

ANNOUNCEMENT / CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

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

International Germany Alumni Seminar 2025:

**The potential of organic farming for a sustainable and just transformation of
agricultural and food systems**

03 - 09 February 2025 in Witzenhausen, Germany

followed by the participation in

**the SDG Alumni Project in the framework of BIOFACH 2025
the world's leading trade fair for organic food**

10 – 15 February 2025 in Nuremberg, Germany

Seminar aims

Smallholder agriculture is still the backbone of food security in most countries around the globe. Adapting to global change (climate change, demographics, globalization) requires major transformation efforts, particularly from smallholder agriculture. Ecologically sustainable land management in line with organic and agroecology principles with closed nutrient cycles and efficient use of water and energy, as well as short value chains adapted to regional conditions, are important building blocks for a sustainable transformation of agricultural and food systems worldwide. This SDG Alumni Project sheds light on ways of effectively linking smallholder farms to short, regional, sustainable and gender-inclusive value chains and their contribution to food security and sovereignty in developing countries. Strengthening local value chains can enable a diverse and cost-effective food supply and, employment and income prospects in rural areas and thus contribute to achieving UN development goals (SDGs). The exchange of knowledge and experience in these thematic fields gives the alumni the opportunity to recognize the diverse potentials of those production systems and to evaluate them comparatively.

The seminar will promote exchange between the participants in the field of organic and agro-ecological farming practices and their value chains, facilitate international scientific cooperation and qualify the participants in the field of quality management along organic agricultural-value chains. It will foster exchange of experiences, establishment of international networks between the participants, scientific discourse on organic agricultural-value chains and international academic cooperation in this field. It will stimulate and promote ideas for joint research, strategy development and knowledge transfer.

Seminar and trade fair participation are offered by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in the framework of the program SDG Alumni Projects: Knowledge and Practice for Development for Germany Alumni from the Global South (www.daad.de/sdg-alumni-projects). This seminar 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). 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 BIOFACH 2025 (www.biofach.de) in Nuremberg, the world's leading trade fair for organic food, which showcased products and services of over 2,500 exhibitors from 94 countries in 2024. As visiting professional you can meet organic producers from the international organic market and source information on recent developments in the organic sector. Successful networking is guaranteed thanks to the multiple experts present and the congress accompanying the BIOFACH, the most important international networking event of the organic food community of the year.

Seminar topics & tentative program

- Principles of agroecology and organic agriculture
- Productive and resilient agricultural systems: Soil fertility, agrobiodiversity, functional biodiversity, water cycles
- Agricultural value chains in developing countries – reduction of losses (volume / quality / value) and opportunities for additional value creation
- International and national standards for organic products and strategies for export market access
- Quality of agricultural products – quality management systems, quality assessment and food safety standards
- Marketing of agricultural products – regional and international value chains
- Business plan development

The program in Witzenhausen will include presentations by the alumni, papers and case studies by invited experts, demonstrations, field trials, sessions, workshops, group work activities, group discussions, 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 programme: seminar, trade fair, social events.

Eligibility criteria

This SDG Alumni Project targets Alumni of German universities / research institutions

- who are citizens of countries listed on the OECD DAC list (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>)
- who carried out research or studied in Germany for at least 3 months OR
- which are funded within the framework of
 - the DAAD In-Country/In-Region Scholarship Programme,
 - the Centers of African Excellence or
 - the SDG Graduate Schools
- who are currently living and working in their home countries / in the Global South.

Applicants should have

- (1) a **proven background in academic fields relevant to the topics** of agriculture and quality management of agricultural value chains
- (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
- (3) the **potential to serve as 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:

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 (formerly: Alumni Special Projects).

Cost coverage

- International return ticket to Frankfurt and from Frankfurt lowest possible economy class airfare – regional ceiling prices: Latin-America 1.000€, Sub-Sahara Africa 800€, Middle East and North Africa 700€, South-East Asia 900€, Asia other countries 800€)
- Train tickets (2nd class): Airport to Witzenhausen – preferably Rail & Fly
- Travel health insurance (max. 30 Euro)
- Visa costs
- Accommodation and partial living expenses (half-board) during the seminar stay in Witzenhausen
- Transport on excursions
- Transport from Witzenhausen to Nuremberg
- Accommodation and partial living expenses during the stay in Nuremberg
- Entrance fees at the trade fair in Nuremberg
- Transport from the hotel in Nuremberg to the departure airport

Please note: Any other than the above costs have to be covered by yourself. This includes particularly:

- Transport between your place of residence and “your” airport
- Travel costs associated with your visa application in your country of residence
- Personal living expenses exceeding the provisions by the program (half-board) in Witzenhausen and Nuremberg
- Local transport in Germany for private errands not associated with the seminar

Extensions of stays before the seminar / after the BIOFACH in Nuremberg 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 programme of activities. These extensions must be approved by DAAD before you start your travel. Decisions by DAAD are made individually based upon your justification, your programme etc.

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

Travel dates:

3	February 2025	Arrival in Witzenhausen
4 - 9	February 2025	Seminar in Witzenhausen
10	February 2025	Travel from Witzenhausen to Nuremberg
11 - 14	February 2025	Participation in the trade fair BIOFACH in Nuremberg
15	February 2025	Departure from Nuremberg

It is essential that you participate from the first day of the seminar in Witzenhausen to the last day of the trade fair BIOFACH in Nuremberg.

Application procedure

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

- a filled-out application form: The form is available on www.ditsl.org
- a short CV with relevant documentation of alumni status
- an **abstract on the subject of** “The potential of organic farming (alternatively of agroecological farming practices) for a sustainable and just transformation of agricultural and food systems” (abstracts must not exceed one page; please use font type “Arial”, font size 11, 1.5 line spacing)
- a **motivation letter** emphasizing your motivation and personal / professional benefit of your participation. Please illustrate how you are planning to imply the gained knowledge and what possible stakeholders for collaboration you may identify for your professional career.
- a **short description of your present duties / position and your personal professional goals**, indicating your envisaged field of activities and duty level
- an **overview** on seminars, workshops or conferences visited in Germany after finishing your studies in Germany

The PDF-document should be named ‘Last name_First name_country’ (e.g. Anne_Siegmeier_Germany).

Please send your application, as one single pdf file, latest by **18 August 2024 (11:59 pm CET)** via email to:

organic@ditsl.org

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 by mid-September 2024.

For further questions

please contact Anne Siegmeier (a.siegmeier@ditsl.org).

Witzenhausen, July 2024



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