

## **Zoonosis and cultural evolution: mapping the past, present, and future of wildlife consumption and trading in Mongolia and the Philippines (ZooMap)**

Initiative: Globale Herausforderungen

Ausschreibung: Pandemieprävention: die Rolle von Mensch-Umwelt-Beziehungen

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The COVID-19 pandemic has put wildlife into the spotlight as potential hosts of infectious bacteria and viruses. One of the proposed responses is stricter biodiversity conservation and wildlife protection. However, these are atomistic approaches and mostly focus on ecological systems with social systems as an afterthought, rather than taking the systemic approach needed for pandemic prevention and addressing zoonotic diseases at the social-ecological interface. The scientists will work with communities involved in wildlife consumption of Tarbagan marmot (*Marmota sibirica*) in Mongolia and in wildlife trade of the Philippine pangolin (*Manis culionensis*) in the Philippines. Both are endangered ecological keystone species, which are documented hosts of bacteria and viruses and are often found in territories of indigenous peoples and local communities. Culture is seen as a unifying thread: Eating of Tarbagan marmot is a cultural practice in Mongolia, and the use of pangolin scales as traditional Chinese medicine drives trading of the Philippine pangolin. Therefore, culture will be used as a starting point to understand how human interactions with these two species could increase and, at the same time, mitigate risk of zoonotic diseases and pandemics. Using mixed methods from the social and natural sciences, the project will map past, present, and future cultural practices associated with marmot consumption and pangolin trade, and co-create culturally sensitive zoonosis mitigation plans with societal stakeholders.

### **Projektbeteiligte**

#### **Prof. Dr. Denise Margaret Matias**

Hochschule für nachhaltige Entwicklung  
Eberswalde  
Biosphere Reserves Institute  
Eberswalde

#### **Dr. Ganzorig Gonchigsumlaa**

Mongolian State University  
of Agriculture  
Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics  
School of Economics and Business (SEB)  
Ulaanbaatar  
Mongolei

**Dr. Jun Cayron**

Palawan State University

Social Science

College of Arts and the Humanities

Puerto Princesa

Philippinen