



GLACIERS AND DEGLACIATION: MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR RELEVANCE FOR SOCIETY

A SESSION AT THE 23RD SWISS GEOSCIENCE MEETING
UNIVERSITY OF BERN | 6 DECEMBER 2025

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2025 the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation (IYGP). This global initiative aims to raise awareness of the vital role glaciers play as a key component of the cryosphere and Earth system, the far-reaching impacts of rapid glacial melt for ecosystems and people, and the urgent need to address their rapid loss. In doing so, the IYGP also highlights a critical need to strengthen and broaden scientific research to inform measures that 'protect' glaciers, through decisive climate mitigation and adaptation action.

The IYGP shines a spotlight on those places in which multiple and interconnected processes of change, feedbacks, and socioeconomic factors interact with glacier loss, thereby exacerbating impacts – such as in mountains and their downstream areas. This session connects expertise, interests, and scientific insights by taking a systems approach to understanding and characterising the far-reaching impacts associated with glacier loss and future risks. Some of the topics and themes that will be explored include:

- Cascading impacts and compound risks (natural hazards and disasters).
- Mountains without snow and ice – scenarios and foresight to imagine the unimaginable.
- History, ethnography, and the role of the arts and humanities for sensemaking and shaping societal values in times of rapid change.
- Impacts and opportunities for societal sectors (tourism, energy, water, agriculture) and governance imperatives posed by glacier loss and the emergence of new periglacial landscapes.

This session will feature speakers with multidisciplinary contributions on the theme of glaciers in a changing climate. It also invites contributions from across the geosciences, and beyond, to explore and inspire new integrative research ideas and collaborations, as well as prospects for broader future-oriented and socially-relevant glacier and cryosphere-related research.

The session is organized by the Mountain Research Initiative, the Interdisciplinary Centre for Mountain Research, and the Forum Landscape, Alps, Parks, and is a contribution to the observance of the IYGP 2025.

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