



## Who can apply?

BIGS-DR aims to attract scientists from all over the world with outstanding master's or equivalent degrees in economics, social sciences, sociology, political science, economics, agricultural and resource economics, agronomy, biology, ecology, forestry, mathematics or earth sciences. Candidates preferably have work experience in national or international research institutions, governments, or the private sector. Interest in interdisciplinary research is a prerequisite.



## Application deadlines



The deadline for the DAAD scholarship via BIGS-DR is **August 31st annually** for the following academic year. The admissions period for the next intake usually begins in early spring.

For independent and external scholarship applicants, completed application documents may be submitted **at any time during the open admissions period**. The admissions period lasts from March to September annually. Please note that these funding institutions often have their own deadlines, so be sure to inform BIGS-DR accordingly by including any deadlines in your motivation letter.

The BIGS-DR courses start **on October 1st annually**.

[Apply now!](#)

## Selection criteria

### Academic qualification

An excellent master's or equivalent degree (GPA higher than 3.0 in the American system, or a grade higher than 2.0 in the German system or equivalent).

Applicants who have finished a one year master's degree are also eligible under the condition that they have written a master's thesis.

### Innovative research ideas

Your application must contain a Graduate Research Statement. The statement should describe a development problem you consider interesting and important. Include your main research questions and the proposed methods linked to them and have literature references. The statement should be a maximum of four pages. Your Graduate Research Statement may relate to ZEF's research areas in a broad sense or may address a topic in another development research area. The selection committee will assess all research statements on the basis of originality, analytical rigor, and relevance.

### Language proficiency

BIGS-DR is conducted in English. We therefore require the following English language skills:

- IELTS certificate (band 6)
- TOEFL (minimum score: 550 paper based, 213 computer-based, 80 internet-based)
- Other English language certificate from a language institution
- University waiver that indicates the language of instruction was in English.

**Your last academic degree should have been obtained less than six years prior to application.** This guarantees the competitiveness of your application.

## Special DAAD requirements

Only applicants from developing countries and emerging economies according to the [DAC list](#) are eligible for the scholarship we offer in cooperation with the [DAAD EPOS program](#). To be eligible, you must have at least two years of relevant professional experience.

*Special prerequisites and requirements for DAAD scholarship applicants from China:*

*Applications from China must be submitted via the German Embassy in the country where you reside, where the academic certificates have to be verified. Find the link to the German Embassy in [Beijing](#).*



## External participants

External doctoral students can participate in one or more of the doctoral courses. As an external participant, you will have to organize your own funds ([cost of living](#), [research expenses](#), etc.). You can apply by submitting the following documents in one PDF file:

- A letter of application
- A BIGS-DR [application form](#)
- A CV
- Copies of your past academic certificates
- A certified registration as a PhD student at a university
- A letter of recommendation from your supervisor

You may submit your completed application to [docp.zef\(at\)uni-bonn.de](mailto:docp.zef(at)uni-bonn.de) at least two months prior to the start of the course.



## Reapplication

Our program receives hundreds of very competitive applications every admission season and we are not always able to guarantee a spot for each qualified applicant. Reapplying to BIGS-DR is possible with a few considerations to keep in mind:

- Rewrite your motivation letter
- Rewrite your Graduate Research Statement (GRS)
- Update your CV with any relevant details
- Recommendation letters do not need to be resubmitted unless you did not submit them last year or if you have new referees

You may reuse portions of your previous application; however, you will need to merge all the documents together once again with your new registration number and updated documents. Additionally, please remember to [register online](#) to receive a new registration ID for the current admission period.

## Is my application complete?

**We confirm the reception of all application documents. If you have not heard from us within two weeks, please inform us immediately. We are not responsible for any application lost due to technical problems.**

Please contact the doctoral program management team in case you have any questions not answered on this page: [docp.zef\(at\)uni-bonn.de](mailto:docp.zef(at)uni-bonn.de)

## Research & Capacity Development

ZEF themes

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## Doctoral Program

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[Application guide](#)  
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[Selection and admission](#)  
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Center for Development Research (ZEF) - Genscherallee 3 - D-53113 Bonn - Germany

[Phone and Fax numbers](#) - Email: [presse.zef@uni-bonn.de](mailto:presse.zef@uni-bonn.de) - [Imprint](#) - [Privacy Policy](#) - [How to find us](#) - [Sitemap](#)

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