

Established in 1989, the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) is a leading research centre on sustainable development. In 2009, it was selected by the University of Bern as one of its strategic research centres, mandated with promotion of research, teaching, and implementation in the field of sustainable development and global change.



Photo: P. Messerli, CDE

CDE employs approximately 100 staff from 25 disciplines, is active in four regions of the global South in addition to Switzerland and Europe, and is currently implementing over 70 projects with an annual turnover of CHF 18 million. A crucial part of CDE's tasks are education and training. CDE offers courses in sustainable development and global change at the bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and postgraduate level, currently serving over 400 students.

CDE upholds the highest scientific standards and societal relevance in support of global transformations towards sustainable development. Its activities are organized according to three thematic priority areas:

- a) Land resources
- b) Socio-economic transitions

- c) Sustainability governance
- d) Education for sustainable development

CDE is internationally respected for its work with diverse partners on sustainable development, for beneficially shaping multi-stakeholder dialogues, for harnessing knowledge on behalf of transformative solutions, and for fostering commitments and action among decision-makers in politics, business, and civil society.

CDE runs its activities with its research partners in 47 countries worldwide. Key partner regions – some with permanent offices (in brackets) going back as far as 30 years – include East Africa (Kenya), the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia), Southeast Asia (Laos and Myanmar), and the Central Andes (Bolivia and Peru).

Building on its unique and longstanding research in the global South, CDE works in concert with global alliances and networks for sustainable development. Its current efforts are especially focused on international and national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including a prominent role in drafting the UN Global Sustainable Development Report and co-hosting the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Switzerland.

Overall, CDE maintains links with a broad international network of well-known cooperation partners in research, policy, and implementation, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Bank, The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). At the national level, CDE has longstanding ties with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), and the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE). Finally, based on its strong competence in issues of global development, CDE has become a preferential knowledge partner of Swiss non-governmental organizations working under the umbrella of Alliance Sud (e.g. Helvetas, Swissaid, Caritas, Bread for All).

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