

Mobilier Center for Resilience

Project Period 2024 – 2026

Policies and Corporate Strategies Strengthening the Sustainable Economic and Social Competitiveness of Switzerland (P3)

La Mobilière Research Cluster for Resilience – University of Fribourg

Executive summary

Research question. The P3 project investigates how policies, corporate strategies, and institutional frameworks can strengthen the sustainable economic and social competitiveness of Switzerland. Conducted within the La Mobilière Research Cluster for Resilience at the University of Fribourg, the project brings together expertise in economics, sustainability transitions, business strategy, and social sciences to address four interconnected questions: how municipal and national policies shape the energy transition, how price shocks affect energy demand, how Swiss agricultural and food systems can become more efficient and trustworthy, and how firms integrate sustainability objectives into their corporate strategies and governance structures.

Methods. The project adopts an interdisciplinary approach combining quantitative methods, systems thinking, and qualitative research, allowing the team to explore sustainability transitions from multiple perspectives. Causal inference techniques are used to evaluate the impact of municipal policies promoting photovoltaic installations in major Swiss cities and their interaction with national programs, and to analyse the effects of the 2023 energy price shock on cantonal electricity consumption using longitudinal data. Data Envelopment Analysis applied to canton-level data is used to assess organic agricultural efficiency and identify structural factors influencing sustainable performance, while a risk-screening approach examines food fraud vulnerabilities in novel food markets such as microalgae and lab-grown meat. System dynamics tools, combined with literature analysis and qualitative data, are deployed to investigate feedback loops in decarbonization processes and the global supply chains of critical raw materials. Corporate engagement with the UN Sustainable Development Goals is examined through governance and strategy analysis, with particular attention to gender equality and responsible business practices.

Main results. The research delivers empirical evidence on the effectiveness of local policy instruments in accelerating PV diffusion, on the responsiveness of Swiss households and economic actors to large energy price changes, and on regional disparities in agricultural resource-use efficiency. It identifies systemic risks linked to critical raw material dependencies and institutional vulnerabilities in emerging food markets, and provides insights into how firms translate sustainability frameworks into concrete governance practices while maintaining economic competitiveness. Collectively, the findings inform ongoing debates on the design of policy instruments, the management of energy demand, the governance of food systems, and the role of corporate actors in sustainability transitions. Beyond its academic contributions, the project has actively strengthened interdisciplinary collaboration within the La Mobilière Research Cluster through seminars, workshops, and joint events, building connections between researchers working on economic, environmental, and social dimensions of resilience. By fostering dialogue between researchers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders, the project supports the cluster's objective of combining academic excellence with societal relevance for Switzerland's ongoing sustainability transitions.

Research Team

- Prof. Dr. Philippe Gugler – Principal Investigator
- Prof. Dr. Martin Huber – Co-Investigator
- Prof. Dr. Sergio Rossi – Co-Investigator
- Prof. Dr. Olivier Furrer – Co-Investigator
- Dr. Fabrice Plomb – Co-Investigator
- Dr. Gift Dembetembe – Postdoctoral Researcher
- Dr. Xavier Raso Domínguez – Postdoctoral Researcher

Impact and Outcomes

Scientific

Publications / working papers/on-going

- Working paper: "The Equality Cookbook: Swiss Companies' Recipes for Gender Parity" (Raso Domínguez, X. et al.) – FSES Working Papers 538, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, University of Freiburg/Fribourg Switzerland.
- Working paper: "Engagements and Disengagements of Multinational Enterprises with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Where We Are and Where to Go from Here" (Dembetembe et al.) - FSES Working Papers 539, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, University of Freiburg/Fribourg Switzerland.

- “The Impact of Energy Price Shocks on Electricity Consumption: Evidence from Swiss Cantons” (Raso Domínguez, Savary, Huber).
- “Is the Business of Energy Transition a ‘Fix that Fails’?” (Dembetembe)
- The impact of municipal incentive policies on photovoltaic installations in Switzerland using Staggered Synthetic Difference-in-Differences (Raso Domínguez, Stoller, Huber).
- Applying Data Envelopment Analysis to organic agricultural efficiency across Swiss cantons (Raso Domínguez, Plomb).
- Food Fraud Initial Screening model to novel food markets (microalgae, lab-grown meat) in the Swiss context (Raso Domínguez, Plomb).

Seminars (in addition to internal seminars)

- Microsymposium on Sustainable Food Materials, Food Research and Innovation Centre, University of Fribourg, 24.05.2024.
- Microsymposium “Science-Based Solutions for Sustainable Agriculture”, FRIC, University of Fribourg, 14.11.2024.

Presentations / keynote speeches / webinars

- Keynote “Macroéconomie durable” – Prof. Dr. Sergio Rossi, Chambre de commerce et d’industrie du canton de Fribourg, 28.11.2024.
- Keynote “The Green Economy Revolution: Rethinking Growth for a Sustainable Future” – Prof. Dr. Philippe Gugler, ICBIT2025, Saar, Bahrain, 24.04.2025.
- Presentation “The Impact of Energy Price Shocks on Electricity Consumption: Evidence from Swiss Cantons” – XX Conference of the Spanish Association for Energy Economics (AEEE), Bilbao, 02.06.2025.
- Presentation “Engagements and Disengagements of MNEs with the UN SDGs” – Dr. Gift Dembetembe, AIB Annual Meeting, Louisville (USA), 28.06.2025.
- Presentation “Navigating the Unintended Consequences of Energy Transition Among Swiss Firms” – Dr. Gift Dembetembe, World Resources Forum, Geneva, 02.09.2025.
- Presentation “Is the Business of Energy Transition a ‘Fix that Fails’?” – Dr. Gift Dembetembe, International System Dynamics Conference, Bergen (Norway), 05.08.2024.

Scientific conferences

- International System Dynamics Conference, Bergen, Norway – 05.08.2024.
- XVII Workshop of the Business Strategy Section of ACEDE, Castelló de la Plana, Spain – 13.02.2025: presentation of “The Equality Cookbook: Swiss Companies’ Recipes for Gender Parity”.
- II International Conference ICBIT2025 – “Sustainable Business Futures: Innovating for a Greener Tomorrow”, Saar, Bahrain – 24.04.2025.
- XX Conference of the Spanish Association for Energy Economics (AEEE), Bilbao – 02.06.2025.
- Academy of International Business (AIB) Annual Meeting, Louisville (USA) – 28.06.2025.
- World Resources Forum, Geneva – 02.09.2025.

- XV Congress of Agri-Food Economics (AEEA) / I Congress of the Ibero-American Network of Agri-food and Natural Resources Economics (RIEARN), University of Granada – 03–05.09.2025: presentation of “Analysing the Causes of the Difference in Efficiency in Organic Agricultural Production in Switzerland Cantons”.
- 5th Anniversary Conference of the Competence Center for African Research (CCAR), University of St. Gallen / ETH Zurich – 19–22.11.2025: panel discussion on global decarbonization and African futures.

Panel discussions / roundtables

- Panel on global decarbonization and African futures – Dr. Gift Dembetembe, 5th Anniversary Conference of the CCAR, University of St. Gallen / ETH Zurich, 19–22.11.2025.

Non-Academic Outreach

Knowledge transfer to partners outside the university

- La Mobilière CSV Internal Workshop, Bern, 15.10.2024 – co-organised by P3 to present the Creation of Shared Value (CSV) strategy and its integration into La Mobilière’s core business strategy through the Mobi-Case work; participants: Prof. Dr. Gugler, Mr. Guillaume, Dr. Raso Domínguez. [Mobilière transfer event]
- Chambre de commerce et d’industrie du canton de Fribourg – “Presentation of the collaboration between La Mobilière and UniFr”, Fribourg, 20.05.2025: presentation of the partnership and posters of group research outputs (Dr. Dembetembe, Dr. Raso Domínguez).
- Mobi-Case / Corporate Health Management collaboration with La Mobilière – knowledge exchange between UniFr and La Mobilière on CSV-based analysis of CHM.
- “La durabilité au-delà des frontières” – National Conference of the Sustainable Development Forum, Bern, 14–15.05.2024.
- Keynote “Macroéconomie durable” – Prof. Dr. Sergio Rossi, Chambre de commerce et d’industrie du canton de Fribourg, 28.11.2024 (engagement with regional business community).