



Sustainable Solutions for Climate-Induced Relocation

Globally, the subsistence of small communities and large cities is under increasing threat from the effects of climate change, which are causing more and more people to lose their homes and even their livelihoods. By clarifying the fundamental questions posed by the threats of climate change and environmental degradation, the RE-TRANS research project aims to lay the foundation for transformative measures in the future.

Leading publications such as the Sixth Assessment Report 2022 of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicate that human relocation and human retreat will reach unprecedented levels in the coming decades. At the same time, however, it remains largely unknown when the limits of habitability and adaptation will be reached, and how the processes of relocation and retreat can be managed in line with sustainability goals. To date, research in this area has lacked large-scale approaches with the capacity to equally integrate the impacts and risks of climate change, biological diversity, ecosystems, history, political ecology, finances, and legislation.

New Research Approach

The interdisciplinary RE-TRANS group at the University of Zurich (UZH) brings together researchers from the Department of Geography, Department of Banking and Finance, Sustainability Team, Faculty of Law, and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. In their research, the team aims to clarify the fundamental questions related to human relocation and retreat induced by climate change and environmental threats. RE-TRANS is the only project at either a national or international level that applies such a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach. By integrating not only aspects of climate change, but also of ecological degradation and social, economic and legal framework conditions, the project distinguishes itself from research conducted to date at other higher education institutions. In order to thoroughly analyze and develop these conditions and frameworks, the participating researchers will work closely with local communities and their related governmental authorities.



«The topic is both urgent and important. In particular, the legal implications of human relocation are rapidly increasing and require deep analysis.»

Prof. Dr. iur. Thomas Gächter, Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Zurich

On the one hand, this will secure concrete improvements in the living conditions of the affected communities, and on the other, ensure that the findings are shared at an international level. As a result, RETRANS will benefit not only top-level research projects but also national and international policy-making bodies, as well as communities and localities that are directly affected.

A Strong Team

UZH is ideally positioned to enable large-scale research demanded by the topic of human relocation and retreat. As Switzerland's largest comprehensive university and one of Europe's leading research universities, UZH harnesses enormous potential. It is the only higher education institution in Switzerland with such a strong presence in all the relevant subjects and disciplines; indeed, only a few universities worldwide can boast comparable expertise. The project brings together researchers from five different disciplines, enabling a synergistic collaboration that integrates relevant and internationally recognized research.

Project Goals

- To develop concrete options and solutions for affected communities
- To contribute knowledge to the various industries impacted by the effects of climate change
- To convey findings at the local level to regional, national and international levels
- To establish a basis for addressing legal issues in the matters of liability and compensation

Financing Plan

The scope and framework of this research project are only partially compatible with existing funding sources. For this reason, the UZH Foundation, on behalf of UZH, is seeking private thirdparty funding for this promising research project:

Funding requirements over five years (2023 – 2027) in CHF

Total project costs (gross):	3,307,940
including associated costs of	41,940
Total project costs (net)	3,266,000
Self-funding established by research team	200,000
Third-party funding already awarded:	270,000
Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)	
Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)	
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	
Total self-funding / third-party funding	470,000
Funding requirements from private third-party funding	2,837,940

Your contribution

Support an interdisciplinary team in finding sustainable solutions to climate-induced relocation and retreat. We look forward to hearing from you and would be pleased to introduce the project to you personally.

Contact

Sabine Schweidler
Partnerships and Philanthropy
Telephone +41 44 634 61 85
sabine.schweidler@uzhfoundation.ch

Linda Schweizer-Thong
Corporate Partnerships
Telephone +41 44 634 61 77
linda.schweizer@uzhfoundation.ch

Account details for contributions in Swiss francs

UZH Foundation
Moussonstrasse 15, 8044 Zurich
PostFinance account: 80-151-4
Zürcher Kantonalbank, 8010 Zurich
IBAN: CH17 0070 0110 0039 2046 3
Account number: 1100-3920.463

Find out more at:

www.uzhfoundation.ch/relocation