

100% Postdoctoral researcher position, 2027-2031 (4 years)
“Scale-OECM: Cross-scale Impact Quantification, Monitoring and Planning of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures”

Background : Nature is declining worldwide, and many species are at risk of disappearing. Protected areas such as national parks are essential for conservation, but they are not always enough to stop biodiversity loss or to balance conservation with human needs. In response, there is growing interest in alternative approaches, known as *Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs)*. These are areas that are not officially protected but can still support biodiversity, often while being used by local communities.

This project aims to understand how these areas can help protect biodiversity and contribute to global targets, such as conserving 30% of the lands by 2030.

The research will address three main questions. First, which types of land management can effectively conserve biodiversity and be recognised as OECMs? Second, how can we monitor biodiversity in these areas using a combination of field observations, drones, and satellite data? Third, where should these areas be located to achieve the greatest conservation benefits?

To answer these questions, the project will combine global analyses with fieldwork in tropical regions of South America (Colombia), Africa (Kenya), and Southeast Asia (Indonesia), where biodiversity is rich but under pressure.

By providing new tools and evidence, this research will support governments, conservation organisations, and local communities in designing more effective and inclusive strategies to protect biodiversity.

Your tasks:

- 1) **Generation of knowledge base on OECMs' biodiversity monitoring:** You will conduct a literature review on biodiversity monitoring in existing and potential OECMs, and their linkages with the Essential Biodiversity Variables and indicators that are used to track progress towards the global biodiversity targets (GBF targets within the CBD framework). For this purpose, you will do a systematic literature search in online specialized libraries, including OpenAlex, Biodiversity PMC, and Scopus. You will also incorporate gray literature and alternative sources of knowledge.
- 2) **Conduct regional prioritizations for biodiversity protection through OECMs:** You will first estimate the influence on conservation effectiveness of the confounding factors that could affect the rate and distribution of deforestation, fragmentation and degradation of forest structure inside the potential and designated OECMs in each case study ecoregion. After calculating the estimated effect of each covariate on the expected impact of a particular governance mechanism on biodiversity retention, you will use spatial conservation prioritization tools to identify priority areas where designation of OECMs could maximize the retention of biodiversity within and beyond those sites. The key novelty will rely on the cross-scale integration of data from ecosystems to ecoregions within the prioritization algorithm.

The expected outcomes are a review paper, a research article, and a policy brief.

Besides, you will contribute to integrate the different working packages and to coordination among the project partners and institutions.

Funding: The position is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation

Project title: “Scale-OECM: Cross-scale Impact Quantification, Monitoring and Planning of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures”

Supervision:

- Prof. Clara Zemp, Conservation Biology Lab, University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland
- Dr. Pablo Negret, Wyss Academy of Sciences, Switzerland

We offer: An inclusive and supportive working environment that encourages scientific curiosity, creativity and engagement with practice and policy. Salary (100 % postdoctoral researcher) and social benefits follow the rules of the University of Neuchâtel. The position is planned for four years and will be evaluated at mid-term.

Your profile:

- PhD in ecology, conservation biology or related field
- Motivated by collaborative work; interest in conservation science and practice
- Good organizational, writing and communication skills
- Experience in reviewing scientific and/or gray literature
- Knowledge of biodiversity monitoring
- Experience with conservation prioritization tools
- Fluent English (written and spoken) is essential; Other languages (French, Spanish, Indonesian) is an advantage

Starting date: The anticipated starting date is February 2027.

Application: To apply, please provide until **31/07/2026**: (1) a one-page letter describing your motivation, (2) a CV including contact information of two references, (3) complete list of publications and access to the most relevant paper. Please, send all the information in a single PDF with the subject “Postdoc_application_ [your name]” to Prof. Dr. Clara Zemp (clara.zemp@unine.ch), with Dr. Pablo Negret in Cc (pablo.negret@wyssacademy.org).

For any questions, contact us using the same email address.