

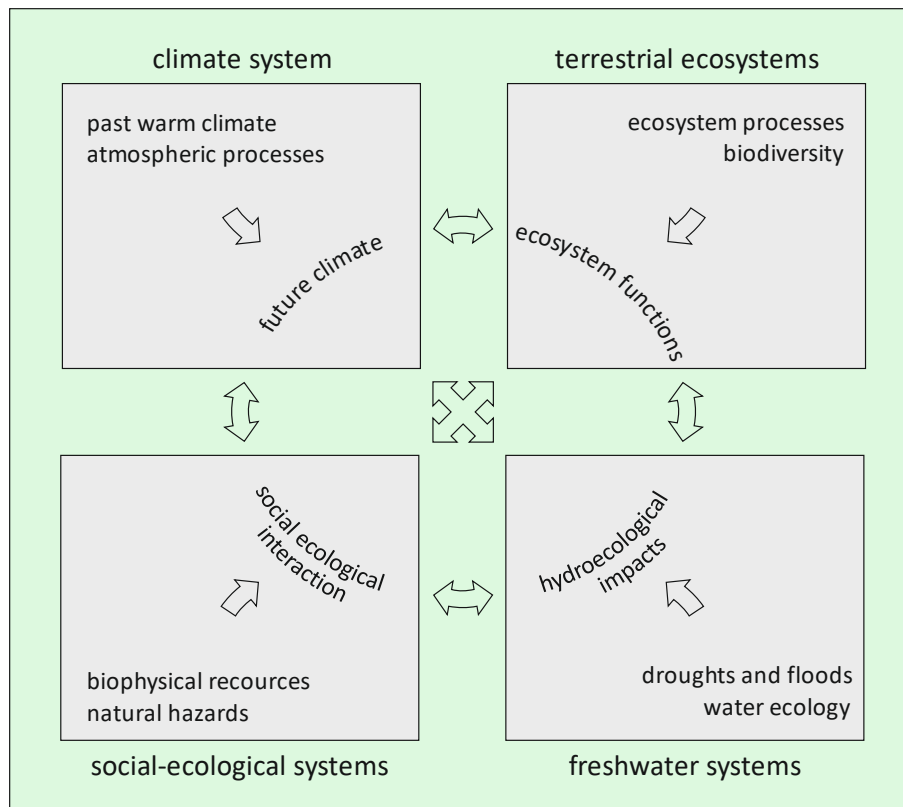
FUTURE ALPS: MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEMS UNDER GLOBAL CHANGE

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF PROPOSED CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE (COE)

Mountain areas are important systems for biodiversity and global biogeochemical cycles and deliver a broad range of essential ecosystem services. In many mountain regions, including the Alps, global change has been taking place at higher rates than on global average with potentially critical impacts on ecosystems, which are characterized by small-scale complexity and high vulnerability. While patterns of the responses of mountain ecosystems to global changes are increasingly emerging, there are significant gaps in the understanding of the underlying processes and their larger scale implications in a future world.

The University of Innsbruck (UIBK) is the leading university for mountain research in Austria and one of the top mountain research institutions worldwide. In the frame of the *excellent=austria* program, UIBK will propose a strong scientific cluster focussing at effects of global change on mountain ecosystems. In cooperation with the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU), the University of Vienna (UNIVIE) and the Technical University of Vienna (TU), high-resolution analyses and projections of processes, interactions and potential feedbacks between the climate system, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems as well as social-ecological systems are planned. Research activities will focus on the Eastern Alps as a model region for mountain areas worldwide.

Future Alps: Mountain Ecosystems under Global Change



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