

ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR APPLICATION

On behalf of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
the TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences,
Faculty of Spatial Development and Infrastructure Systems (F12), is organizing the

International Germany Alumni Training Seminar 2023

Biodiversity and Food Security Nexus: Species-rich tropical forests as core areas for sustainable agriculture

The seminar follows the concept of blended-learning:
online phase from June to September 2023 and
attendance phase from 12-18 September 2023 in Cologne, Germany

followed by the participation in the

Tropentag Conference 2023

“Competing pathways for equitable food systems transformation: Trade-offs and synergies”

The annual, development-oriented and interdisciplinary conference Tropentag addresses issues of agriculture, resources management, environment, forestry, fisheries, food, nutrition and related sciences in the context of rural development, sustainable resource use and poverty alleviation worldwide.

20-22 September 2023 in Berlin, Germany

SEMINAR AIMS

The blended-learning seminar (online and attendance phase in Cologne) and the participation at the Tropentag in Berlin are offered by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in the framework of the program SDG Alumni Projects (www.daad.de/sdg-alumni-projects). This seminar mainly addresses two essential United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and managing forests sustainably (SDG 15), and achieving food security and promoting sustainable agriculture (SDG 2).

Species-rich forests provide a wide range of ecosystem services to surrounding regions worldwide. Due to stable environmental and climatic conditions, such areas have traditionally been used for agricultural production and contribute to food security. Today, tropical forests are under increasing pressure due to climate change and anthropogenic impacts. As a result, forests are being degraded, their biodiversity is being lost and the forest ecosystem services are declining, which can lead to threats to food security. This is where the SDG Alumni Project comes in: how can the protection of biodiversity in forest regions contribute to sustainable agriculture in the surrounding areas, and thus also to food security? The main objective of the training seminar is to collect data on biodiversity, ecosystem services and agricultural production for different tropical forest areas, and then to develop scenarios in group work on how the loss or the protection of biodiversity affects food security in the surrounding areas.

Participants are introduced to digital tools and trained to use them to communicate with local stakeholders and to collect data for the scenario development. The work will take place in groups so that participants can get to know each other and exchange ideas. The results are to be presented in a short video as well as compiled in a poster according to the principles of scientific work. After a preparatory online phase, feedback rounds and further development of both the video and poster contributions will take place in the training seminar at the TH Köln. Through this intensive preparation, the participants are sensitized to the interdisciplinary contributions of the Tropentag and bring stakeholder views to the Tropentag.

The proposed activities are aiming to:

- develop skills in solving development-relevant questions about the importance of biodiverse tropical forests for sustainable agriculture and food security;
- strengthen the Alumni self-image as change agents for transformative change for biodiversity;
- expand the Alumni network by engaging in professional networks with Alumni of their own country and internationally;
- strengthening Alumni ties to Germany through cooperation with universities, research institutions and companies.

The SDG Alumni Project is organized and hosted by the Institute for Technology and Resources Management in the Tropics and Subtropics (ITT) of the Faculty 12 at the TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences.

The costs will be mainly covered by funds from the DAAD provided by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The seminar takes place in the run-up to the [Tropentag 2023](#), jointly organized by The Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF), Germany in cooperation with Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany.

TENTATIVE PROGRAM

The online phase (June until mid-September 2023) consists of

- five online sessions, each lasting approximately 1,5 hours. In this stage, you will have an introduction to scenario building for your chosen topic, and you will learn the skills required for developing a short-video with a smartphone. This phase will end with the preparation of a poster and material for the attendance phase as well as a first draft of the video material.

The attendance phase I in Cologne (12-18 September 2023) includes

- sessions to identify challenges of the transformative change for biodiversity and food security in the tropics;
- presentations of posters and videos with feedback rounds, further development of posters and videos by the participating Alumni;
- guided group work activities for scenario building and professional networking opportunities with scientists and representatives from the industry and NGOs;
- excursions and cultural events.

By the end of this phase, you will present the scenarios developed and the final videos in a workshop.

The attendance phase II in Berlin (19-23 September 2023) includes

- participation at the Tropentag 19-22 September, and completion of evaluation forms for the Alumni Training Seminar.

The post-event evaluation phase (October – November 2023) includes

- one online session lasting approximately 1,5 hours. You will reflect on the experience gained through the SDG Alumni Project and participation at the Tropentag, and on the experiences from the exchange with local stakeholders on the results of the SDG Alumni Project after returning home;
- an additional online session for those participants who have decided to write a scientific article, in which they plan future work steps together with the lecturers and arrange follow-up meetings in the respective author groups.

The final program of the training seminar in Cologne will be published once all applications have been reviewed. It is necessary to participate in the whole program: training seminar, conference and social program.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION

This seminar addresses Alumni from German universities and research institutions, especially Alumni of the master programs of ITT (NRM, IWRM and REM, as well as TERMA, ENREM and IWRM-MENA) at TH Köln:

- from countries listed on the DAC list of 'developing' countries,
- who carried out research or studied in Germany for at least 3 months and
- who are currently living and working in a DAC listed country.

You should have

- (1) **a proven background in academic fields relevant to the topics** of biodiversity conservation, tropical forest diversity, sustainable agriculture, food security, and related sciences in the context of rural development, sustainable resource use, natural resource management, environmental studies;
- (2) **professional experience and personal interest in one of the following areas:** research, education, NGOs, government agencies, policy making, project development, local communities, and related stakeholders in the biodiversity and food security nexus;
- (3) the **requirements to act as a potential change agent (multiplier)** who will present the seminar results in your home country and thus disseminate the acquired knowledge as well as develop ideas and projects for regional implementation;
- (4) **adequate language proficiency** which is essential to actively participate in the workshops and discussions as the seminar will be held **in English**.

Eligibility for repeated attendances at SDG Alumni Projects (formerly: Alumni Special Projects):

Participations in SDG Alumni Projects are limited to a maximum of 2 participations within 4 years. The year of participation, not the year of application, is decisive for the calculation. This rule does not apply for attendances in completely digital SDG Alumni Projects.

COST COVERAGE

- International return ticket from and to airport in Germany (lowest possible economy class airfare, booked through TH Köln)
- Transportation (2nd class) from the airport to Cologne (preferably Rail & Fly, booked through TH Köln)
- Accommodation and partial living expenses during the stay in Cologne
- Travel health insurance (max. 30 Euro) and visa costs
- Transport on excursions

- Transport from Cologne to Berlin
- Accommodation and partial living expenses during the Tropentag 2023 Conference in Berlin
- Entrance fees at Tropentag 2023 Conference
- Public transport from the hotel in Berlin to the departure airport

Please note:

You must cover by yourself any other costs, such as transport costs between your place of residence and “your” airport, and travel costs for visa application in your country of residence.

In cases of a self-inflicted no-show, the costs must be covered by the participant. Rebookings can only be considered in exceptional cases and only after consultation.

Please keep in mind that living expenses are only covered partly during your stay in Cologne and Berlin.

Extensions of stays before the seminar or after Tropentag 2023 in Berlin are only possible up to 5 working days and upon submission of a comparison of flight ticket prices before you start your travel. You will have to pay any difference between the flight ticket prices for the official arrival/return date (see below) and your actual date of travel before/after your extension. You must also cover by yourself any additional travel costs, subsistence costs and other additional costs of your extension.

Extensions beyond 5 days must be of an official nature which you need to justify, e.g. through visits to universities, organizations, institutions, companies etc. and with details about contact persons and a day-to-day program of activities. These extensions must be approved by DAAD before you start your travel. Decisions by DAAD are made on an individual nature based upon your justification, your program etc.

For any extension, you need to organize your accommodation by yourself, and, very important, you have to make sure to have a valid health insurance for the extension days.

Travel, seminar and conference dates

- Online phase: 1 June - 8 September 2023
- Arrival in Cologne: 11 September 2023
- Attendance phase in Cologne: 12-17 September 2023
- Travel from Cologne to Berlin: 18 September 2023
- Tropentag 2023 in Berlin: 19-22 September 2023
- Departure from Berlin: 23 September 2023
- Post-event evaluation phase: 1 October - 30 November 2023

It is essential that you participate from the first day of the online phase to the last day of the post-event evaluation phase.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Your application should emphasize your motivation and professional / personal benefit for your participation. You should illustrate how you are planning to imply the gained knowledge and what possible stakeholders for collaboration you may identify for your professional career.

Your application (in English language) must include the following documents in one single pdf file:

- a) a filled application form: The form is available to upload on <https://th-koeln.sciebo.de/s/95IP2rmQomJVhPa>
- b) a letter of motivation (2 pages) comprising the following information:
 - Why do you want to attend the SDG Alumni Project Tropentag 2023?
 - What do you expect to learn during the Alumni seminar and the conference?

- What topics related to the seminar are of special interest to you?
 - How are you planning to imply the results of our discussions into your present and upcoming projects?
 - How will you personally and professionally benefit from the participation?
- c) an abstract (1 page, please use font type "Arial", font size 11, 1.5 line spacing) summarizing the biodiversity and food security nexus topic you want to work on in the seminar, including at least one of the following suggestions:
- importance of species-rich tropical forests for surrounding agricultural areas
 - tropical biodiversity and sustainable agriculture
 - role of neglected underutilized species NUS for food security
- d) short CV (e.g. EuroPass)
- e) relevant documentation of your Alumni status (no template)
- f) an overview on seminars, workshops or conferences visited in Germany after finishing your studies in Germany.

NOTE:

- All documents must be compiled to a single PDF file.
- The PDF-document should be named 'Last name_First name_country' (e.g. Mustermann_Mara_Germany).

Please submit your application latest by 9 April 2023 via email to

alumniseminar-ITT@th-koeln.de

Please note: Completeness of personal data mentioned in the online application form will affect your eligibility as a participant.

After the review by the local organizing committee and DAAD, the invited participants will be notified end April 2023.

For further questions, please contact alumniseminar-ITT@th-koeln.de

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