

Pressemitteilung

Schweizerischer Nationalfonds SNF

Media

30.05.2024

<http://idw-online.de/de/news834413>

Forschungsprojekte
Umwelt / Ökologie
überregional



Research funders from around the world meet in Interlaken

The Global Research Council in Switzerland! The conference was hosted by the SNSF together with its partner organisation FONSTI from Ivory Coast. The main topic of this year's conference was sustainability in research.

The annual conference of the Global Research Council (GRC) at the end of May in Interlaken brought together 60 research funders from 53 countries. The institutions that participate regularly in the GRC have a total budget of over 80 billion dollars, expressed in purchasing power parity (World Bank), which they use to finance research activities. The two co-hosts of this event of international interest stand for cooperation between the Global North and the Global South: on the one hand the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) with over 70 years of activity as a research funding institution, on the other hand the still-young FONSTI – Fonds National pour la Science, la Technologie et l'Innovation, based in Ivory Coast. The main players on the global research scene met for one week in the Bernese Oberland and discussed the research of tomorrow.

International networking in the spotlight

For the Swiss research location, the event was an opportunity to focus global attention on Switzerland's research activities in the field of sustainable development. Matthias Egger, President of the SNSF Research Council, comments as follows: "We are living in dynamic times with fast-paced change and global challenges. It is our responsibility to contribute to the goals of sustainable development through cooperation in research." For Yaya Sangaré, Secretary General of FONSTI, it is particularly important that this takes place on equal terms: "As representatives of the Global South we believe it is important that we not only benefit from the experience of our partner organisations but that we can also contribute our view as countries of the Global South. We view our partnership with Switzerland as a model for future North-South cooperation in the GRC."

Focus on sustainable research

Over the four days of the conference (27-30 May), the participating organisations mainly addressed the topic of sustainable research. Here, the focus was on aspects of research on sustainable development that contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

At the same time, the participants discussed how to make research itself more sustainable. Gabriela Wülser from the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT) comments: "We also have to ensure that research culture changes. Here it is important to focus on the sustainability of research practice."

Results of the GRC conference

The consensus of the participating organisations is reflected in the Statement of Principles published by the GRC after the conference. Some of the key points relating to Research for sustainable development are:

- Research funders recognise their role and bear responsibility for ensuring that research contributes to sustainable development.
- The international, multilateral cooperation between financial backers and researchers will be supported; global challenges require cross-border cooperation between equal partners.
- Applied research requires financial support that is sufficiently flexible and permits longer time horizons.
- Research must include various perspectives from society so that its contribution to sustainable development will succeed in the long term. Researchers require specific skills for this.
- Researchers and their funding institutions engage in a dialogue with society; they recognise its needs and include these in their work.
- Researchers build up trust through credible, traceable action.

The Statement of Principles also stipulates that research itself should be more sustainable:

- Research funders are aware of their influence on scientific systems and are setting a good example, e.g. by creating incentives for sustainable practices in conducting research projects (mobility, waste management, gender equality, social integration, quality before quantity, employment conditions).
- Research funders pool their resources and ensure a greater and longer-term impact; they also make shared use of tried-and-tested processes.
- They promote open science as the basis for disseminating research results; and they guarantee effective administration, use and reuse of research data as well as secure global access to research publications.

The Vice Chair of the GRC Governing Board and President of the German Research Foundation (DFG), Katja Becker, mentions another key finding: "It is right and proper for research to open up to and to represent the needs and interests of society in many places. The GRC supports research funders around the world in making an important contribution and taking responsibility for future generations."

About the organisations

The Global Research Council links key international experts in research promotion around the world and supports high-quality cooperation between the participating research funding agencies.

FONSTI was established in 2008 and is the central research funding agency in Ivory Coast. Switzerland was involved in the organisation's establishment and provided financial and institutional support. In 2023 FONSTI and the SNSF signed a declaration of intent to co-operate more closely. In addition to supporting science, another important goal of FONSTI is to contribute to the sustainable development of Ivory Coast.

The text of this press release, download images and further information are available on the website of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

wissenschaftliche Ansprechpartner:

International Cooperation
Laura Tejada

Email: grc24@snf.ch

URL zur Pressemitteilung:

<https://www.snf.ch/en/UuJOla9XymD68KE3/news/research-funders-from-around-the-world-meet-in-interlaken>

D