



Coop Research Program | Call 3

## Developing a Sustainable Value Chain of Brazil Nuts for Swiss Consumers

### Background

The Brazil nut is a giant tropical rainforest tree found in Brazil, Bolivia and Peru. The nutritious nuts, harvested only from the wild, are one of the most economically important non-timber forest products in the world. Annual exports of Brazil nuts are valued at tens of millions \$US. Currently only a small fraction of nuts are sourced ethically through certification. Brazil nut harvesting is a crucial part of rural livelihoods across the Amazon region. The communities also depend on timber and other forest resources to keep them above the poverty line. Forest degradation potentially has negative consequences for Brazil nut production, biodiversity conservation, and climate change.

### Objective

The project aims to examine possibilities to develop a resilient supply chain for certified and sustainable Brazil nuts from Peru by 1) providing a sound scientific knowledge base of Brazil nut reproductive ecology to promote adaptive management strategies, practices conducive to certification, and to raise consumer awareness of Brazil nut; and 2) working with stakeholders to build a forest-to-consumer value chain for long-term ethically and sustainably sourced Peruvian Brazil nuts for the Swiss-based market.

### Research Approach

The project uses an interdisciplinary systems-based approach. It will instigate an adaptive management strategy with all stakeholders from Brazil nut harvesters to local and national NGOs, local scientists and other forest users. This will explore the social ecological system and implement

experiments to modify pollinator communities in Brazil nut-rich forests.

### Relevance and Expected Outcomes

This project will provide guidelines for Brazil nut concessionaires on how best to enhance pollinator communities through reduced timber harvesting and artificial nest sites. Through more sustainable management of concessions, ecosystem services and productivity will be maintained. Working directly with stakeholders across the supply chain will improve the livelihoods of gatherers, increase concessionaires' and buyers' access to environmentally and ethically-certified markets, and increased access of Swiss consumers to a healthy and environmentally beneficial food source.

### Food System Challenges Addressed

Biodiversity, rural poor, forest carbon, forest conservation, sustainable food value chain.

[www.worldfoodsystem.ethz.ch/research/CRP](http://www.worldfoodsystem.ethz.ch/research/CRP) →

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**Project Duration** 2016-2018

**Project Cost** 278'010 CHF

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