



Master in Life Sciences

A cooperation between
BFH, FHNW, HES-SO, ZFH

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| Module Title | Rural and Regional Development in Practice |
| Module Code | MSLS_AF-33 |
| Degree Programme | Master of Science in Life Sciences (MSLS) |
| ECTS Credits | 5 |
| Workload | 150 h: Contact 40 h; Group Exercise 20 h; Self-study 90 h |
| Module Coordinator | <p>Name Dr. Dominic Blaettler</p> <p>Phone +41 31 910 22 50</p> <p>Email dominic.blaettler@bfh.ch</p> <p>Address Bern University of Applied Sciences, School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences, Laenggasse 85, 3052 Zollikofen</p> |
| Lecturers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Dominic Blaettler • Dr. Sébastien Boillat • Dr. Zenebe Uraguchi • Dr. Pascale Waelti |
| Entry Requirements | None |
| Learning Outcomes and Competencies | <p>After completing the module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyse and evaluate rural and regional development approaches and underlying paradigms, in different places and under different circumstances, and their influences at household level and beyond; • measure effects and impacts of rural development initiatives; • identify and assess potentials and limitations for development in a given environment, both in terms of natural resources and in terms of institutions and people; • propose strategies and organisations to support sustainable rural development. |
| Module Content | <p>The module takes into account the participants' prior knowledge and experiences. It is based on real examples (in which the lecturers have been personally involved), and these examples are presented as "problem cases". Problem cases are used in problem-based learning (PBL), which is the teaching method used in this module.</p> <p>The following topics are addressed in the problem cases and skills labs of this module:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dimensions of rural development: indicators for monitoring and evaluation of rural development projects; • Regional development in Switzerland: the case of the San Gottardo region, with a special focus on knowledge management within the New Regional Policy of Switzerland (NRP); • Including pastoralists in the co-management of natural resources, better understanding pitfalls and opportunities as well as issues to do with conflict prevention and conflict sensitivity of project management; • Nature conservation and development in the Bolivian Andes: addressing the issue of protecting natural resources and biodiversity in a rural development context, linked to participatory methods for natural resource management; • tbd. |
| Teaching and Learning Methods | <p>Introductory lectures, problem-based learning (four PBL problem cases will be submitted to the participants) each problem case has been formulated by a specialist who will also provide the coaching.</p> <p>In addition to the problem cases studied in the PBL sessions, there are also five skills labs (1/2 day events) focusing on specific subjects where the participants will learn</p> |

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| | how to apply methods or instruments related to the problem cases, such as do no harm approach, participatory methods for natural resource management etc. |
| Assessment of Learning Outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written exam to assess the ability of students to apply the concepts of rural development to new situations (60%) • Two individual working papers (20+20%) |
| Bibliography | <p>Boillat S et al. 2018. Distant Interactions, Power, and Environmental justice in Protected Area Governance: A Telecoupling Perspective. Sustainability 10(11): 3954.</p> <p>SECO, 2017. The New Regional Policy of the Federal Government.</p> <p>SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), 2012. Conflict-Sensitive Programme Management CSPM: Integrating conflict sensitivity and prevention of violence into SDC Programmes - A handbook for practitioners. SDC, Bern, 24 p.</p> <p>IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute Washington, DC), 2002, Methods for Rural Development Projects, Edited by John Hoddinott</p> <p>A selected list of references and documents related to the different problem cases will be made available before the start of the module.</p> |
| Language | English |
| Comments | The following sequences are compulsory for students: All PBL tutorials. For details on compulsory sequences, please refer to the detailed schedule of the module, which will be uploaded on Moodle before the start of the module. |
| Last Update | January 2026 |