

## SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT FOR GLOBAL CHANGE(SMD4GC) AFRICA PROGRAMME



### *Overall Goal and Objective of the SMD4GC*

The overall goal of the SMD4GC programme which ARCOS is leading in Africa through the funding support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is to contribute to Sustainable Mountain Development under uncertain changes in climatic, environmental and socio-economic conditions, focussing on poverty and risk reduction.

The main objective of the SMD4GC programme is to launch policy instruments for SMD at different levels by local, national, International stakeholders and decision makers; and to implement knowledge-based SMD activities.

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## Background

Mountains cover an estimated 3 million km<sup>2</sup> of Africa's surface area. Approximately half of Africa's countries have mountains higher than 2000m, with mountains above 4500m being concentrated to the north-western, central and eastern regions.

African mountains are characterised by their great heights which vary widely from about 1,500m to over 5,000m above sea level (e.g. Mt. Kilimanjaro approx. 6,000m, Mt. Kenya, Mt. Rwenzori both 5,000m above sea level). Due to their proximity to the equator, African mountains including Kilimanjaro, Kenya and Rwenzori Mountains are snow-capped, making them unique ecosystems in the world for monitoring climate change.

African mountains often have favourable climatic and ecological conditions, in contrast to the surrounding lowlands that are generally much drier. As a consequence, the total average population density in all African mountains is more than double the density of the lowlands.

Mountains are also a source of goods (including food, medicine, raw materials for making crafts and construction). African Mountains are water towers. They store a vast amount of water in form of glaciers, snow, and ice; as well as in soil, groundwater, and lakes, hence are a source of water.

Apart from providing important goods to up and downstream communities, mountain ecosystems also play an important role in water purification and carbon sequestration, among others.

## The challenges In African Mountains

Despite of the positive attributes, mountain communities especially in Africa are grappling with issues including water stress or water scarcity or both, poverty, land degradation and climate change, already seen through recurrent landslides, floods, storms, increased temperature and consequent loss of glacial cover in most African mountains. If nothing is done, climate change for example will lead to the disappearance of tropical mountain glaciers, increasing variation in water flows and changes in disturbance regimes in mountain flora and fauna, with detrimental impacts on local communities.

Also, at national level, most African countries do not have mountain-specific policies, laws or institutions simply because mountains have not been recognised as unique ecosystems that require special attention. To respond to these and other issues, ARCOS received financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to implement the global initiative "SMD4GC" programme which started on 1st May 2014.

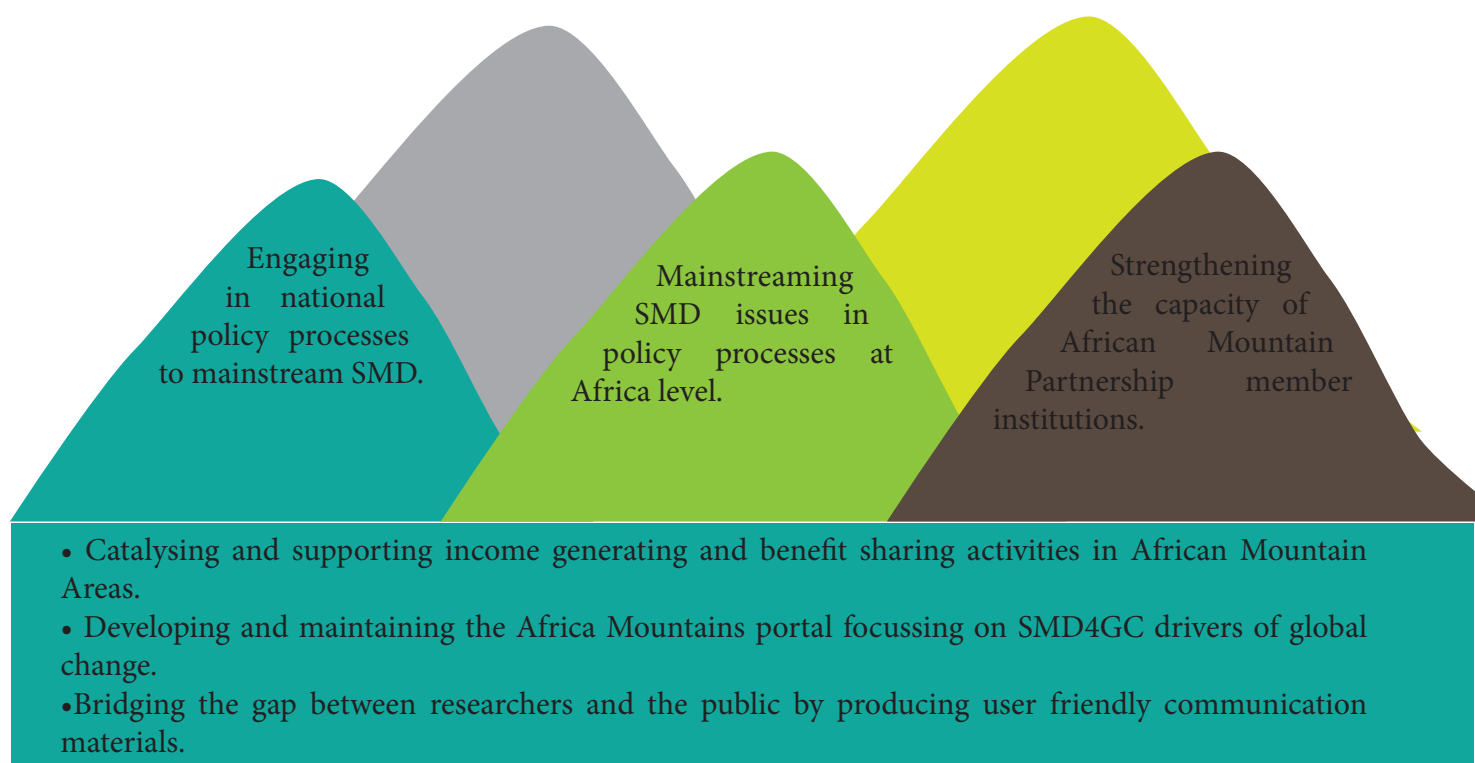
## Overall Goal and Objective of the SMD4GC

The overall goal of the SMD4GC for which ARCOS is leading in Africa is to contribute to Sustainable Mountain Development under uncertain changes in climatic, environmental and socio-economic conditions, focussing on poverty and risk reduction.

The main objective of the SMD4GC programme is to launch policy instruments for SMD at different levels by local, national and International stakeholders and decision makers and to implement knowledge-based SMD activities. These objectives will be pursued by generating the following key outputs:

- Raised awareness on SMD issues
- Increased promotion of and support for SMD activities
- Generation of knowledge on SMD, improved access to SMD knowledge and know-how
- Knowledge sharing
- Increased knowledge-based stakeholder capacity development
- Application of knowledge and know-how in pilot studies

## Key SMD4GC Programme Activities



## Partners

SMD4GC programme is being implemented in Africa by the Albertine Rift Conservation Society with financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and in collaboration with Partners in Africa including:

- African National Governments
- African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)
- African Mountains Partnership Champions Committee members,
- African Mountains Partnership members
- Afromont
- Regional and continent wide bodies such as EAC, the African Union, UNEP, FAO, ICIPE, IUCN, Makerere University, SORAINÉ, UNDP, World Bank and WWF

And with the following international partners:

- ICIMOD ([www.icimod.org](http://www.icimod.org))
- CONDESAN ([www.condesan.org](http://www.condesan.org))
- UCA, University of Central Asia ([www.ucentralasia.org](http://www.ucentralasia.org))
- The Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)
- Geo-UZH, the department of Geography at Zurich University
- Fondation pour le développement durable des régions de montagne



# Albertine Rift Conservation Society



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