Key objective: To contribute to a safer climate for all.

Overall goal
The overall goal of the theme Reducing Climate Risk is to contribute to a safer climate for all.

Addressing climate change is urgent because of the calamitous consequences climate change can have if left unchecked: it could make some countries uninhabitable, cause costly damage to infrastructure, increase mortality and prevalence of disease, and make it more difficult to eradicate poverty. In fact, climate change is already taking a considerable toll in some places, and the costs will keep rising. Yet climate change is also difficult to address, because its main drivers are built into our socio-economic systems; livelihoods and entire economies depend on activities that create greenhouse gas emissions.

Still, investments in adaptation and mitigation can reduce the impact of climate change around the world and yield human and economic benefits – if they are based on the best available knowledge and made in a timely and efficient manner. Climate change must also be addressed in conjunction with other pressing issues, such as water and food security, public health, desertification and biodiversity loss.

With its focus on bridging science and policy, SEI is particularly well positioned to help advance this field. We take on crucial issues such as climate mitigation and adaptation finance (including carbon markets); equitable effort-sharing; accountability; the geopolitics, economics and governance aspects of adaptation and mitigation; and cross-scale links between climate change and development. This theme supports the design, development and implementation of effective and equitable strategies for adaptation and mitigation in developing and developed countries, taking into account the broader challenges and policy objectives of sustainable human development.

Strategic objective
The strategic objective of this theme is to develop and advance new knowledge and insights into climate risk reduction, in support of adaptation and mitigation action in developing and developed countries. We address the need to incorporate measures to reduce climate risk into policy and practice, in particular the management of energy systems, bio-resources and water resources. We do this by concentrating on governance, economics, vulnerability and equity. Recognising that effective reduction of climate risk requires multi-sectoral action across all scales, the theme covers local, national, regional and international policy, as well as initiatives taken by private firms and civil society. We also respond to the needs of stakeholders – especially policy actors – for knowledge and capacity-building.
Our work

Our researchers are involved in a wide range of projects and activities, often in close interaction with other themes. Primarily we:

- Conduct research on key areas of adaptation and mitigation, based on a rigorous scientific understanding of climate change and relevant policy regimes, and of the increasing role of climate change in regional and global politics.

- Provide timely, authoritative and pertinent analysis to support policymakers and negotiators, finance institutions, development planners, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders. For example, we advise on equitable effort-sharing through the Greenhouse Development Rights initiative, and we do extensive research on the economics of climate change in the US and Europe, as well as China and several African countries. We examine the emerging institutional architecture for climate finance, assess the technical and economic potential for greenhouse gas emission reductions in Europe and North America, and analyse the possible consequences of biofuel strategies on food security and ecosystems.

- Address knowledge and capacity deficits that hinder effective action on adaptation and mitigation, through (i) developing collaborative information, training and awareness raising, (ii) promoting knowledge sharing aimed at stimulating social learning, and (iii) supporting national and regional networks, in particular in Africa, Asia and Latin America. For example, we contribute to regional knowledge platforms for climate adaptation, and organise ‘writeshops’ aimed at training and empowering developing-country academics to publish in peer-reviewed journals.

- Pioneer and apply innovative analytical tools and collaborative platforms to support action on climate change, including the integrated energy planning tool LEAP and the weADAPT platform for sharing knowledge on adaptation. As well as supporting analysts and decision makers, these tools serve to build flourishing communities of practice.

- Work with local, national, regional and international organisations and networks to explore and promote pathways towards effective and equitable climate policy. Our partners include renowned universities and academic institutes around the world, international actors such as the UN Climate Change Secretariat, civil society organisations and networks, and the private sector. An example of the latter is our partnership with 3C, a global initiative of business leaders, to produce in-depth research at the intersection of climate policy and business.

Summary

The goal of the theme Reducing Climate Risk is to contribute to a safer climate for all. The theme supports the design, development and implementation of effective and equitable strategies for adaptation and mitigation in developing and developed countries, taking into account the broader challenges and policy objectives of sustainable human development.

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