

SUDAC Programme

swissuniversities

Effingerstrasse 15, Postfach
3001 Bern
www.swissuniversities.ch

Contact

Programme coordinator
Vincenzo Ribi
Deputy Head
International Relations
swissuniversities

T: +41 31 335 07 58
Vincenzo.ribi@swissuniversities.ch

Head of COFER

PD Dr Christian Huggel
Department of Geography (UZH
GIUZ)
University of Zurich
Winterthurerstrasse 190
8057 Zurich

COFER Strengthening capacities and resilience in climate adaptation

Summary

The UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on “Climate Action” recognizes climate change as one of the greatest challenges of our time, fundamentally undermining the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development. While climate change affects all countries on all continents it disproportionately affects the developing world, with unprecedented and increasing risks to life, livelihoods and ecosystems. Adaptation to changing and new environmental conditions is therefore of fundamental importance to sustainability and implies inter-disciplinary scientific knowledge. However, climate change adaptation (CCA) is not a straightforward but a complex and interwoven process. The current translation from research to CCA practice shows important limitations. Moreover, it is widely recognized that human capacities and knowledge, and thus education, are a critical resource to address CCA, but comprehensive teaching curricula at the university level are missing in Switzerland and countries in the South. This COFER addresses this major challenge by developing and implementing dedicated joint teaching programs and introducing new approaches to put research into value for practice and development. For this purpose, we systematically adopt a joint knowledge production (JKP) approach where researchers, policy makers and groups of civil society engage and cooperate in a framework of different forms of knowledge to ultimately negotiate adaptation. We directly respond to SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 4 (Quality education), and also contribute to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). The COFER will also adhere to the 11 KFPE principles as shown in the proposal.

This COFER brings together top, multi-disciplinary expertise from Switzerland and from two major world regions, South Asia-Himalaya, and Latin America-Andes. The University of Zurich (UZH) takes the lead of the consortium, joined by ETH Zurich, BFL-HAFL and ZHdK, and five carefully selected partner institutions in the South. The COFER partners have renowned expertise in CCA, development and sustainability with a substantial track record of collaborations with the South, and cover fields from climate science to physical and human geography, economics, anthropology, ethics, visual arts and pedagogy. The COFER can build on pre-existing collaborations in Switzerland and the partner countries and will form an unprecedented network, responding to the currently scattered academic landscape in CCA.

Three Work Packages (WP) are foreseen: WP A jointly assesses the needs, establishes coordination structures and a stakeholder network. WP B focuses on the co-production of the teaching material in CCA, which will be introduced in existing and

new courses in the partner institutions, and WP C is concerned with the co-production of research from co-design to co-dissemination where existing cases will be systematically analyzed to enhance the translation from re-search to practice, with the gained insights applied in new pilot studies. Outputs include a unique network of the partner institutions with stakeholders, a com-mon learning platform with a range of diverse and innovative teaching material, a knowledge hub with novel research insights on JKP in CCA and new pilot studies generated, and a coherent dissemination strategy developed and implemented. In-kind and third-party funds and projects, a joint publication record and experience, measurable strengthened competitiveness and enhanced impact will ensure sustainability of the COFER beyond 2020.