

Climate change, ecosystems, and health: **Conéctate-A+** small grants program

Call for small grant proposals 2022

v. 19/Aug/2022

1 Background

Conéctate A+ is a “Cluster of Cooperation (CLOC)” and research collaboration hub in the Tropical Andes and Central America region, supported by and part of the swissuniversities Development and Cooperation Network (SUDAC) programme. Conéctate A+ has a broad membership that builds on the SUDAC’s Consortia for Education and Research (COFER) and existing networks coordinated and led by the MRI, CONDESAN and the University of Zürich, as well as combining existing and new partnerships in this region. The research activities promoted in Conéctate A+ are thematically focused on climate change, ecosystems, and health in view of sustainable development within the framework of the United Nations Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Conéctate A+ aims to strengthen the capacities needed to achieve the SDGs in the tropical Andes and Central America region by providing a platform that promotes knowledge exchange, generates information, and fosters academic collaboration opportunities among Swiss universities and other key actors that play an active role in formulating and implementing innovative sustainable development strategies and policies in the tropical Andes and Central America region.

Conéctate A+ promotes interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research collaborations that actively integrate relevant knowledge across the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, as well as local knowledge and from stakeholders outside of academia, thereby integrating local voices, needs, knowledge, and common interests in policy processes.

This small grants programme supports collaborative research, synthesis activities that generate outputs such as publications and kick-start integrative research initiatives, and projects focused on teaching, training, and capacity development across the thematic areas of focus of this call. This is based on the recognition that substantial knowledge gaps persist, especially on the interaction of social and environmental dynamics as they influence sustainability outcomes, including the challenges and opportunities that can ensue. Conéctate A+ will be awarding small grants to 3- 4 outstanding proposals that meet the eligibility criteria of this call.

2 High priority themes for funding

This call invites proposals for inter- and transdisciplinary collaborations that critically conceptualize, analyze, and substantiate how science and policy interact on topics relating to **climate change, ecosystems, and health in the Tropical Andes and Central America region within the framework of sustainable development.**

We encourage proposals for projects that can provide original insights stemming from synthesis and comparative analyses of case studies, meta-analyses, or systematic reviews of the literature. Furthermore, we particularly encourage proposals that engage with, or include education and teaching on university level. Proponents may consider (but are not limited to) the following areas of thematic interest:

- Integrative research that links climate change, ecosystems, and health; identifies and/or addresses knowledge gaps in the region; and/or provides scenarios or future projections. *For example*, integrative disaster risk research that considers hazards such as floods, landslides, or wildfires and their impacts on human health and/or ecosystems; or research on the impacts of climate change on human health in urban areas.
- Projects focused on transferring, adapting or implementing measures that promote sustainable development in local contexts, especially targeting urban systems, mega cities and settlements.
- Projects focused on teaching, training, and capacity development across the thematic areas of focus of this call. *Examples can include*: training material for educators to develop curricula and syllabus content and design, content for online educational modules, including virtual experiments for teaching risk assessment in the context of climate change.
- Synthesis research and/or research partnerships related to the following priority themes: climate change and human health; disaster risk reduction; environmental governance; glacier loss and human health; land-use change and human health; water-related risks and adaptation; and food production, food security and nutrition.
- Projects that explore links between climate change and human health, which build on the outcomes of previous efforts made under the COFERS [KnowledgeForClimate](#) (KfC) and [One Health](#).

3 Eligibility, selection criteria, and evaluation

To be eligible to apply, consortia must:

- Consist of researchers affiliated with at least one Conéctate A+ member institution in the Tropical Andes and Central America region¹, AND at least one [SUDAC](#) member

¹ The list of founding or associate partners can be found in the CLOC website: <https://cloc.condesan.org/>

institution in Switzerland. There are no caps on the number of partners that can participate in a consortium.

- Present a proposal that is thematically focused on the triple nexus between climate change, ecosystems, and health across disciplinary, sectorial, and geographic boundaries in the Tropical Andes and Central America region, and within the framework of sustainable development.
- Formulate research or guiding questions that address a specific knowledge gap(s) identified for the Tropical Andes and Central America region as part of the proposal.

Proposals need to be submitted following the steps indicated in Section 4 “Proposal Details”. Only proposals that meet the eligibility criteria will advance to the evaluation stage. Scores of up to 52 points are possible, with bonus points awarded for proposals that include graduate student researchers. Representatives of the three Conéctate A+ Co-Heads² will carry out the evaluation following these criteria:

Evaluation criteria		Points
1.	Clarity and significance of the problem description	0 – 10
2.	Consistency between the problem and theoretical framework	0 – 10
3.	Scientific quality of the methodological and analytical design	0 – 10
4.	Relevance to regional knowledge gaps	0 – 10
5.	Multidisciplinary expertise/experience of the consortium members	0 – 10
6.	<i>Bonus:</i> The proposal includes at least one postgraduate student (master and/or PhD student) in the research team.	0 – 2

By submitting an application, applicants confirm their ability and commitment to complete their proposed deliverables within 12 months after the funds have been awarded. Successful applicants will be required to provide a detailed report of the outcomes of the research activities conducted with the awarded funds. These reports need to detail a) new insights gained as part of the research activity and how these relate to the stated knowledge needs for the Tropical Andes and Central America region, b) additional topics or areas of research needed, and c) conclusions and outcomes of the research activity that can serve as basis for a publication in a scientific journal.

Successful applicants are eligible for **funding of up to 10.000 USD** to cover the following types of expenses: i) co-financing salaries of early career researchers and students involved in the project, ii) travel and fieldwork costs, and iii) workshops organization. These funds are

² The Co-heads institutions are: the Mountain Research Initiative, the University of Zurich, and Condesan

also intended to enable researchers to publish the research outcomes in a scientific journal, as a policy brief, or in other formats agreed with prior consultation with *Conéctate A+* that are targeted at broader audiences such as the general public, practitioners, officials from public agencies, among others. The funds cannot be used to cover institutional overhead costs, vehicle or equipment purchases, conference travel costs and/or fees, or for the purchase and/or installation of equipment or infrastructure.

The selected research teams are expected to lead 2 online (or hybrid) workshops on the *Conéctate A+* virtual platform to showcase and discuss research progress. The first workshop, on 28 February 2023, focuses on a conceptual discussion on a topic relevant for their project. In the second virtual (or hybrid) workshop, on 30 June 2023, the research team will present their first results and manuscript draft for discussion with the rest of the *Conéctate A+* members. Additionally, the research team will be required to present the manuscript in a workshop scheduled for September - October 2023 (exact format to be confirmed).

English and Spanish are eligible languages for both grant proposals and subsequent activities.

4 Proposal details and deadline

Proposals need to include the following information:

- A research plan (science part) that specifies the following key elements (maximum 1200 words):
 - A short 200 word abstract
 - Main issues to be addressed and their relevance to move forward the 2030 Agenda in the Tropical Andes and Central America region, with emphasis on the linkages between climate change, ecosystems and human health.
 - Research questions to be addressed that link to the issues identified as a focus for the research activity.
 - Research approach or proposed methods (e.g. for conducting the comparative case studies, meta-analysis), and expected results. In case of education related proposals, a teaching plan is expected, including the way how the content is to be presented and incorporated as part of the proposed teaching activities.
 - Details of the research team members, including their affiliations, and their roles in the proposed research work.
- A twelve-month work plan and budget (administrative part), in which the proposed research activities are specified (maximum 2 A4 pages). The work plan should elaborate on how the proposed activities will contribute to sustain an active collaboration between the selected institutions and the project team members. The budget should detail the amount requested from *Conéctate A+* and other

complementary cash and/or in-kind contributions from the proponents and their institutions.

- Include a 2 A4-page CV for each team member.
- Submit your proposal via this [online application form](#). Submissions will not be accepted via email.

Submission deadline: midnight (GMT-5) **14 October 2022**.

5 Timeline

- Call opens: **19 August 2022**
- Proposals due: **14 October 2022 (midnight GMT-5)**
- Grant award notification: **by 11 November 2022**
- Synthesis report - first draft due: **28 February 2023**
- Synthesis report - second draft: **30 June 2023**
- Synthesis report discussion workshop: **September-October 2023**
- Final deliverables due: **30 November 2023**

The grant implementation period is expected to last up to 12 months from 1 December to 30 November 2023.

6 Inquiries

For inquiries contact the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) Coordination Office: Michele Egger, mri@mountainresearchinitiative.org