

May 2018

## **Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)**

### **Status and challenges**



**DAAD**

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service

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## 1. Summary

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the 2030 Agenda will have a decisive impact on foreign, development, education and climate policy over the next decade and a half.

Education, higher education institutions and science are explicitly included in the 2030 Agenda. Specific objectives are named in this area under Goal 4 “Quality education for all”. In the field of higher education, the Agenda specifically calls for a substantial expansion of the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular the least developed countries. The German government has now incorporated this goal into its Sustainable Development Strategy and will report regularly on it nationally and internationally in the future. Higher education institutions and science have a supporting role for the other SDGs too, for example in Goals 3 (Health), 8 (Sustainable economic activity) and 13 (Climate).

As the world's largest funding organisation for the international exchange of students and researchers, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is actively supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Since it was founded in 1925, the DAAD has provided funding for around two million academics in Germany and abroad. The DAAD is a registered association and its members are German institutions of higher education and student bodies. The DAAD awards scholarships internationally, supports the internationalisation of German higher education institutions, promotes German studies and the German language abroad, assists developing countries in establishing effective higher education institutions and advises decision-makers in the fields of educational, academic relations and development policy. Its budget is derived mainly from funding from the Federal Foreign Office (AA), the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Further funding is provided by the European Union and foreign governments.

In order to drive the implementation of the SDGs, the DAAD proposes to continue supporting and consistently developing a number of programmes in the future. These are particularly innovative and SDG-compliant funding programmes such as Bilateral SDG-Graduate Schools, University-Business Partnerships and New Partnerships for Renewable Energy and the Protection of Tropical Forests, as well as the Alumniportal Deutschland with its topical SDG focus. To strengthen the sustainability of project funding, proposals are also put forward in the following document that outline how higher education institutions and the DAAD can contribute towards achieving the higher education institution components of SDG 4.

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda calls for joint knowledge creation, i.e. mutual learning and joint research by industrialised and developing countries from the outset. Higher education institutions and the DAAD are particularly well qualified in this area. Up to now, however, the BMZ and BMBF funding models have often only allowed a specific, defined part of innovative and integrated approaches to be supported at any one time. For this reason, proposals are presented here for the stronger integration of research and teaching in cooperation projects, for specialist networking beyond institutional boundaries and for the introduction of transformational educational work.

## **2. The 2030 Agenda as a new framework for global development**

The Sustainable Development Goals will have a decisive impact in particular on foreign, development, education and climate policy over the next decade and a half. Ending hunger, eradicating extreme poverty, ensuring high-quality education for all and reducing inequality, as well as switching to responsible consumption and production patterns: with a total of 17 goals and 169 objectives, the 2030 Agenda aims to achieve a transformation to globally sustainable development by calling on industrialised nations and developing countries equally for the first time. The Agenda applies universally. There is no longer a focus solely on development progress in the Global South. All 193 UN member states have committed themselves to driving forward implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national, regional and international level.

The 2030 Agenda draws together two strands of global agreements: the Rio process, which aimed to conserve natural resources for future generations primarily through changes in industrialised countries, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), whose main focus was on addressing key basic concerns in developing countries. The Agenda will encourage stakeholders who have mostly acted separately up to now – particularly environment, research and finance ministries on the one hand and foreign and development ministries on the other – to cooperate much more closely in the future.

The core principles of the 2030 Agenda are cooperative partnerships, the continuous consideration of sustainability and the introduction of a bold and clearly measurable transformation. No one must be left behind. The Agenda itself states:

“All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.” (Decision of the UN General Assembly in 2015 on the 2030 Agenda).

Following the example of the MDGs, the SDGs have measurable objectives assigned to them for which specific indicators are currently being developed and agreed within the specialised agencies of the United Nations. In the education field, this is being done by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

In 2016, under the direction of the Federal Chancellery, the German government began to report on implementation of the 2030 Agenda to the UN’s High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and will continue to do so with comprehensive reports every four years. This reporting will become more concrete as an increasing number of internationally binding indicators are formulated and adopted. Differences between the goals’ aspirations and the reality of their implementation will also be more clearly visible internationally and could result in the postponement of future funding allocations. The milestones planned up to 2020 for implementing the SDGs in Germany have been defined in the German government’s Sustainable Development Strategy. The current version of this was introduced in January 2017 and particularly emphasises the principle of “leave no one behind”.

The higher education sector and the work of the DAAD are mentioned explicitly in the strategy. For example, increasing the total number of students and researchers from developing countries by 10% is cited as an indicator for SDG 17 “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”.

Education at all levels is a goal in itself in the 2030 Agenda. The aim is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (SDG 4). This also includes ensuring equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university (SDG 4.3); expanding the number of scholarships, in particular for the least developed countries (4.B) and promoting international cooperation for teacher training (4.C).

Compared to the MDG education objective, there is a much stronger emphasis on inclusion and equal opportunities, learning outcomes and the necessity of lifelong learning. Furthermore, cross-sector tasks are also assigned to education and science for the fulfilment of other targets. An explicit reference is made to education for the goals relating to health (SDG 3), economic growth and work (SDG 8) and for combating climate change (SDG 13). The importance of science is particularly emphasised in the goals relating to inclusive and sustainable industrialization (SDG 9), sustainable consumption (SDG 12) and conserving the oceans (SDG 14).

In order to translate the commitments of SDG 4 into practice, the international educational community, under the direction of UNESCO, agreed a global Education 2030 Framework for Action in November 2015. This includes strategy recommendations and specific courses of action. In the tertiary education field, the Framework for Action again stresses the importance of expanding tertiary education: "Evidence suggests that most education systems are not keeping up with market demand. By 2020, the world could have 40 million too few workers with tertiary education relative to demand, and up to 95 million too many at lower education levels." The Framework for Action also underlines the importance of equal opportunities and of the societal relevance of content and methods, and calls for the expansion of high-quality policies and programmes for distance studies.

In July 2017, 43 globally coordinated indicators and their collection methods for SDG 4 were introduced by the UN Statistics Division. Two indicators relate to increasing the number and funding level of scholarships for developing countries. In future, UNESCO will report on implementation once a year to a global audience as part of the new Global Education Monitoring Report.

### **3. Fundamental principles of the 2030 Agenda and their implementation at the DAAD**

The DAAD has excellent global connections and, as an internationalisation agency in the field of academia, is particularly well placed to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A partnership-based approach is at the heart of its ethos. It has also actively incorporated the other fundamental principles of the 2030 Agenda and initiated steps to put them into practice in its programme work.

### **3.1 Cooperative partnership**

The work of the DAAD is centred on cooperative partnerships and the international exchange of higher education institutions, researchers, students and academic policy decision-makers. More than 130,000 people were granted funding in 2016, with nearly 60,000 of these taking part in cooperative projects. Few other organisations are as capable of implementing the 2030 Agenda's basic principle of cooperative partnership as the DAAD.

In the DAAD's partnership-based scholarship programmes, funding is jointly provided by the Federal Foreign Office (AA) and foreign governments. The governments accept the DAAD principle that academics decide on academic quality. The selection committees are composed of experts from the respective participating countries and jointly make decisions.

In almost all DAAD programmes, German higher education institutions make an often substantial contribution of their own. International cooperation on an equal footing with their partner institutions is an integral part of their philosophy. They deliver teaching free of charge and open their laboratories; the academic coordinators do not receive payment in the vast majority of cases and junior researchers from all over the world are integrated into research groups and supervised. The German higher education institutions also benefit from this, of course. In this way, they can harness the creativity of the brightest minds worldwide. They frequently work together on solutions to global challenges, which have been set out in the 2030 Agenda.

Implementation of the Agenda calls for partnerships between a wide range of different stakeholders beyond societal subsystems. The DAAD and German higher education institutions are becoming increasingly active in this area and often take on a coordinating role. For example, in various higher education partnership programmes, they integrate organisations that come from outside academia. This also happens in many cooperation projects within the "Transnational Education" programme, in which German businesses provide professionally supervised work placements, among other things. Cooperation between higher education institutions, the media, associations and youth organisations is expressly promoted in the programme "Expanding Cooperation with Civil Society in the Eastern Partnership Countries and Russia".

A particularly innovative programme that brings together co-financing and the active participation of various stakeholders is "New Partnerships/Novas Parcerias" (NoPa). Up to 2017, Brazilian ministries, research organisations and business people worked closely with German higher education institutions, the DAAD and the Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to develop solutions and products for specific problems in the fields of sustainable energy production, energy efficiency and the protection of tropical forests. It was an outstanding success by bringing together knowledge producers and knowledge users. The Brazilian research council (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico) is therefore currently examining how it can continue the central elements of the programme using its own funding.

In the DAAD's alumni work, a partnership-based approach and increasingly also cross-border networking between foreign alumni and German alumni interested in the respective country are encouraged. This enables DAAD alumni to further educate themselves together, learn from each other and work on solutions to global challenges. A reference project illustrating this is the accompanying project for the German-Chinese Alumni Networks (DCHAN), with which the BMBF is supporting networking for the first time between German alumni who have studied in China and Chinese alumni who have studied in Germany.

### 3.2 Sustainability

Investing in the brightest minds ensures that new knowledge and expertise can be sustainably utilised over a number of decades. The knowledge that was previously acquired during education and the cross-border, personal specialist networks need to be nurtured on a lifelong base, however. The DAAD actively supports this through various alumni programmes.

In 2016, nearly 17,000 people were reached solely via large and small alumni seminars, many of them organised by DAAD alumni or national alumni associations themselves. The attendees were able to exchange ideas on relevant topics and further develop their skills together. The meetings also provided an opportunity for the alumni to maintain and further expand their specialist networks by interacting with each other and with stakeholders from Germany.

Particularly innovative is the Alumniportal Deutschland (APD), an initiative in which the DAAD, GIZ, the Goethe Institute and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH) work closely together, primarily supported with BMZ funding. The APD provides a platform for more than 150,000 Germany alumni. Since 2016, the APD's core tasks have included sharing information about the 2030 Agenda and promoting joint learning to develop solutions for the SDGs.

DAAD project funding programmes have a clear focus on sustainability from the outset. Cooperative partnerships between higher education institutions are geared towards the long term and, in the vast majority of cases, continue on after funding ends. They are based on the genuine interests of the participating higher education institutions from Germany and the partner countries. Both sides contribute their own resources to these cooperative partnerships, for instance in the form of infrastructure or researcher working time. In addition, other partners such as businesses, research funders or foundations are also involved in the project in many cases.

Another important element of successfully assuring sustainability in DAAD programmes is the demand for sustainability concepts and the gradual increase in financial contributions from foreign partners during the cooperation – for example, as part of the Transnational Education project or in projects aimed at developing cross-border quality assurance structures in the higher education sector. This is only possible by maintaining a close focus on partner interests and engaging in an intensive dialogue process. Patience, stamina and funding cycles that are long enough are essential here.

### **3.3 Transformative steps**

The transformation to sustainable development in its three dimensions – social, environmental and economic – envisioned in the 2030 Agenda calls for far-reaching global changes and new, global forms of cooperation. There is a need for additional incentives for higher education institutions and researchers, as well as targeted support, in order to ensure they can work on finding innovative solutions to support a global transformation on a continuous, long-term basis. The DAAD provides this type of funding to the five centres in the programme “Higher Education Excellence in Development Cooperation – exceed”. Together with their partners from all over the world, they are seeking solutions in the fields of water management, international health, food security, sustainable use of resources and decent work. Researchers from various disciplines work together here. Of central importance is their close cooperation with their colleagues in a global network and the joint training of junior academics from Germany and developing countries. This approach makes it more likely that relevant issues faced by the South are also dealt with and not only solutions from Germany that are considered.

The centres were selected by interdisciplinary expert committees in which decisions were made by academics from Germany and from industrialised and developing countries, and also by experts from developmental policy implementing organisations and think tanks. The new Bilateral SDG-Graduate Schools were also selected this way. This is precisely why the DAAD programmes offer a particular opportunity for academics who seek creative and applicable solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals beyond individual disciplines.

### **3.4 Examining effectiveness**

The DAAD monitors the results and impacts of its activities so it can learn from these experiences. The long-term effects of funding activities cannot always be clearly assigned and measured, especially in the academic sector. This is all the more true insofar as impacts often only occur at a later point in time and are only measurable in a limited way when funding ends if project periods are relatively short. However, the DAAD is defining programme objectives more clearly in accordance with its Strategy 2020. It has begun to ensure they can be measured more effectively and is examining the impacts more systematically. For this purpose, a three-phase survey of scholarship recipients has been introduced which also covers the time after the end of the funding period. Starting with the BMZ funding area, the DAAD is also running pilot programmes in which a web-based tool for structured reporting by higher education institutions has been developed and introduced for the first time. The tool assesses the extent to which objectives have been implemented and achieved and makes this useable for mutual learning.

## **4. The DAAD's specific contributions**

### **Project funding**

Through more than 1,200 higher education institution cooperation projects, the DAAD promotes international collaboration in a variety of fields which contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In the programmes that fund specialist centres in Africa (AA), transnational education (BMBF) and the exceed centres (BMZ), a crucial role is played by the cross-border joint development of innovative solutions to key issues facing humanity, such as hunger, health, sustainable business and decent work.

### **Scholarship programmes**

The DAAD scholarship programmes also contribute directly to the achievement of SDG 4 "Quality education for all" and to the implementation of the German government's Sustainable Development Strategy (new edition 2016). This strategy includes the specific goal – in line with the 2030 Agenda – of increasing the total number of students and researchers from developing and emerging countries by 10% by 2020. In 2016, the DAAD provided nearly 16,000 grants to people from developing countries. The DAAD is continuously increasing the number of scholarships for developing countries through various cooperation agreements with governments and foreign research organisations co-financed by the partners. This enhances opportunities for supporting international exchange and mutual learning.

### **Scholarships for Africa special programme**

The DAAD has also further increased the number of scholarships for developing countries with "1,000 Scholarships for African Students", a (limited term) special programme for which the BMZ provides almost 25 million euros in funding. This programme also meets the demands of section 4B of the 2030 Agenda, which specifically calls for a substantial expansion of the number of scholarships available to developing countries. In rapidly expanding higher education systems in particular, the provision of additional scholarships for postgraduates plays an important role in sustainably maintaining the academic systems themselves. Lecturers are often required to take on additional teaching commitments. As a result of this, training capacity for junior academics shrinks in many cases. In an expansion phase in particular, international cooperation is therefore often the only way to combine growth and the preservation of quality.

The higher education sector is currently growing extremely fast in Africa in particular. Training capacity for doctoral candidates and master's students therefore needs to be massively expanded quickly. Academics holding a PhD are urgently needed for this. In the DAAD's In-Region/In-Country Programme (2016: 860 grants for Africans), a large share of the scholarships and tuition fees goes to selected African centres in order to expand postgraduate training capacity there. This enables capacity to be created and reinforced locally and the incentives that prompt a brain drain are reduced. In the DAAD's view, the need for additional scholarships is predicted to remain very high for at least another decade, even after the current special programme comes to an end.

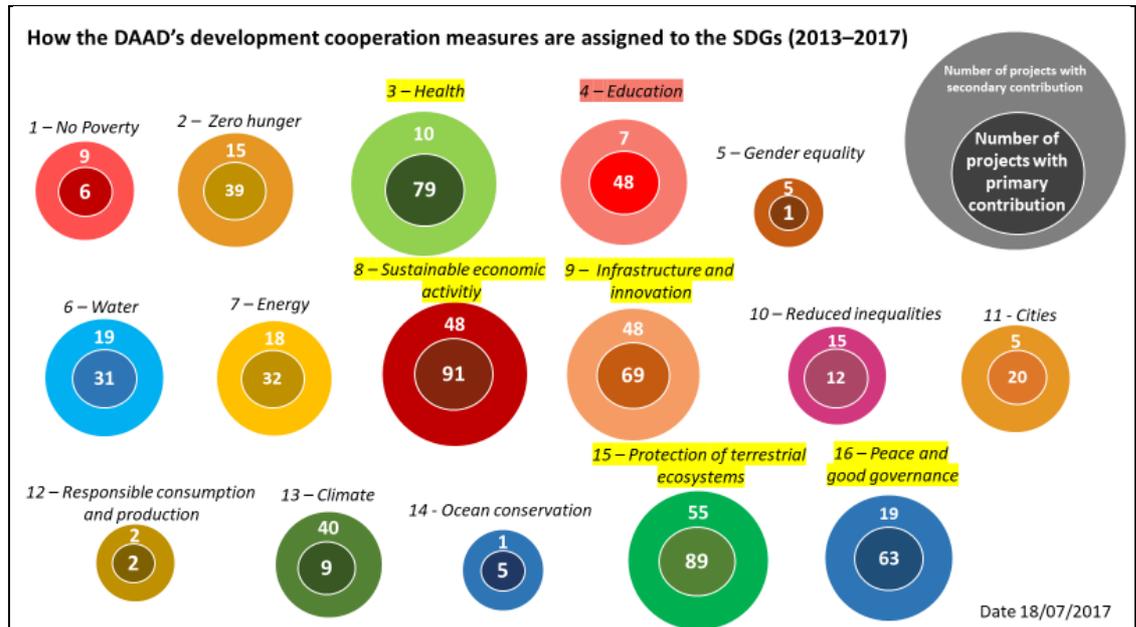
***DAAD alumni organise lobbying for higher quality education in East Africa***

*The aim of SDG 4 is not only a quantitative expansion, but explicitly also an improvement in quality. In order to stimulate change, additional measures are needed together with other courses of action in the education policy field. To mobilise majorities in favour of this, the unsatisfactory quality of education first needs to be made clearly visible to the population. Two DAAD alumni who gained their doctorates in Germany, Dr Sara Ruto and Dr John Mugo, are dedicating their efforts to this aim as coordinators of the East African NGO Uwezo. In Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, they joined up with hundreds of volunteers to assess the literacy and numeracy of tens of thousands of school pupils using an internationally developed process. From these assessments, they derived a quality ranking for the administrative districts in the three countries – which resulted in an outcry among parents, particularly in Uganda, and in intense political debates in newspapers and on national talk shows. The education ministries came under significantly increased pressure not only to widen access, but also to take the subject of quality seriously. Forming the basis for the commitment of the two academics and activists is their excellent education which they received at German higher education institutions. This enabled them to work through assessment models from India and Europe and adapt them to their home region.*

The DAAD's commitment to the 2030 Agenda is described below using selected examples. First of all, using the BMZ as an example, an overall picture is given of the SDG relevance of the funding for DAAD measures. The 2030 Agenda will be a key reference framework for BMZ policy development in future in accordance with the German government's 15th development cooperation report published in May 2017. Elements of the 2030 Agenda have also already been implemented in AA and BMBF funding. Therefore, examples are then presented of the DAAD's contributions to those SDGs where higher education cooperation is particularly important for their implementation.

#### **4.1 Example: The 2030 Agenda in the BMZ funding area**

For the BMZ funding area, the contribution that the 650 measures funded from 2013 to 2017 made to the 2030 Agenda was ascertained. An initial thematic assignment of the measures to the individual sustainability goals showed that DAAD-funded measures make contributions to all 17 development goals. The focus of DAAD funding was on Goal 15 "Protecting terrestrial ecosystems" (89 with a direct link/55 with an indirect link), Goal 8 "Sustainable economic activity" (91/48), Goal 3 "Health" (79/10) and Goal 16 "Peace and governance" (63/19). A total of 55 measures support the education sector itself. As a result of their impact in the higher education field, all measures also made a contribution to Goal 4 "Education" and, due to the continuous partnership-based approach, to Goal 17 "Global partnerships" as well.



The focus in the field of rural development ties in with higher education institutions' strong interest in cooperations in developing countries and in Germany. The increasing interest shown by economics and social science departments in cooperation with developing countries is reflected in the high proportion of support for the goals "Sustainable economic activity" and "Peace and good governance". Cooperations in these areas have also been systematically increased in recent years through new funding programmes such as "University-Business Partnerships".

There was a lower number of contributions to areas that would also lead to changes in the North, such as "Responsible consumption" (2/2), "Gender equality" (1/5) and "Reduced inequalities" (15/12). In order to close these gaps, SDG-related learning could be more strongly promoted in Germany as well in the future.

## 4.2 Examples of DAAD contributions to selected Sustainable Development Goals

### Goal 3: Health

In the programme "Partnerships for the Health Sector in Developing Countries" (PAGEL), the DAAD supports 24 cooperation projects in which participants are working together to update teaching content and methods in healthcare-related degree programmes. This has a direct effect on the quality of medical care – and not only in developing countries. This type of mutual learning also improves diagnostics and the range of treatment offered by organisations in Germany that deal with tropical medicine. The programme is backed up by measures supporting the early return of medical staff trained in Germany. (BMZ funding)

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In the programme “Transnational Education” (TNB), the DAAD is supporting the development of a double degree for the biomedical technology bachelor’s degree course at the University of Applied Sciences Aachen and the University Moulay Ismail in Morocco. Also a TNB project, a biomedical sciences master’s degree course at the University of Buenos Aires is training highly qualified university graduates for future roles in biomedical research and development. The provision of these application-oriented, interdisciplinary and international degree programmes is very much in line with the principles of the 2030 Agenda. (BMBF funding)

In the programme “Clusters of Scientific Innovation in the Middle East and North Africa” (COSIMENA), the DAAD, four German universities, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, the Orient-Institut Beirut and the Central Agency for German Schools Abroad are enabling Germany alumni from the Middle East to acquire current interdisciplinary expertise in the health sector (and other SDG fields) and build long-lasting knowledge networks with Germany. They then pass this expertise on to researchers and students, or make use of it in health centres, companies and medical practices. (AA funding)

### **Goal 8: Sustainable economic activity**

The DAAD supported cooperation between higher education institutions and business in 2017 through 36 partnerships with businesses. In this programme, higher education institutions and companies in developing countries and in Germany devise innovative approaches to solving specific business-related problems, increase the practical orientation of curricula and improve conditions for the foundation of enterprises by academics and students. More jobs plus support for decent work and fair working conditions is the focus of one of the centres receiving a high level of funding over ten years as part of the programme “Higher Education Excellence in Development Cooperation – exceed”. Here, future experts are trained within a global network by the University of Kassel, which is part of an international network that includes relevant partner higher education institutions and the International Labour Organization (ILO). In this way, Germany can also acquire extensive knowledge about working conditions along value chains which begin in developing countries and end in industrialised nations. (BMZ funding)

In the TNB programme, the DAAD supports the German-Jordanian University, which is based on the German university of applied sciences model. By systematically integrating practical semesters into degree programmes, the university is setting an example in the Middle East to show how higher education provision can be structured so that it is relevant to the world of work. In this way, practice-focused and solution-oriented skilled specialists are trained who are often urgently needed and who, for example, also contribute to competitiveness and climate protection through the introduction of energy efficient processes. A comparable (regionally focused) project is planned for the cooperation between higher education institutions for applied sciences in Germany and East Africa. (BMBF and AA funding)

### **Goal 13: Climate**

The global nature of Goal 13 is particularly obvious because changes in the atmosphere take no notice of national borders. However, while emissions per capita are very high in industrialised countries, the impact is mainly felt in developing countries. The complexity of the processes that trigger climate change, or are induced by it, call for in-depth research in the regions affected. This research can only come to fruition through cooperation between industrialised nations and developing countries.

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In western and southern Africa, the BMBF is therefore funding two networks of climate research centres in the projects WASCAL (West African Science Service Center on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use) and SASSCAL (Southern African Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land Management). The DAAD is working with the BMBF and the centres on a new programme that is designed to support networking and the specialist and professional development of the junior researchers trained at these centres. They will help to select the topic areas; networking with practitioners is also intended to enhance the applicability of their research work. The centres' best graduates will receive postdoc scholarships so that they can implement their specific projects with support from the network. DAAD alumni will be involved in the initiative.

In the programme "Partnerships for sustainable solutions with Sub-Saharan Africa", 14 cooperation projects between African and German higher education institutions are addressing climate-related topics in the fields of urban development, bioeconomy and resource management. In this programme, the DAAD is cooperating closely with the international office at the German Aerospace Center. (BMBF funding)

In the new programme "Bilateral SDG-Graduate Schools", which involves seven centres, the DAAD is providing funding to the universities of Hawassa and Hohenheim for work on adapting agriculture to the ever more intensive droughts in East Africa. In the "University Programme on Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency", the DAAD is cooperating with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) to support the development of an inter-university master's programme for renewable energy in Senegal; this is closely integrated into the aims of the German technical collaboration in the local area. Likewise focusing on the impact of climate change is the new "Integrated Water Management" master's degree course at the German-Kazakh University. (BMZ, GIZ and AA funding)

The crucial role of the research contribution made by the industrialised nations is underlined by the initiative "Make our Planet Great Again", for which French President Macron invited international researchers to France to work on climate-related issues. Germany has also got involved in this initiative. Here, 13 new research groups of international researchers are being established in the fields of climate change, energy transition and Earth system research. Accompanying measures will ensure that the teams established in Germany and France will collaborate intensively in order to pool their bi-national expertise. (BMBF funding)

### **Goal 16: Peace and justice**

In Colombia, the still fragile peace process between President Juan Manuel Santos' government and FARC rebel groups will be bolstered by the new German-Colombian Peace Institute CAPAZ (Instituto Colombo-Alemán para la Paz) at the Universidad Nacional. The German partner is a consortium coordinated by the University of Gießen. As a research, teaching and outreach organisation, CAPAZ will disseminate expertise on key issues relating to peace research, historical reappraisal, land reform, conflict prevention and the design of a post-conflict society.

A large number of comparable centres of expertise already exist in Africa, where funding is being provided for regional integration in conflict-ridden eastern Africa and a human rights centre in South Africa. Recently, two centres relating to important transit countries for refugees in Africa (Niger and Mali) were added. (AA funding)

A major cause of often violent conflict situations in Latin America was and still is social injustice. This is the focus of “trAndeS”, another centre funded under the above-mentioned Bilateral SDG-Graduate Schools programme. It is a cooperation between Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú and the Freie Universität Berlin. (BMZ funding)

If disputes cannot be avoided and military conflicts result, there is a rise in the movements of refugees. To help with the resettlement of civil war refugees, particularly from Syria and Iraq, the DAAD has put a substantial amount of additional resources into establishing a number of programmes designed to help academically able refugees from this group integrate into German higher education institutions. (BMBF funding)

## **5. Requirements and challenges: take substantive action and think innovatively**

### **5.1 Summary of key points: take substantive action**

#### **Maintain cross-stakeholder programmes**

Programmes that include higher education institutions in industrialised and developing countries as well as stakeholders from industry and civil society are necessary in order to achieve the universal and transformative aims of the 2030 Agenda. However, implementing these programmes is often a very complex task as different interests and viewpoints constantly need to be brought in line with each other. For these complex approaches, the DAAD contributes particular expertise through its international network and its alumni, and its well-established cooperation with partners from federal ministries and a variety of private funding bodies. Programmes such as University-Business Partnerships, NoPa and the Alumniportal Deutschland are extraordinarily successful examples of such cooperation. These programmes must be continued and expanded on a long-term basis.

#### **Expand and enhance innovative programmes with an SDG focus**

The Bilateral SDG-Graduate Schools, the Centres of Excellence in Africa and Colombia, “Sustainable Solutions for Africa” and the exceed programme that is closely aligned with five key SDGs particularly address the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and promote the academic capability of all participants. Sustainable financing and expansion of these programmes, including beyond Africa, are required.

#### **Promote sustainability more consistently**

Sustainability becomes more likely if funding programmes allow sufficient time for stable structures to become established. In particular, the development of transnational education projects and of graduate schools and centres of excellence need patience and stamina.

If this is guaranteed and, in addition, the individual interests of everyone involved are taken into consideration from the very beginning, the likelihood of cooperative partnerships being able to continue after projects come to an end increases considerably. By consistently integrating digital communication into funding strategies and introducing co-financed phasing-out periods after the end of the main funding period, this likelihood could be boosted even further, and sustainability could be substantially increased.

**No academic cooperation without researchers: increase the number of scholarships**

Notwithstanding rapid expansion, only if the next generation of researchers, including those in developing countries, is at least as well educated as the present one will it be possible for industrialised and developing countries to jointly create the fundamental innovations that are necessary for successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For this reason, the developing countries in particular have rightly called for the steady expansion of the OECD countries' scholarship programmes as an explicit objective. Whether and to what extent Germany, as a location for science and research, contributes to this objective will also be an indicator by which the German contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be measured, especially by the countries of the South. Provided that there is sufficient funding, German higher education institutions, the DAAD and their partners worldwide are ready and willing to contribute to the achievement of this goal – as well as the other goals of the 2030 Agenda. In doing so, they could also help the German government implement its sustainability strategy, in which the target of increasing the number of students and researchers from developing countries by 10% (from 2016 until 2020) is explicitly stipulated.

## **5.2 Think innovatively**

**Enable joint knowledge creation – remove funding barriers**

Experts at an international conference of the BMZ, the DAAD, the AvH, GIZ and the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) on implementation of the 2030 Agenda agreed that it will not be possible to meet the Sustainable Development Goals without joint knowledge creation from the outset. Simply adapting expertise and innovations from industrialised countries will not be enough, and if new solutions are not disseminated rapidly, they may never have a widespread global impact.

Close collaboration between industrialised nations and developing countries, the integration of research, problem solving, learning and teaching are essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. With their core competencies and their national and international networks, German and international higher education institutions are the ideal bridge builders in this context. As an organisation of German higher education institutions that operates on a global scale, the DAAD possesses specific expertise in overcoming national and institutional borders and boundaries. It is therefore exceptionally well placed to actively support and promote joint knowledge creation.

The way in which funding programmes are designed must provide greater support for models of this vital closer cooperation. Higher education institutions are centres of research and teaching. However, funding is often focused either on research – allowing the development of teaching only as a secondary aim – or puts capacity building in teaching in developing countries at the centre, thus enabling the learning of German academic personnel only in a very limited exceptional situation.

In order to change this, BMZ programmes could also expressly promote the learning of German academic personnel from partners in developing countries in the future and support accompanying research elements (for one or more SDGs). BMBF programmes could regularly include the dissemination of researched knowledge through innovative international master's programmes as an eligible additional goal.

### **Overcome institutional boundaries**

In efforts to achieve individual SDGs, the ministries involved should coordinate their activities with each other. A start has been made with the formation of the new, interministerial round table for education, science and research, organised by the BMBF and the AA. The DAAD is an active member of the round table and could implement coordinated funding from various funding bodies under one roof in future.

But the 2030 Agenda calls for even more. To implement the SDGs, science and research institutions should actively seek cooperation with actors of change beyond the field of academia, because otherwise it takes too long to exploit new findings to achieve the goals. The DAAD is already doing this: specialist alumni activities have been conducted jointly with the GIZ in various countries. In these activities – for example, in the water sector – GIZ water specialists, water management authorities, provincial administrations, local water NGOs, hydrologists, geologists, chemists and geographers from higher education institutions in the partner country and from Germany have often met each other for the first time. They have subsequently worked together on developing innovative solutions. New event formats like this should be better supported; at present, they are hampered by strictly separate financing arrangements between the institutions.

The DAAD – which maintains links with innovation and development organisations worldwide like no other stakeholder – can take the lead on organising these kinds of cross-institutional networking events jointly with alumni in selected countries for the SDGs that are particularly important for Germany. The Alumniportal Deutschland is the ideal tool for preparation and follow-up work.

### **Actively promote learning from the South**

The partnership approach called for in the 2030 Agenda often still seems like a one-way street going from the highly developed industrialised countries to the developing countries. The opportunity to learn explicitly from the experiences of developing countries and their innovations – for example, the establishment of participatory budgeting in Brazil, the use of mobile payment systems in Kenya or the consistent efforts to avoid plastic waste in Rwanda – is still rarely taken up.

In particular DAAD alumni, both foreign and German, can play an important role as SDG ambassadors and drivers of change in higher education institutions and beyond. They can help to show the very real consequences that the vast ecological footprint of each inhabitant of an industrialised country has in their home countries – and explain what innovative solutions may be possible to reduce this.

**Recruit higher education institutions as partners for implementing the 2030 Agenda**

For joint learning and joint knowledge creation beyond institutional boundaries, crucial partners are the higher education institutions in industrialised and developing countries with close ties to industry, the state and civil society. Higher education institutions need to be made much more aware of the 2030 Agenda and its basic principles. The DAAD already plays an important role here through the provision of innovative funding programmes and information events; this function needs to be reinforced significantly in the future.

A programme for transformational educational work, geared towards mutual international learning, may raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda in higher education institutions and societies, both at home and outside Germany, and subsequently promote collaborative learning by developing and industrialised countries. Because higher education institutions operate in closely integrated networks, both in their own societies and also internationally, they are particularly suitable for actively implementing such a programme. As a membership organisation for German higher education institutions and with its international network and its alumni all over the world, the DAAD is the ideal organisation to drive this forward.

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