



THE Awards 2019 – International Collaboration of the Year

Institution/Nominee	Heriot-Watt University
Title	Neighbourhood-based landslide risk mitigation using WhatsApp and community-state dialogue
Key personnel	Associate Professor Dr Harry Smith Professor Gabriela Medero
URL	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1LY0h8jFDI
Submission	<p>Heriot-Watt’s international collaboration with Edinburgh University and the Universidad Nacional de Colombia to create a neighbourhood-based landslide risk mitigation model using WhatsApp and community-state dialogue, faced multiple challenges.</p> <p>Young communities with no memory of recent landslide tragedies feared losing their homes more than losing their lives. The project also faced a backdrop of drug cartels and territory wars plus local government disengagement from informal communities.</p> <p>Built on the premise of community empowerment, the multi-disciplinary academic partnership developed a landslide mitigation model that transcended borders and traditional roles by working with and brokering dialogue between ‘community researchers’ and government officials.</p> <p>A second project now supports two more Colombian communities and one in Brazil with the Universidade de São Paulo, demonstrating the global application of the solutions created. These projects now safeguard some of the world’s most vulnerable populations by empowering them to mitigate against landslide threat – sustainably.</p>