

SDC HUC FOCUS GRANTS

Call for Proposals

Date of circulation: 31 March 2018

Application deadline: 07 May 2018

I. BACKGROUND

The Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region is home to 240 million people in the mountains and hills, and around two billion people in the river basins with their headwaters in the HKH. It has the largest body of ice outside the polar regions, covering an area of more than 60,000 km². Hence, the HKH region is sometimes referred to as the Third Pole. The glaciers, ice fields, and snow packs provide important intra- and inter- annual water storage facilities, and the mountains are often called the “water towers” of Asia. They are the major source of surface water and groundwater during the dry season and play a significant role in agriculture and food and energy security. Around one billion people live in the three large transboundary basins in the region – the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra. These rivers have their sources in the HKH mountains, and are shared across borders between Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Climate change studies increasingly suggest that the effects of glacial melt, temperature variations, and erratic monsoon patterns will impact the availability of water in the region and lead to a greater frequency and intensity of floods and droughts.

Globalization and climate change have an increasing influence on the stability of fragile mountain ecosystems and the livelihoods of mountain people. Mountain and downstream communities are increasingly vulnerable to climate change impacts and are in pressing need of effective adaptation and mitigation measures. The resilience and adaptation capacities of communities and ecosystems need to be strengthened through adaptation mechanisms that are built on both indigenous knowledge of autonomous adaptation and strong scientific evidence. Appropriate policies and practices, and innovative livelihood improvement and sustainable natural resource management strategies need to be developed through a strong partnership between scientists, policy makers, and practitioners.

Universities and research centres play a key role in generating, sharing, and disseminating knowledge on climate change and providing evidence for effective climate change impact mitigation policies and practice. They also play a key role in filling in crucial knowledge gaps and infusing technical content into public discourse that can help influence policy makers and

public opinion. The Himalayan University Consortium (HUC) was founded in 2007 with a mandate to develop an effective, sustainable network of universities in the HKH, for collaboration with academic, research, and knowledge generating and exchange institutions both within and outside the HKH region for sustainable mountain development. Its founding member, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICMOD), hosts the HUC Secretariat as part of one of its Regional Programmes – Mountain Knowledge and Action Networks. The Consortium has expanded its network to 47 full members in eight HKH countries and 15 associate members in OECD and other Asian countries (Annex 1). Through initial activities such as Small/Seed Grants, Exchange/Mobility Grants, and ICIMOD PhD/Doctoral Fellowship Programmes, members have increased their ownership and commitment. Nine HUC Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) have been established and initial steps are being taken to build regional collaboration on research and training for sustainable mountain development across the Consortium (Annex 2).

In order to assist the consolidation and sustainability of the network, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has provided a two-year grant to HUC as part of the Second Phase (2016–2019) of the Indian Himalayas Climate Adaptation Programme (IHCAP). The initiative is called HUC SDC Focus Grants and aims to contribute to IHCAP's objective of advancing knowledge on climate science and promoting effective and sustainable adaptation measures. It seeks to upscale the impacts of interventions made by IHCAP to the larger HKH region and promote regional collaboration between institutions of higher education in India and those in neighbouring countries, under the continued support of Swiss expertise.

II. THEMATIC AREAS & REQUIREMENTS

The objective of the focus grants is to foster regional collaboration in higher education research and training in and for sustainable mountain development.

Institutional grant proposals are expected to focus on any of the nexuses among the thematic areas of Climate Change Sciences and Adaptation Measures listed below, which include:

- Water
- Ecosystems
- Landuse
- Air Quality
- Gender
- Migration

Grant activities may range from primary data collection and analyses of existing data and preparation of international peer-reviewed publications, and development of adaptation strategies or policy briefs, to revising course syllabi/curricula, in any combination. However,

trainings, workshops/conferences, exposure visits by faculties or students, and stand-alone curriculum building/revision are ineligible grant activities.

Applying (leading) institutions must be one of HUC's Full Members (Annex 1). The proposal must also fulfill the following:

- The implementing partnership should consist of at least ex

- **Potential for impact and sustainability:** Identified impact areas, secured commitment for policy or curriculum uptake by relevant institutions, potential for external funding from government and international agencies.

V. IMPORTANT DATES

Deadline for submission of proposal: 7 May 2018

Notification of Selection: 25 May 2018

Grant contract signing: 15 June 2018

Inception Meeting in Kathmandu (Nepal): 1 July 2018. Principal investigators of lead partners and selected participating partners are required to participate in the Inception Meeting.

CONTACT

To apply for the grant, please register online at huc-hkh.org

Please send your queries to The Himalayan University Consortium Secretariat
huc@icimod.org


LIST OF ANNEXES

1. List of HUC full and associate members as of November 2017
2. List of HUC Thematic Working Groups

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