

Press release**Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn****Svenja Ronge**

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<http://idw-online.de/en/news788687>Cooperation agreements, Research projects
Environment / ecology, Geosciences, Zoology / agricultural and forest sciences
transregional, national**Supporting Africa's contribution to the World Biodiversity Council IPBES**

The Center for Development Research (ZEF) at the University of Bonn will receive around eight million Euros in funding over the next eight years from the International Climate Initiative of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection. The aim of the new project is to strengthen international networking on issues of ecosystem services and sustainable development.

The CABES project aims to bring together government representatives, researchers and practitioners - incorporating indigenous and local knowledge. "This will build a network of platforms for implementing policy decisions for the management and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services for local people," says Dr. Jan Henning Sommer, senior scientist at ZEF and coordinator of the project consortium, which consists of seven universities and research institutions across Africa and Europe.

The project will support a total of 38 countries in West, Central and East Africa. "In this way, the regions will develop a stronger voice in future IPBES processes," says Sommer. IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) is an intergovernmental platform under the umbrella of the United Nations with currently 137 member states and a secretariat in Bonn. The platform aims to promote scientific evidence on biodiversity and ecosystem services in order to inform policy-making processes.

Master's degree programs in three different countries

Another goal of the project is to train early career scientists as intermediaries at the science-policy interface. Together with local partners, master's degree programs are being established in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and the DRC. Students from as many of the 38 countries as possible in West, Central and East Africa are to participate and receive methodological and practical knowledge related to the IPBES work program.

"ZEF is excellently positioned for such an international and cross-disciplinary task," says ZEF Director Prof. Dr. Christian Borgemeister. Together with its partners, he said, the Center for Development Research has comprehensive expertise in all necessary areas to successfully implement the project goals. "Thanks to ZEF's many years of experience with international projects in the field of research and the promotion of young researchers, as well as through the successful establishment of graduate schools in Africa, we are well connected in the region," emphasizes Borgemeister. "The activities in CABES contribute to the University's Transdisciplinary Research Area 'Innovation and Technology for Sustainable Futures (TRA6)' and - in addition - implement many key points of the new ZEF Strategy 2021-2030."

Prof. Dr. Birgit Ulrike Münch, Vice Rector for International Affairs at the University of Bonn, emphasizes: "The new CABES project hits the core of the University's internationalization strategy, which aims to expand multilaterally active partnerships for research and teaching with a special regional focus on Africa." In addition to the very important substantive priorities of CABES, the project based at ZEF will contribute significantly to strengthening the international networking of the University of Bonn and further improving its international visibility, she added.

Strong partners for new master's degree programs

The new master's programs will be affiliated with several local project partners. The partners are the African Center of Excellence on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Agriculture (CEA-CCBAD) at the Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny (UFHB) in Côte d'Ivoire, the Horn of Africa Regional Environment Center and Network (HoAREC) in Ethiopia, and the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences of the Université de Lubumbashi (FSA-UNILU) in the DRC.

In addition, prominent project partners contribute their particular expertise to achieve the various project objectives. These include the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge (WCMC) for the national platforms, the West African Science Service Center on Climate Change & Adapted Land Use (WASCAL) for the regional platforms, and the company CoKnow Consulting for innovative hybrid and digital teaching and learning formats.

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