play in maintaining biodiversity and mountain ecosystems.

## Including mountains in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

The MPS has produced a policy note that calls on Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to ensure that mountains are explicitly included in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and in all CBD processes. The document complements the two policy briefs coordinated by UNEP, in collaboration with GRID-Arendal, the Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment and the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI): *Elevating mountains in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework* (2019) and *Elevating mountains in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework 2.0* (2020).

Argentine Patagonia  
©Arto Marttinen/Unsplash



## Launch of UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

World Environment Day 2021 marked the official kick-off of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030, aiming to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide, including mountains. On the occasion, UNEP highlighted the importance of large-scale restoration and ecosystem-based adaptation projects in mountains and, in particular, the host country Pakistan’s commitment to reviving mountain forests. Mountain areas are some of the hardest hit by climate change and projects such as Adaptation at Altitude, implemented in close cooperation with partners that include ICIMOD, explore how to increase community resilience and adaption. The Carpathians have been selected by UNEP as one of the Restoration Flagships for Europe.

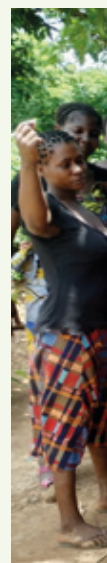


## Restoring native forests in the Andean foothills of Chile

At the beginning of 2015, two forest fires in Chile badly damaged 7 405 hectares (ha) of the National System of Wilderness Areas in the Andean foothills. The National Forest Corporation of the Ministry of Agriculture of Chile launched a project to restore native forests in La Araucanía. The initiative was part of the National Strategy for Climate Change and Vegetation Resources, and was supported by the UN-REDD National

Left: Social media card for launch of UN Decade ©UNEP / FAO / MPS

Patagonia, Chile ©Mario La Pergola/Unsplash







## Empowering mountain women to save the Mulanje cedar

Mount Mulanje in Malawi is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The mountain hosts rich biodiversity, including the Mulanje cedar (*Widdringtonia whytei*), an endemic species ranked as critically endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List. The tree faces a number of threats, including illegal harvesting for commercial fuelwood by vulnerable women living around the mountain. MP member the Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust launched the initiative “When sleeping women awake, mountains move” with support from #SOSAfricanHeritage, to provide these women with an alternative livelihood option and assistance in establishing their own small-scale businesses. To date, 100 women have benefited from the initiative. They have completely withdrawn from fuelwood collection, saving 2.1 ha of forestland per year.

Programme. The project included prior participatory processes with local communities, as well as working with indigenous communities, universities, NGOs, schools, public and private institutions, to gather information on how to carry out the restoration process. The initial goal was to restore 90 ha, and by the time the project ended in 2021, a total of 309 ha had been restored.

“*When sleeping women awake, mountains move* is a local proverb meaning every person, regardless of gender, has the capacity to progress in their socioeconomic status provided that they are well empowered.”

**Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust**

Top: Women beneficiaries of project on  
Mount Mulanje, Malawi  
© Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust

## Mountain women collectively defend Mother Earth

Two MP members, Mujeres a la Cumbre and the Feminist Hiking Collective, joined forces to launch the Mountain Women of the World network in 2021.

The project aims to build a transnational network of mountain women and mountaineers, build mountain women's collective leadership, and share the experiences of mountain women in protecting mountains. In celebration of International Mother Earth Day, the network organized a web conference on the theme: "We are nature: Mountain women collectively defending the Earth", at which the MPS participated, alongside mountain women from around the world.



Cartoon of people in the mountains  
©Feminist Hiking Collective





# Promoting mountain products and enterprises

“ The Mountain Partnership Products initiative is a certification and labelling scheme for ethical, fair and organic products that generates tangible benefits for mountain producers and ecosystems. ”

**Giorgio Grusso**  
Coordinator of the MPP initiative

**A**round the world, valuable agrobiodiversity and traditional knowledge are disappearing as farmers switch to growing commercial crop varieties that are more profitable in the short term. The solution to this problem lies in promoting heritage varieties and strengthening value chains to ensure that farmers receive fair pay, access new markets and continue to grow varieties that their communities have developed over generations.

The MPS provided technical and financial support to implementation of the Mountain Partnership Products (MPP) scheme in 2021. Countries currently involved include Bolivia, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Panama, Peru and the Philippines. The initiative is also expanding to Guatemala, Lesotho and Rwanda.

Several training schemes were organized within the framework of the MPP initiative, including one on implementation of participatory guarantee systems in Bolivia, Panama and Peru, in collaboration with IFOAM - Organics International and three MPP partners. Tailored marketing support continued to be provided for MPP partners.

## Mountain products at Milan Fashion Week

The MPP initiative teamed up with the FAO Women's Committee to bring together Haitian-Italian fashion designer Stella Jean and the traditional designs of the Topchu artisan group, comprising Kyrgyz mountain women. Together, the designer and the mountain women produced a unique collection featuring Kyrgyz felt and motifs, which was presented at Milan Fashion Week. As a result of the collaboration, the women are now becoming financially independent, revitalizing their traditions and reaching new markets. Moving forward, Topchu will retain ownership of the designs developed with Stella Jean and will be able to reproduce the fashion items and sell them directly, benefiting from the increased international exposure achieved through the partnership. A video about the collaboration was produced in seven languages and distributed widely. A related editorial and articles were featured in *La Repubblica*, *El País* and *Vogue Runway*, among other media channels.

Local women wearing Stella Jean clothing samples in Barskoon, Kyrgyzstan

©FAO/Mirbek Kadraliev









## FAO unveils rooftop farm at Rome headquarters

FAO installed a prototype rooftop farm at its Rome headquarters to highlight how innovative technology can help to increase access to healthy diets from sustainable agrifood systems. The rooftop farm is sponsored by Italian organic retailer NaturaSi, designed by Italian urban garden design company Ecobubble and monitored by Sapienza University's Botanical Garden of Rome. It features a wide range of plants, including neglected species and crops at risk of extinction. Also growing on the farm will be examples of mountain plants recognized by the MPP initiative.



QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General, and Fausto Jori, NaturaSi Chief Executive Officer, at the FAO rooftop farm ribbon cutting ceremony  
©FAO/Alessandra Benedetti



Alpaca farm in Peru  
©Michelle Geringer





## Promoting biodiversity, improving the alpaca value chain

Communities in the High Andes are severely affected by climate change, and alpaca herders are under pressure from the industry to breed and keep exclusively white alpacas. MP member Illa Biodiversidad y Desarrollo SAC (Illariy) is working with remote communities in Peru to promote the conservation of alpaca diversity and ensure that local livestock keepers can continue to earn a livelihood through traditional alpaca herding. To improve the value chain, Illariy works with producers to transform alpaca fibre into value-added products and connect artisans to markets. Through capacity development, the quality of the products is being assured and improved. In 2021, around 30 women artisans from Tolconi, Peru participated in four workshops on the processing of alpaca fibre, spinning and knitting.

Top right:  
Harvesting in Peru  
©REDAR



## Supporting rural livelihoods in times of pandemic

REDAR is a Peruvian association that supports rural people who value Andean biodiversity, providing them with technical and commercial skills and support. In 2008, it launched the Center for Practical Training for Rural Youth in Agribusiness Management in Huari, Peru. In 2021, its processing plant for transforming local biodiversity into value-added products expanded to include new product lines, including nectars, liqueurs and frozen pulps. These were marketed online through e-commerce and various digital platforms. The processing plant successfully provided a source of permanent income for more than 36 women, all heads of household, who have managed to support their families in times of pandemic thanks to the plant. REDAR is also actively promoting agroecology among family farmers.

A person with long brown hair, seen from behind, is standing on a dirt path in a mountain valley. They are wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and a large, dark green backpack. They are holding a smartphone up to take a photo of the landscape. The valley is lush green with a river winding through it, and mountains are visible in the background under a clear sky.

# Sustainable mountain tourism: A path to prosperity and inclusion

“ Sustainable tourism can serve as an important driver of socioeconomic development in mountain areas. Well managed, community-based tourism increases and diversifies household incomes, enhances job and livelihood opportunities, supports traditional systems, builds resilience and helps to conserve and promote natural and cultural heritage across landscapes. ”

**Zurab Pololikashvili**  
UNWTO Secretary-General



**W**ith mountain destinations attracting around 15 to 20 percent of global tourism, International Mountain Day (IMD) 2021's theme of sustainable mountain tourism recognized the sector's role in valuing the natural and cultural heritage of mountains and mountain peoples, promoting sustainable food systems, and protecting mountain ecosystems and their biodiversity.

The IMD theme also drew attention to the impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism sector. The pandemic can be seen as an opportunity to rebuild mountain tourism in a greener and more sustainable and inclusive way. This means ensuring community empowerment, effective measurement of the impact of tourism on mountains, and proper management of resources and waste.

Global celebrations to mark International Mountain Day transported participants to distant locations – physically and virtually. Governments, organizations and individuals in 46 countries staged more than 75 events. In Brazil, the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Research and Innovation in Mountain Environments held a virtual forum focusing on sustainable tourism in South America. In Tanzania, photographer Davie Masanja hosted a photo exhibition celebrating the landscapes and peoples of the Uluguru Mountains.

Top right: Stella Jean  
Photo courtesy of Stella Jean

International Mountain Day  
celebrated in Malawi  
©Macpherson Nthara

A virtual celebration by FAO and the Mountain Partnership, “Sustainable mountain tourism”, held on 10 December, highlighted the need to promote dialogue and cooperation in order to tap mountain tourism's full potential for contributing to sustainable development. With opening remarks by FAO Director-General QU Dongyu and UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili, the event included a high-level segment, a panel on best practices in mountain tourism, and a session featuring the Mountain Partnership Goodwill Ambassadors. FAO Deputy Director-General Maria Helena Semedo made the concluding remarks. Italian-Haitian fashion designer Stella Jean was appointed Mountain Partnership Goodwill

Ambassador in recognition of her work with mountain women artisans from Kyrgyzstan. Dilshodbegim Khusravova, a young Tajik volunteer, was named the first Youth Mountain Partnership Goodwill Ambassador for her work on early warning disaster prevention systems in the mountains of Tajikistan.



# Celebrating mountain tourism through photography

A photo contest on mountain tourism promoted by FAO for International Mountain Day received more than 390 entries from 66 countries. Susheel Kumar Shrestha from Nepal won the adult category for his stunning photo “Beautiful Nepal”, and Yifei Yan from China won the youth category for her photo “Mt Assiniboine and Hind Hut”, taken in Canada.





# Linking sustainable food systems and tourism destinations

The MP and the Global Island Partnership founded the Coalition of Fragile Ecosystems (COFE), a global alliance for the protection of mountain and island ecosystems. As part of the COFE initiative, the Republic of Palau, an archipelago of 300 volcanic islands in Micronesia, was selected for a programme aimed at sustainable production and empowering rural women producers in the tourism value chain. To reduce the carbon footprint of tourism in Palau, the Palau Sustainable Tourism Value Chain Programme is developing a carbon management

programme for tourists, and aims to increase the proportion of food sourced from local producers and reduce the industry's dependence on imports. The strategy will connect small-scale producers with tourism service providers, promote high-quality mountain products, and allow visitors to support unique biodiversity, while safeguarding local foods and ensuring that traditional farming practices are not abandoned. The MPS is supporting implementation of the demonstration project in Palau, in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism of Palau.



## Astrostays at 4 000 metres

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on communities reliant on tourism for their livelihoods. Astrostays, a stargazing-based homestay initiative owned and operated by villagers in Maan in Ladakh, India, was no exception. However, young people in the village put the downtime when there were no tourists to good use, spending it on honing their astronomy skills. Their investment paid off when tourism started to pick up again in 2021. During the four-month tourist season in Ladakh, the village ‘astropreneurs’ (astronomy entrepreneurs) welcomed more than 2 500 travellers to their homes and held stargazing sessions for them, showing them how to scan the skies of the Himalayas. This generated more than USD 23 000 in income for the community and strengthened the confidence of the team, who are now a role model for other communities around the world to leverage astronomy for livelihoods.

Right: Villager of Maan trained in stargazing  
©Astrostays

Next page (bottom):  
Traditional Romanian meal  
©Danut Ungureanu





## Promoting gastronomic mountain tourism in Romania

The National Agency of the Mountain Area of Romania developed and promoted the concept of Local Gastronomical Points (PGL) in 2021 to foster the development of rural mountain communities through the valorization of local agrifood products. Diversifying the agricultural activities of rural mountain households by setting up PGLs contributes to the development of the rural environment in a sustainable manner, creating work opportunities, maintaining community cohesion

and preserving culinary traditions in harmony with nature. The PGLs, which currently number 135, will be part of the future strategy of gastronomic tourism in Romania. The National Agency of the Mountain Area is providing free training courses for anyone interested in setting up a PGL.

Picnic baskets in Romania

©Danut Ungureanu



## The world's first carbon neutral homestays in the Himalayas

Tourism contributes to more than 8 percent of the world's carbon emissions, and high mountain ranges are particularly susceptible to the effects of climate change. MP member Mountain Homestays leverages the force of tourism to build livelihoods in remote mountain communities in a carbon neutral and sustainable manner. As part of its efforts, Mountain Homestays has developed the world's first carbon neutral rural homestays in the Himalayas.

Each carbon neutral homestay has more than 32 elements, including solar-based energy and solar water heaters, which make stays sustainable and carbon neutral – even at 4 000 metres above sea level. In 2021, the initiative welcomed more than 2 500 guests in carbon neutral homestays, generating USD 40 000 in income for local communities. The Mountain Homestays initiative was awarded the Regenerative Travel Impact Award in the climate category for its work in the Himalayas.



Carbon neutral homestay in the Himalayas

©Mountain Homestays, India

“ Mountain Homestays, in collaboration with the Mountain Partnership, has been advancing the narrative of sustainable tourism by leveraging indigenous knowledge and community development of remote mountain communities across the world. ”



## Launching the Sustainable Mountain Alliance

On World Tourism Day, 27 September 2021, a new international non-profit was launched. The Sustainable Mountain Alliance (SMA)'s vision is to facilitate the transition to sustainable sports and tourism in the mountain environment – the most sensitive environment to climate change – providing a collaborative platform that identifies and supports inspirational, innovative solutions and a regenerative economy in mountains. The SMA's key initiative in 2021 was the Big Climb, an ascent of Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest freestanding mountain in the world at 5 895 metres. The aim was to build back local tourism in the region and to raise funds for and awareness of the need for more equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. Professional mountain athletes including Mountain Partnership Goodwill Ambassador Mira Rai joined leading politicians, United Nations officials, academics and youth leaders in a high-profile advocacy climb of Africa's highest peak.

Mountain Partnership Goodwill Ambassador Mira Rai climbing Mt Kilimanjaro

©Ingrid Beutler





# Communication and knowledge management

Photographer in Celendín, Peru  
©Alvaro Araujo Alcalde/Unsplash

“The Mountain Partnership is a uniquely important mechanism for us to exchange information and knowledge among mountain-focused organizations from around the globe.”

Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)



Producing key publications and information, promoting a vast range of communications initiatives, and sharing the stories of Mountain Partnership members and their activities are core parts of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat's work. By generating and disseminating compelling evidence of challenges faced by mountain communities, and the many best practices developed in overcoming them, the MP aims to inform policy-makers and relevant stakeholders and galvanize action.

In 2021, the MPS produced a number of technical publications, policy briefs and press releases and continued to share mountain news and events through its communication channels and media outreach. Several success stories that were highlighted in these publications are shared in this report.

## Showcasing agroecology's potential in mountain farming systems

In mountains, practising agroecology and the conservation of agrobiodiversity results in more resilient agricultural and food systems. Sustainable mountain farming systems can drive progress towards reducing rural poverty, contributing to zero hunger and ensuring the resilience of mountain communities, while maintaining the provision of global ecosystem services, especially those related to water.

In July, the MPS launched the *Mountain farming systems – Seeds for the futures* report during a side event at HLPF 2021. The publication presents a collection of case studies from MP members around the world, highlighting experiences of agroecological mountain farming systems. It aims to increase attention on agroecological principles and approaches and showcase their potential.

Farm in Palau  
@FAO/JesseAlpert





Group of men in Mongolia  
© Bayar Baltantseren



## Rebuilding greener, more sustainable forms of mountain tourism

With their soaring peaks, remote locations and majestic beauty, mountains have long been a powerful attraction for visitors from all walks of life, who are drawn by the often colourful traditions of local communities, the opportunities for sporting activities, and the spiritual solace to be found in highland landscapes. Launched on International Mountain Day, *Mountain tourism – Towards a more sustainable path* highlights the key role that sustainable tourism plays in valuing the natural and spiritual heritage of mountains, and the cultural diversity and traditional practices of mountain peoples. Jointly developed by FAO, the MPS and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the publication features examples of innovation, best practices and initiatives from all over the world, as well as practical guidelines and recommendations in the context of building back better for sustainable mountain tourism.

Adaptation at Altitude solutions portal  
©Zoë Environment Network

## Adaptation at Altitude launches solutions portal

Mountains and their communities face significant challenges from climate change: glacial melt, changing water patterns and increased natural hazards, to name but a few. With the aim of supporting mountain communities in adapting to climate change, the Adaptation at Altitude programme has launched a Solutions Portal, to improve and transfer knowledge for the purpose of informing decision-making in policy processes. The A@A Solutions Portal is a database of tried, tested and replicable climate change adaptation solutions for mountainous regions. It helps to make existing solutions easier to find and explore, while giving visibility to those who developed them. Solutions are presented by sector, ecosystem type and impacts addressed, to help users find those that are most useful for their needs.



## Plastic on the peak: Global survey on waste in mountains

In recent years, much attention has been paid to the impact of waste in oceans. However, pollution in mountain regions has rarely made the headlines. To address this gap, GRID-Arendal, UNEP, the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA) and the Kilian Jornet Foundation teamed up with international mountain guide federations for the biggest-ever global survey among the mountaineering community. More than 1 750 outdoor enthusiasts from 74 countries responded, revealing that waste is a pervasive issue affecting mountain regions everywhere. Waste is encountered during two-thirds of mountain trips, the survey revealed. Hard and soft plastics are the most common types of waste seen at altitudes by mountaineers. Ahead of International Mountain Day 2021, the International Olympic Committee's Mountain Summit group, together with UNEP, launched 10 steps to be a mountain hero, a practical guide on how mountain visitors can reduce their environmental footprint and help to protect the places they love for future generations.

Garbage in the Himalayas  
©Sylwia Bartyzel/Unsplash





## 20 years of making connections for our changing mountains

In 2021, the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) Coordination Office celebrated its 20th anniversary. The milestone is testament to the efforts of a dynamic global community of researchers. Together, they have added to a growing body of important scientific knowledge, synthesized research results to identify further research priorities and inform policy and practice, and raised the profile of mountains on the international stage. To celebrate

the collective effort that has made the MRI what it is today, the MRI Coordination Office has published *Mountain Research Initiative: 20 years of making connections for our changing mountains*. This publication showcases just a few of the many key contributions made by the MRI community, and invites those who have been part of its 20-year history to share their reflections on the past, present and future of the network.



“ Being part of the Mountain Partnership means being part of a broader community with whom we share and expand on our scientific knowledge, and that places mountains at the core of its activities – not least on advocacy efforts at the global level. ”

**Dr Carolina Adler**

Executive Director, Mountain Research Initiative

# Mountain Partnership by numbers

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## #MountainsMatter Hashtag

The MPS delivered a communications strategy for International Mountain Day 2021 (11 December) generating the following results:

More than **6 600** tweets with the hashtag #MountainsMatter were delivered to more than **107 million** Twitter timelines. During the International Mountain Day period of 10–17 December, over **50** multilingual mountain-related posts were shared by FAO accounts, receiving **800** mentions and reaching more than **21 million** accounts. In addition, two FAO Instagram Reels videos produced by the MPS received over **128 000** views.

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## MP Website

**41 100** total users in 2020

**44 639** total users in 2021

**8.6 %** increase in users

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## IMD Website

**23 800** total users in 2020

**26 602** total users in 2021

**11.7 %** increase in users

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## On IMD

**5 436** total users on IMD 2020

**6 492** total users on IMD 2021

## MP Instagram

**970** followers in Jan 2021

**1 695** followers in Jan 2022

**74.7 %** increase in followers

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## MP Facebook

**7 630** followers in Jan 2021

**8 254** followers in Jan 2022

**8.1 %** increase in followers

**1 351** average daily reach in 2021

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## MP Twitter

**204 554** total impressions in 2021

**1 450** followers in Jan 2021

**2 150** followers in Jan 2022

**700** new followers

**48.2 %** increase in followers

**27.5 K** impressions on IMD 2021





# 2021 content highlights

## Videos

**Kyrgyz mountain women collaborate with fashion designer Stella Jean** (English; subtitles in Arabic, Chinese, French, Italian, Russian and Spanish) – long and short social media versions

**International Mountain Day 2021 photo contest promo video** (English)

**International Mountain Day 2021 photo contest winner video** (English)

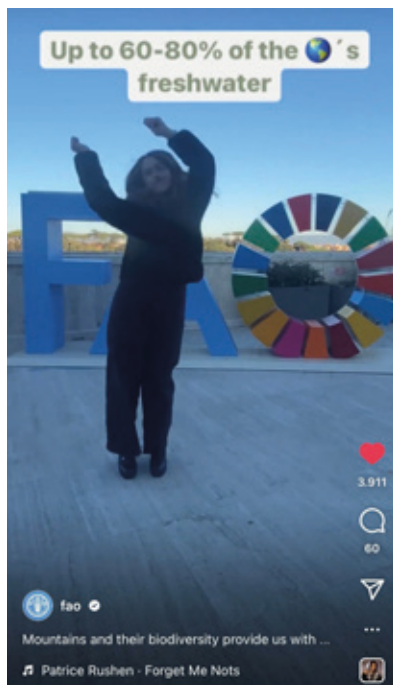
**Expo 2020 Dubai video message by FAO Director-General QU Dongyu** (English)

**GROW Summer School 2021 promotional video** (English)

**International Mountain Day 2021 – Sustainable Mountain Tourism event recording** (English)

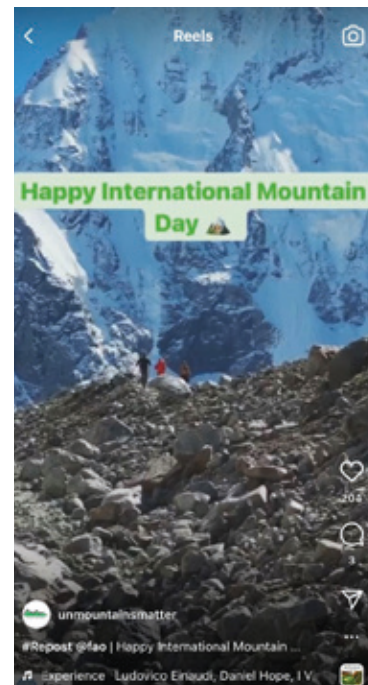
**International Mountain Day 2021 – Instagram filter promo video** (English)

**Instagram Reel on FAO Instagram for International Mountain Day** (English)



**Instagram Reel on FAO Instagram on Why Mountains Matter** (English)

2021 International Mountain Day FAO Instagram Reel





# Publications

**Mountain Partnership Secretariat Annual Report 2020** (English)

**Mountain tourism – Towards a more sustainable path** (English)

**Mountain farming systems – Seeds for the future** (English)

**Highlighting sustainable food systems in mountains for the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 info sheet** (English)

**Including mountains in the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework** policy note (English)

**Promoting mountain biodiversity through sustainable value chains** article (English)

**FAO's work in mountains: Building the road to recovery for mountain peoples** article (English)

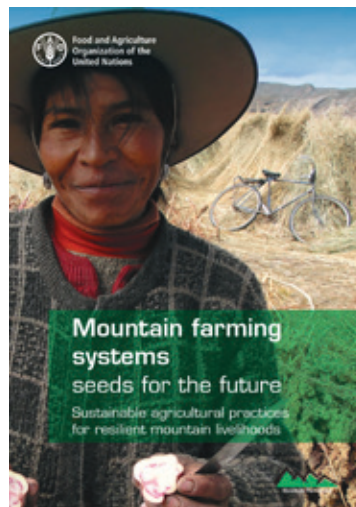
**Stella Jean partners with FAO to support artisans in Kyrgyzstan** FAO press release (English and Italian)

**FAO unveils rooftop farm at Rome headquarters** press release

**IMD 2021 fact sheet** (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish)

**IMD 2021 editorial** (English and Spanish) – published in 20+ international news outlets

Top right: Mountain Partnership Secretariat Annual Report 2020



Mountain farming system - seeds for the future



International Mountain Day 2021 fact sheet



# Mountain education and capacity development

Father and children walking to the Kyaukhteeyo Pagoda in Myanmar

©Kyaw Kyaw Winn

“As a mountain enthusiast, participating in the IPROMO training course provides the framework and skillset to properly advocate for ecosystem management in mountains and sustainable mountain development.”

**Aydan Özkil**

Programme Assistant,  
United Nations Volunteers Turkey Field Unit



**E**ach year, the MPS organizes summer courses, workshops and training sessions to strengthen members' understanding of and expertise in different aspects of sustainable mountain development.

## **IPROMO explores post COVID-19 recovery**

“Post COVID-19 recovery in mountain areas” was the theme of the 14th annual IPROMO training course, held online in July 2021 for 40 participants from 18 countries. This year's course focused on tools and skills that contribute to the integrated management of mountain areas through recovery plans and the concept of “building forward better.” The annual IPROMO course is jointly organized by MPS, the University of Turin and the University of Tuscia, both in Italy, with the high patronage of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Many MP members such as CONDESAN, ICIMOD, UNEP and FAO contribute to this course by making their experts available as instructors.



Machhapuchhare in Nepal  
©Daniel Matthews



GROW winner Jyoti Patil  
©Jyoti Patil

## Innovative tools for agrobiodiversity in a changing climate

“ The GROW course has given me a greater theoretical understanding of agrobiodiversity. I plan to take concrete steps to consolidate my idea of developing traditional products and encouraging the community in my small mountain village to grow the shrubs and trees required for rope-making. ”

**Jyoti Patil**

2021 GROW innovation contest winner

Thirty young professionals from 21 countries attended this year's two-week GROW Summer School, which was held online. The event sets out to introduce students to the importance of biodiversity in agriculture and, in particular, agrobiodiversity's role in enhancing the resilience and adaptability of cropping and farming systems to climate change in fragile ecosystems such as mountains and islands.

Jyoti Patil from India won the 2021 GROW Summer School innovation contest, which focused on improving smallholders' livelihoods through agrobiodiversity in fragile ecosystems. Her winning proposal outlined how the prolific use of machine-made synthetic fibres for rope-making are

compromising traditional knowledge and biodiversity in remote areas of India, where indigenous communities have historically cultivated diverse trees and shrubs for their fibres.

The summer school was organized by the MPS, in conjunction with Sapienza University of Rome and the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture. Technical support was provided by FAO. Sponsors and partners of the summer school included the Italian Development Cooperation, NaturaSi, Slow Food, IFOAM - Organics International and the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research.



# **CONDESAN hosts first Latin American edition of IPROMO**

The MPS, together with the Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN), organized the first ever Spanish language Latin American edition of the IPROMO training programme. Staged as part of the Adaptation at Altitude and Andean Forest programme, which is funded by the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development, the theme of the training initiative was “Sustainable management of socio-ecosystems in the Andes”. More than 40 students from 8 Latin American countries with a wide variety of professional profiles and backgrounds were selected to participate. Lectures were given by 21 instructors, including experts in research and the sustainable management of mountains in Latin America.

“ Being one of the members of Mountain Partnerships has helped GHE share its learnings with other communities outside the HKH region that face similar issues and challenges on sustainable tourism and energy access.”

**Global Himalayan Expedition**

## Creating solar power engineers for mountains

Imparting knowledge is a crucial step in helping to create livelihood opportunities. With this idea at its core, the Global Himalayan Expedition (GHE) trained 45 youths and women from the local community in the Khasi hills of Meghalaya, India to become solar engineers. Through a week-long workshop on both solar-based alternating current (AC) and direct current (DC), the members gained hands-on experience of working on solar projects throughout the region. The trainees installed solar set-ups in ten villages, some of them their own communities, enabling them to become self-sufficient in terms of repairs and maintenance and creating opportunities for more electrical projects and jobs. The engineers are now engaged in various projects at district level, putting their new skills to good use.



GHE solar training youth

©GHE India





# Joint action and investment for resilient mountains

“ Being part of the Mountain Partnership has helped us to establish the mountain agenda, and to connect and create solidarity with a wider base of stakeholders, for better championing of mountains globally. ”

Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre  
(KIRDARC)

The year 2021 created connections and launched new partnerships for resource mobilization and other activities with a wide variety of partners, serving mountain communities and agendas around the world.

The MPS received a donation from MP member Terra del Terzo Mondo of EUR 120 000 (USD 131 500) to be deposited in the Mountain Facility. These funds represent a crucial first step towards operationalization of the Mountain Facility, a funding mechanism launched in 2016 to address the rising threat of hunger in the mountain areas of developing countries.

The Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability of the Principality of Andorra renewed its support to the MP by extending the secondment of a policy officer to the Secretariat. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture and FAO all continued to offer strategic and financial support to the Secretariat in 2021.

In October 2020, with the support of the MPS, the FAO Forestry Division launched the project “Enhancing community resilience to climate change in mountain watersheds”, financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan.

The goal of this four-year global project is to enhance the capacities of institutions and communities in the risk-based watershed management approach for forest and land-use management, to improve local populations’ livelihoods. The MPS collaborated on the identification of local activities and partners in Peru and the Philippines and continued to contribute to implementation of the project during 2021.

Likewise, the MPS contributed to implementation of the “Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Mountain Areas” project, funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic – the Directorate General for Development Cooperation.



FAO rooftop farm inauguration and MoU signing

©FAO/Alessandra Benedetti



## Argentina ratifies its national mountain committee

The Committee for the Sustainable Development of the Mountain Regions of the Argentine Republic was established in 2005, building on the National Committee for Mountains that was created to observe the International Year of Mountains 2002. Since then, a set of public sector institutions and agencies has been working together on the management and sustainable development of Argentina's mountain regions. In 2021, the National Committee for Mountains was officially ratified when the Ministry of Environment and Sustainability announced that the Committee would be officially included within its scope of work on 12 January. Additionally in 2021, Argentina participated in the activities of the Andean Mountain Initiative, of which the Governments of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela are also members. Working groups were set up to develop methodological and governance frameworks, a five-year action plan and a finance strategy, and to review its operating manual.

Aconcagua Park, Mendoza, Argentina

©Nicolas Perez/Unsplash



# The Mountain Partnership Steering Committee

**T**he Steering Committee of the Mountain Partnership provides programmatic orientation to the MP, overseeing the preparation of a four-year strategy and a two-year workplan. The 17-member body monitors the work of the MPS, the implementation of the “Mountain Agenda” and the achievements and impacts of their respective electoral groups.

Steering Committee members are elected to four-year terms by the various membership categories and regions.<sup>1</sup> They meet annually and select a chair and vice chairs.

The following governments and organizations are serving on the 2017–2021 Steering Committee:

## Donor organization to the MPS

- Switzerland

## Governments

- Asia and the Pacific: Philippines, Nepal (Alternate)
- Europe: **Italy (Chair)**, Turkey (Alternate)
- Middle East and North Africa: Tunisia
- North and Central America and the Caribbean: Dominican Republic, Guatemala (Alternate)
- South America: Argentina, Chile (Alternate)
- Sub-Saharan Africa: Uganda, Cameroon (Alternate)

## Host institution of the MPS

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

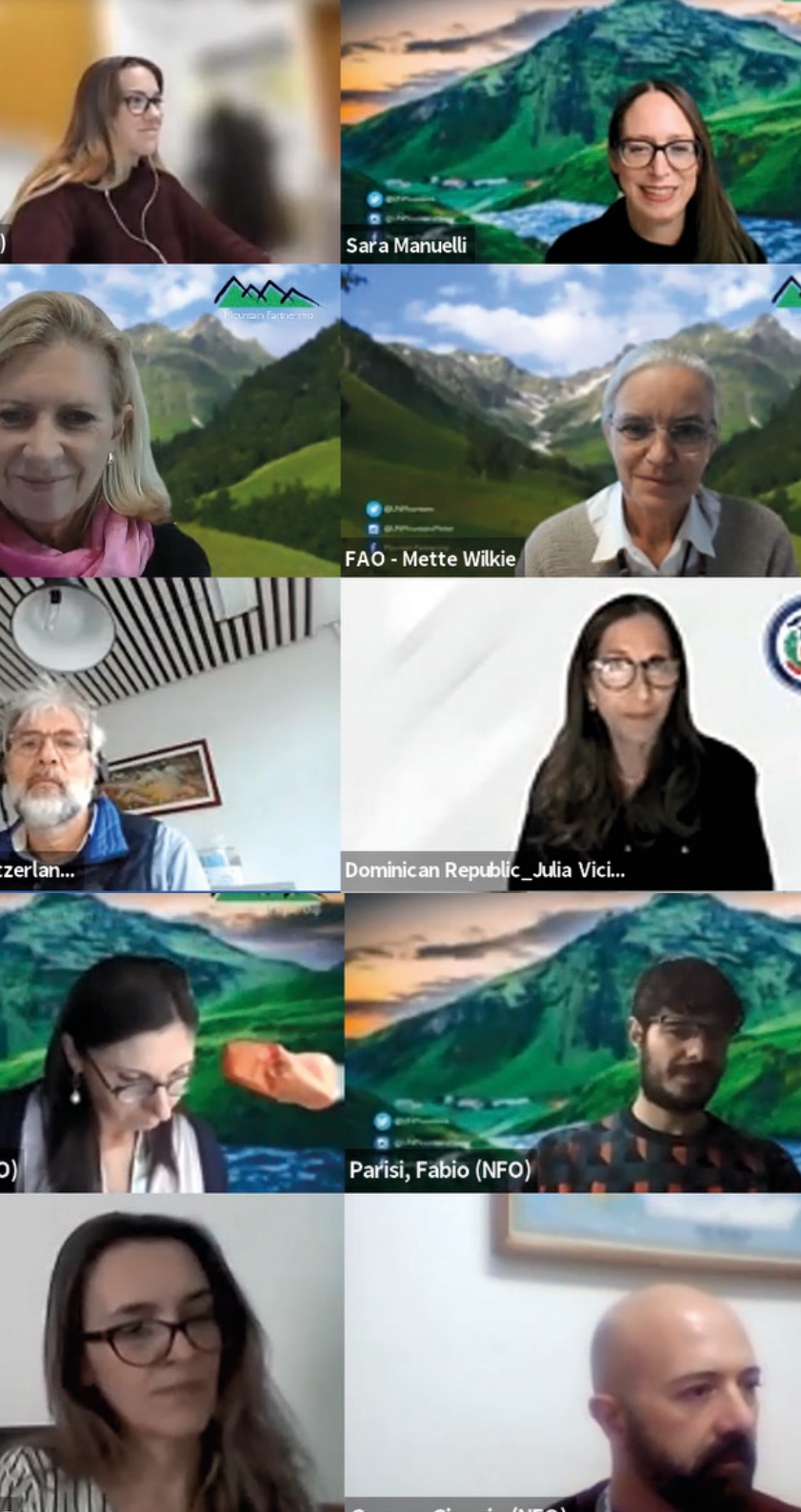
## Intergovernmental organizations

- United Nations Environment Programme, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (Alternate)

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1. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the current Steering Committee members have been in charge for five years.





### Major group organizations

- Asia and the Pacific: **Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (Vice Chair)**, Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation (Alternate)
- Central Asia: Institute for Sustainable Development Strategy Public Fund, Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation (Alternate)
- Europe: Centro de Investigação de Montanha and Euromontana
- Global Civil Society Organization: Mountain Research Initiative, The Mountain Institute (Alternate)
- Middle East and North Africa: Mountain Environment Protection Society
- North and Central America and the Caribbean: **Aspen International Mountain Foundation (Vice Chair)**, Fundación CoMunidad (Alternate)
- South America: Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion, Fundación Agreste (Alternate)
- Sub-Saharan Africa: Foundation for Environment and Development, Les Compagnons Ruraux (Alternate)

Steering Committee meeting, November 2021

©Mountain Partnership Secretariat

A scenic view of a mountain valley with rolling hills and a small settlement in the distance. The sky is hazy, and a bird is visible in the upper center.

# Mountain Partnership members

“ The Mountain Partnership represents an alliance in which we cooperate, share best practices, and learn from the experiences of mountain inhabitants around the world. ”

National Agency of the Mountain Area of Romania



At the end of December 2021, the following **442 governments and organizations** were members of the Mountain Partnership:

## North & Central America and the Caribbean

6 governments:  
Costa Rica / Cuba / Dominican Republic / Guatemala / Jamaica / Mexico + 33 NGOs  
+ 4 subnational authorities

## Europe

17 governments:  
Andorra / Armenia / Austria / France / Georgia / Italy / Liechtenstein / Monaco / Romania / Serbia / Slovakia / Slovenia / Spain / Switzerland / Republic of North Macedonia / Turkey / Ukraine + 96 NGOs  
+ 3 subnational authorities

## Near East and North Africa

6 governments:  
Algeria / Iran / Jordan / Morocco / Tunisia / Yemen + 11 NGOs

## Asia and the Pacific

10 governments:  
Afghanistan / Bangladesh / Bhutan / India / Indonesia / Nepal / Pakistan / Papua New Guinea / Philippines / Sri Lanka + 77 NGOs  
+ 1 subnational authority

## Sub-Saharan Africa

13 governments:  
Burundi / Cameroon / Democratic Republic of the Congo / Ethiopia / Ghana / Guinea / Kenya / Lesotho / Madagascar / Malawi / Swaziland / Togo / Uganda + 35 NGOs  
+ 1 subnational authority

## Central Asia

1 government:  
Kyrgyzstan + 38 NGOs  
+ 1 subnational authority

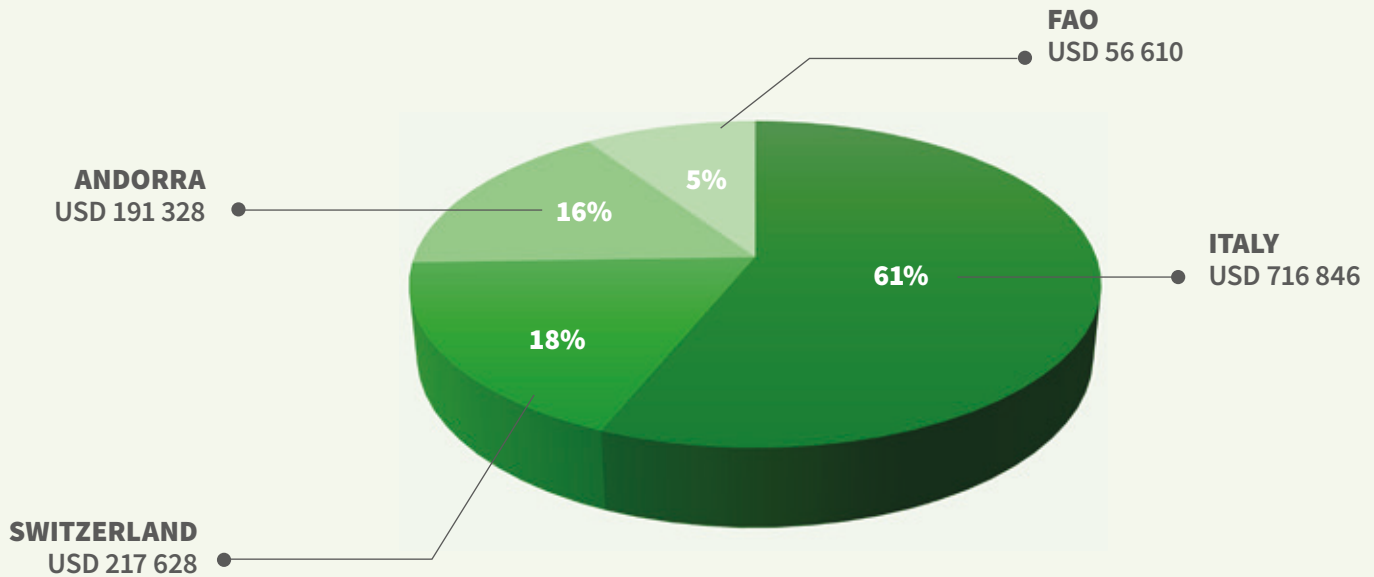
## South America

7 governments:  
Argentina / Bolivia / Chile / Colombia / Ecuador / Peru / Venezuela + 37 NGOs

## GLOBAL

18 intergovernmental organizations  
27 global major groups

# MPS financial overview

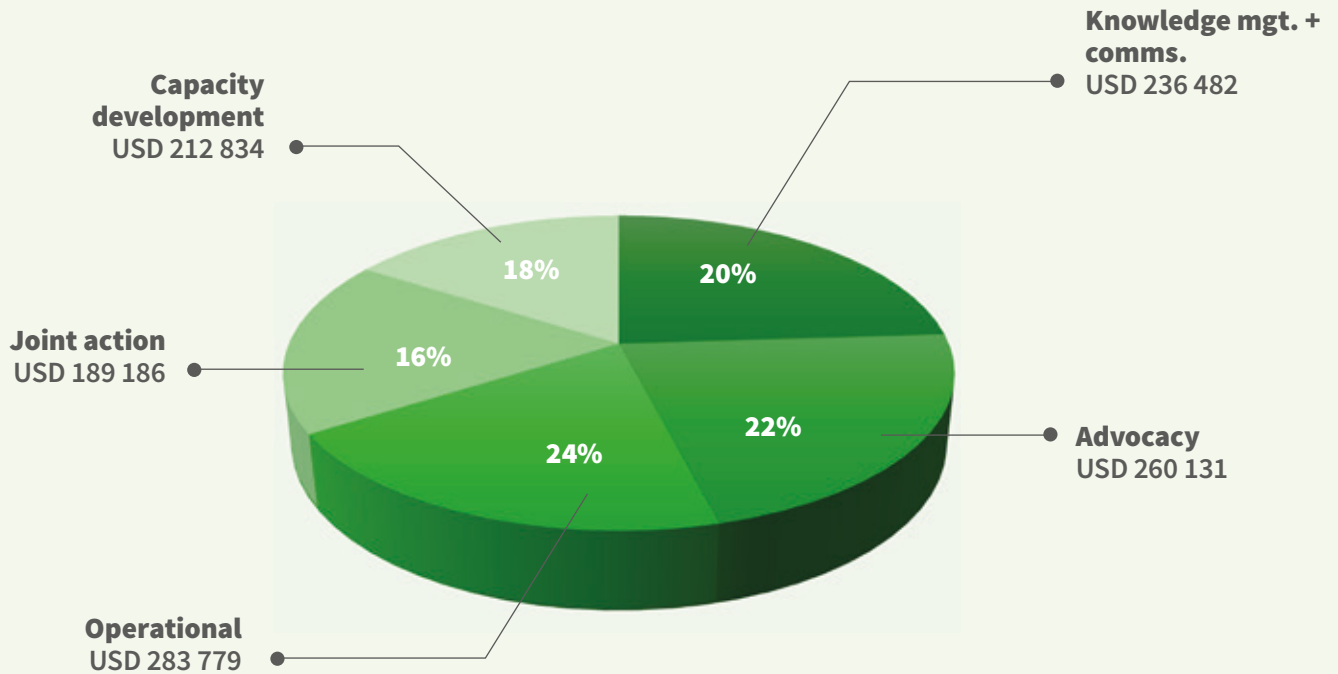


**Resource partners**  
Italy, Switzerland,  
Andorra, FAO

 **Total (100%):**  
USD 1 182 412



# Functions









## Mountain Partnership Secretariat

The Mountain Partnership is supported by a Secretariat hosted at FAO and is funded by the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Sustainability of the Principality of Andorra, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture and FAO.

**Yuka Makino**

Coordinator of the MPS  
(January - June 2021)

**Rosalaura Romeo**

Programme Coordinator

**Giorgio Grussu**

Project Coordinator

**Sara Manuelli**

Advocacy and  
Outreach Officer

**Patricia Quillacq**

Policy Officer

**Antonella Sorrentino**

Administrative Assistant

**Laura Russo**

Sustainable Mountain  
Development Senior  
Expert

**Fabio Parisi**

Sustainable Mountain  
Development Specialist

**Valeria Barchiesi**

Project Specialist

**Samantha Abear**

Communications and  
Outreach Expert

**Allison Bozzi**

Outreach Expert



Tourists watching Tiji festival at Lo-Mangthan  
(Upper Mustang, Nepal)  
©Susheel Kumar Shrestha









Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,  
Education and Research EAER  
**Federal Office for Agriculture FOAG**

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**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**  
Rome, Italy