

ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

On behalf of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the University of Kassel and DITSL Witzenhausen organise the

International Germany Alumni Training Seminar:

Strategies of ecological intensification for the sustainable transformation of agri-food systems in the global south

12 - 17 September 2023 in Witzenhausen, Germany

followed by the

Participation in the Tropentag 2023 development oriented and interdisciplinary conference

18 - 23 September 2023 in Berlin, Germany

Seminar aims and content

The seminar addresses the conservation of agricultural biodiversity in the context of economically and ecologically resilient agricultural systems adapted to climate change and food security. The global community needs to intensify the global fight against hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in the coming years if it still wants to achieve the goals set by 2030. Among the most important factors exacerbating food insecurity and malnutrition are poverty, climate extremes and the progressing loss of biodiversity. Diverse smallholder agriculture and family farming are the backbone of regional food security in many developing countries worldwide. There is increasing scientific evidence for a positive relationship between the diversity and the productivity and stability of farming systems. The seminar will particularly focus on farming systems based on methods of agroecological intensification and adapted diversification as the chosen strategy to achieve stable production growth and thus food security and sovereignty in the Global South. It will discuss the relationship between agroecosystem-diversity and their productivity, their resilience to variability and external shocks, and the variety of other tangible and intangible ecosystem services they provide (e.g. pest and disease resistance, soil fertility, water storage capacity, pollination). During the seminar, we will discuss possibilities to assess the value of this so-called functional biodiversity. The principles of organic agriculture and its role in enhancing biodiversity and food security will be discussed in more detail.

As we are dealing predominantly with smallholder family farming systems, we will regard them as human activity systems and take a transdisciplinary approach to their analysis. Integrated into the program is therefore a module on social innovations and transdisciplinary and actor-oriented research methods. These serve to identify system-specific innovation and change opportunities, and to consider different knowledge and value systems of different actors and stakeholders. We will set our system boundary beyond the production of food and agricultural commodities and regard agricultural systems together with their associated supply chains (how do commodities reach the consumer) / value chains (how is the value addition distributed along the chain). The strengthening and further development of local agri-food systems and their importance for a diverse and cost-effective food supply, for employment and income in rural areas will be addressed in a workshop on marketing of agricultural products, which also includes excursion on direct marketing and processing. Further field trips and expert inputs will highlight innovative methods of regenerative and agroecological approaches to land use.

The seminar will promote exchange between the participants, facilitate international scientific cooperation and qualify the participants in the field of ecological intensification of agri-food systems. It will stimulate and promote ideas for joint research, strategy development and knowledge transfer. The program in Witzenhausen will include presentations by the participating Alumni, inputs and case studies by invited experts, workshops, group work, discussions, demonstrations and field trials at the Department of

Agricultural Engineering in Witzenhausen, as well as excursions and cultural events. The final program will be published once all applications have been reviewed. It is compulsory for participants to attend the entire program: seminar, conference, social events.

The seminar and participation in the Tropentag 2023 are offered by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in the framework of the program SDG Alumni Projects (<https://www.daad.de/en/alumni/funding-programmes-for-alumni/sdg-alumni-projects/>). This SDG Alumni Project is organized and hosted by the Department of Agricultural Engineering in the Tropics and Subtropics of the Faculty of Organic Agricultural Sciences of the University of Kassel (Prof. Dr. Oliver Hensel, www.uni-kassel.de/fb11agrar) and DITSL Witzenhausen (www.ditsl.org). 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 is scheduled in the run-up to the Tropentag 2023 Berlin. Tropentag is an annual development oriented and interdisciplinary international conference on resource management, environment, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food, nutrition and related sciences in the context of rural development, sustainable resource use and poverty alleviation worldwide (<https://www.tropentag.de/>). The Tropentag conferences are organized jointly by the universities of Berlin, Bonn, Göttingen, Hohenheim, Kassel, Prague, Ghent and Vienna (Austria), and the Council for Tropical and Subtropical Research (ATSAF e.V) in co-operation with the the German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture DITSL. In 2023 the thematic focus will be on competing pathways for equitable food systems transformations.

Eligibility criteria for participation

This seminar targets Alumni of German universities who

- are citizens of countries listed on the OECD DAC list (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>)
- spent at least 3 months in Germany on professional errands (study, training, teaching, research)
- currently live and work in their home countries.

Successful applicants have

- (1) **demonstrated academic background** in agriculture and sustainable transformation of agri-food chains or related fields
- (2) **professional experience and personal interest** in research, education, development, governance, policy making, and the active involvement of local communities and stakeholders
- (3) **potential to act as multipliers** who will disseminate seminar content and results in their home countries / regions and thus inspire and trigger ideas and projects for regional implementation
- (4) **adequate English language proficiency** to actively participate in the workshops and discussions.

Eligibility for repeated attendance at Alumni Special Projects: Alumni are eligible to participate in up to two SDG Alumni Projects within four years. The year of participation, not the year of application, is decisive for the calculation: This rule does not apply for attendance in a completely digital SDG Alumni Project.

Cost coverage

- International return ticket to Frankfurt/Berlin and from Frankfurt/Berlin (lowest possible economy class airfare – up to a maximum grant of € 1.000 for Latin-America, € 900 for South-East Asia, € 800 for Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia, € 700 for Middle East and North Africa (in case the flight budget does not allow for a full flight reimbursement)
- Airport transfer in Germany to Witzenhausen and from Berlin (if possible Rail & Fly).
- Local transport in Germany on excursions and from Witzenhausen to the Tropentag 2023 in Berlin
- Public transport in Berlin
- Accommodation and contribution to subsistence (half-board) for the stays in Witzenhausen and Berlin
- Registration fees for the Tropentag 2023 in Berlin
- Visa costs
- Travel health insurance (max. 30 Euro)

Please note: Any other than the above costs must be covered by the participants, i.e. particularly:

- Transport between your participants place of residence and the national airport
- Travel costs associated with participants' visa application in their country of residence
- Subsistence cost exceeding the above provisions (half-board) in Witzenhausen and Berlin
- Local transport in Germany for private errands not associated with the seminar.

Extensions of stays before or after the official program are possible for up to 5 working days upon submission of a comparison of flight ticket prices before booking the ticket. Any additional cost incurred (airfare, travel, accommodation, subsistence, other) by deviating from the official arrival / return date (see below) must be borne by the participants. Participants must organize their accommodation for extension periods themselves and must make sure have sufficient health insurance coverage.

Extensions beyond 5 days may be granted by DAAD **only upon prior application** and **only for official purposes** (e.g. professional visits to universities, organizations, institutions, companies). Such extensions must be applied for well in advance and approved by DAAD beforehand. They must be substantiated by official invitations, agreed work plans and schedules of visits by the respective host organisations. Plans for such extensions must be communicated well in advance – possibly already with the application for this SDG Alumni Project.

Travel dates

12	September 2023	Arrival in Witzenhausen
13 - 18	September 2023	Seminar in Witzenhausen
19	September 2023	Travel from Witzenhausen to Berlin
20 - 22	September 2023	Participation in the Tropentag in Berlin
23	September 2023	Departure from Berlin

Attendance is compulsory from the first day of the seminar in Witzenhausen to the last day of the conference Tropentag in Berlin.

Application procedure – deadline

Applications (in English language) must include the following documents in **one single pdf file**:

- a **filled application form**: The form is available on www.ditsl.org
- a **short CV** with relevant documentation of Alumni status
- an **abstract (max. 1 page) on the subject of** “Strategies of ecological intensification for the sustainable transformation of agri-food systems” (font type “Arial” 11pt, 1.5 line spacing)
- a **short description of applicants’ present duties / position and of professional goals**, indicating envisaged field of activities and duty level
- an **overview** on seminars, workshops or conferences visited in Germany after completion of studies in Germany.

Applicants should emphasize their motivation and professional / personal benefit of participation in the application form and illustrate how they plan to apply and disseminate the gained knowledge.

The PDF-file should be named ‘Last name_First name_country’ (e.g. Siegmeier_Anne_Germany) and must be sent via email to: tropentag@ditsl.org latest by **16 April 2023.**

Please note: Completeness of personal data in the online application form will affect eligibility.

Applicants will be notified upon review by the selection committee and DAAD by beginning of May 2023. **For further questions**, please contact Anne Siegmeier (a.siegmeier@ditsl.org).

Witzenhausen, February 2023

With financial support from the

