

Transformative research and capacity building in the education sector to protect livelihoods and biodiversity in Costa Rica

Brief Description

Growing poverty and rising unemployment pose major challenges for biodiversity conservation in Costa Rica. The proposed project of the UTN and the UOS develops innovative inter- and transdisciplinary approaches in research and higher education in order to contribute to the solution of persistent socio-ecological conflicts in the Gulf of Nicoya. The region around the Gulf of Nicoya in Costa Rica is representative for conflicts between biodiversity conservation and economic development as they are found in many countries of the Global South. Water extraction and contamination by agriculture, as well as overfishing; threaten marine and terrestrial ecosystems in the region and consequently the livelihoods of poorer groups within the population. The complexity of the problem requires the linking of inter- and transdisciplinary approaches of both universities. Among these are a transformative approach through the active promotion of social and technical innovations (UTN), as well as the continued development of nexus approaches and collaborative research using participatory modeling and social network analysis (UOS). The project aims to build the capacity of undergraduate students, PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, and experienced researchers to conduct inter- and transdisciplinary research in the areas of biodiversity and development cooperation. The focus on the environmental conflicts in the Gulf of Nicoya allows the inclusion of relevant stakeholders and therefore ensures the practical relevance of the teaching and research concepts to be developed.