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## **Women's Month: African Climate Development Initiative names Gina Ziervogel as its new director**



Associate Professor Gina Ziervogel takes the helm at the African Climate Development Initiative.

Photo: UCT News

Associate Professor Gina Ziervogel has been appointed director of the African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI), a University of Cape Town (UCT) flagship initiative.

As ACDI director, Ziervogel will be responsible for the strategic operational management of its role as a hub that facilitates interdisciplinary research and teaching on problems at the intersection of climate change and development.

"I believe I bring with me experience in climate governance, adaptation and transdisciplinary approaches," she said. "I have worked collaboratively on numerous topics around adaptation, vulnerability assessment, resilience and social justice as well as on urban water-

related issues, including drought and flood risk. It is really exciting to work with the excellent scholars at ACIDI, and the diverse partners to take forward this next phase.”

Ziervogel is based in the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science. She is a geographer by training, with 20 years of experience in the field of adaptation and vulnerability to global environmental change.

She completed her PhD in geography at the University of Oxford in 2002 after obtaining a BSc at UCT and her honours in environmental water management at Rhodes University. Ziervogel was a lead author on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 6th Assessment report’s “Cities, settlements and key infrastructure” chapter and has authored numerous papers, book chapters and popular articles. In 2020 she won the UCT Social Responsiveness Award.

Ziervogel has a successful history within the ACIDI, acting as principal investigator for several ACIDI-based projects over the past 10 years. Her research focuses on climate change adaptation and development across scales – from the household to municipal level with a focus on water, urban governance and resilience issues.

Methodologically she is interested in engaged scholarship and transdisciplinary projects that bring together civil society, government and academics to address climate and sustainability problems collaboratively. Her recent research project on [Urban climate and water governance](#) in Cape Town, funded by AXA Research, set out to acknowledge and understand the diverse perspectives on urban water resilience, at the city and neighbourhood levels. The project outputs included academic papers, a book, a documentary, [a comic](#) and [a mural in UCT’s subway](#), illustrating Ziervogel’s commitment to sharing academic work more widely and creatively.

The ACIDI continues to be an inter- and transdisciplinary research and training institute that brings together academics and researchers from UCT (and other higher education and research institutions) with business, civil society, and government actors. It aims to facilitate and substantially extend climate change research and education at UCT with the specific context of addressing the development challenges of Africa from an African perspective.

Going forward, Ziervogel hopes to further grow the ACIDI’s collaborative research, especially around climate resilience, adaptation and social justice.

“Although this is urgent work, we need to do it carefully and collaboratively to ensure we have the best chance of succeeding, given the scale of the climate challenge alongside the urgent development priorities we face in southern Africa,” said Ziervogel.

“I hope to continue to build the institute around understanding climate risk and resilience and taking forward responses to climate change from a systemic perspective. For me, it is important that we focus on strong science and continue to build partnerships that take a systems perspective to support a just transition.”

***ENDS***

***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

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