

# 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 km<sup>2</sup>. 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
- "Nexus" approach - two or more thematic areas combined and addressed simultaneously in the context of climate sciences and adaptation measures (e.g. 'Gender & Migration, or 'Water & Landuse').

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 one additional HUC Full Member from a country other than that of the lead institution.
- The implementation of the grant must involve relevant expertise from research institutions in Switzerland.<sup>1</sup>
- The linkage with one of HUC's Thematic Working Groups is convincingly demonstrated (Annex 2).
- Adhere to the ICIMOD's reporting, financial, and administrative requirements.

Previous grantees of HUC Seed/Seedling Grants are strongly encouraged to apply.

### III. FUNDING AND DURATION

Depending on the scope of the proposed activities and the size of partnership, funding ranges from **USD 20,000 to USD 35,000** per grant for a duration of **12 to 15 months**, starting 15 June 2018. Three to four grants will be awarded.

### IV. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed by an independent panel of climate change and adaptation experts, according to the following criteria.

- **Scientific quality:** Validity and relevance of research question, quality of literature review, clarity and appropriateness of methodology for data collection and/or analyses, potential for international peer reviewed publication.
- **Policy relevance:** With direct policy implications, proven feasible and sustainable adaptation measures.
- **Strength of partnership:** Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and contributions of each partner. Proposal based on existing partnership and scope for continuation, evidence of ownership or shared leadership, linkage with HUC TWGs, presence of women as principal investigators in the team, incorporation of Swiss expertise, etc.
- **Interdisciplinary approach:** Balance between natural and social sciences, creative use of stakeholder engaging strategies, etc.
- **Potential for upscaling:** Replicability and applicability of research outcome or/and adaptation measures in other contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> The costs of Swiss consultancy will be covered in addition to the grant's budget. The lists of Swiss institutions and experts are available upon request.

- **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](http://huc-hkh.org)

Please send your queries to The Himalayan University Consortium Secretariat  
[huc@icimod.org](mailto: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

### List of HUC Full Members

S.No	Name of the Institution(s)	Country
1	Eshraq Institute of Higher Education	Afghanistan
2	Kabul University	Afghanistan
3	Kandahar University	Afghanistan
4	Nangarhar University	Afghanistan
5	Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology (BUET)	Bangladesh
6	Rajshahi University	Bangladesh
7	University of Chittagong	Bangladesh
8	Royal University of Bhutan	Bhutan
9	Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environmental Research (UWICER)	Bhutan
10	Institute for Mountain Hazards and Environment (CAS)	China
11	Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research (IGSNRR)	China
12	Kunming Institute of Botany	China
13	Lanzhou University	China
14	Northwest University	China
15	Qinghai Normal University	China
16	Sichuan University	China
17	Southwest Forestry University (SWFU)	China
18	UNIDO International Solar Energy Centre for Technological Promotion and Transfer	China
19	Yunnan Agricultural University (YAU)	China
20	Yunnan Minzu University	China
21	Yunnan University	China
22	Xinjian Institute of Ecology and Geography	China
23	CSK Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University	India
24	G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development	India
25	Forest Research Institute (FRI, Dehradun)	India
26	Kashmir University	India
27	HNB Garhwal University	India
28	Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences	India
29	Shri Guru Ram Rai University	India
30	South Asian University	India
31	Sikkim University	India
32	SKUAST Agriculture University, Jammu	India
33	Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)	India
34	TERI School of Advanced Studies	India

35	Wildlife Institute of India (WII)	India
36	Yangon University	Myanmar
37	Yezin Agricultural University (YAU)	Myanmar
38	Agriculture and Forestry University	Nepal
39	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)	Nepal
40	Kathmandu University (KU)	Nepal
41	Pokhara University	Nepal
42	Tribhuvan University (TU)	Nepal
43	Agriculture University Peshawar	Pakistan
44	COMSATS Institute for Information Technology	Pakistan
45	Karakorum International University (KIU)	Pakistan
46	Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University	Pakistan
47	University of Swat	Pakistan

### List of HUC Associate Members

S.No	Name of the Institution(s)	Country
48	Department of Geoinformatics (Z_GIS)	Austria
49	University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, BOKU	Austria
50	Mongolia International University	Mongolia
51	International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC)	Netherlands
52	International Institute of Asian Studies, Leiden	Netherlands
53	Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB)	Norway
54	University of Central Asia (UCA)	Tajikistan & Kyrgyzstan
55	Centre for Development and Environment (CDE, University of Bern)	Switzerland
56	Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)	Thailand
57	University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)	UK
58	Walker Institute, University of Reading	UK
59	India China Institute at The New School	USA
60	University of Arizona	USA
61	Yale Himalayan Initiative	USA
62	University of Colorado, Boulder	USA

## List of HUC Thematic Working Groups

1. Water
2. Culture and Trans-Himalayan Environmental Humanities
3. Disaster and Resilience
4. Climate Change
5. Social Mobility and Non-Traditional Food Security
6. Genetic Biodiversity
7. Livelihood and Poverty Reduction
8. Online Training
9. Mountain Agriculture