

Your gateway to a career in  
international cooperation for  
development and sustainability





## Background

To ensure our shared planetary future, we must transform social, political, and economic systems to meet the needs of present and future generations. Our societies' complex interconnections and interdependencies necessitate developing joint and collective sustainable solutions.

In response to global challenges, the field of international cooperation has undergone significant transformation in recent years. Previously, development policy focused mainly on knowledge transfer and financial aid. Today, international experts work professionally and collaboratively to tackle global challenges and support partners in designing and implementing their own problem-solving strategies.

New challenges are continuously emerging, and shifts in global power dynamics and growing criticism of the sector for maintaining post-colonial power structures come on top. Amidst changing conditions in various world regions and increased systemic competition, partnership-based cooperation has become more crucial than ever.

Our postgraduate programme is designed to prepare you for this evolving professional landscape. Join us to gain the skills and knowledge needed to drive meaningful change and create sustainable solutions for our world's most pressing issues.



## What is the Postgraduate Programme for Sustainability Cooperation?

In our Postgraduate Programme for Sustainability Cooperation (PGP), participants learn cooperation competencies for transnational and international cooperation to jointly shape sustainable futures.

The PGP enhances competencies of master's graduates aspiring a career in international cooperation for development and sustainability. Each year, we select 18 people for our 9-month programme.

What we offer:

- **Comprehensive Perspective:** Gain a 360-degree perspective on global cooperation.
- **Unique Learning Environment:** Work in an environment that emphasizes intensive teamwork, a high degree of participant involvement, and collaboration with our international partners. Conduct research in a team under the guidance of experienced IDOS researchers on current questions and real-world challenges in international cooperation.
- **From Research to Policy:** Learn from our experience at IDOS on how to provide theory-led and empirically based policy advice to political decision-making.
- **Career Orientation:** Benefit from individualised coaching, career trainings, and our personal contacts to main actors in the field of international cooperation.
- **International Networks:** Establish connections with future decision-maker from emerging global powers (MGG) and from African countries (Shaping Futures). We consider fostering mutual exchange within trust-based networks as fundamental for international cooperation.
- **Valuable Alumni Network:** Build personal networks with our alumni working in different professions in the field of international cooperation.

*"IDOS provides the ideal preparation for a professional career in international cooperation. The combination of academic knowledge, practical relevance and global networking with organisations has opened numerous doors for me over the years."*

**Achim Steiner (participant 21st PGP)**

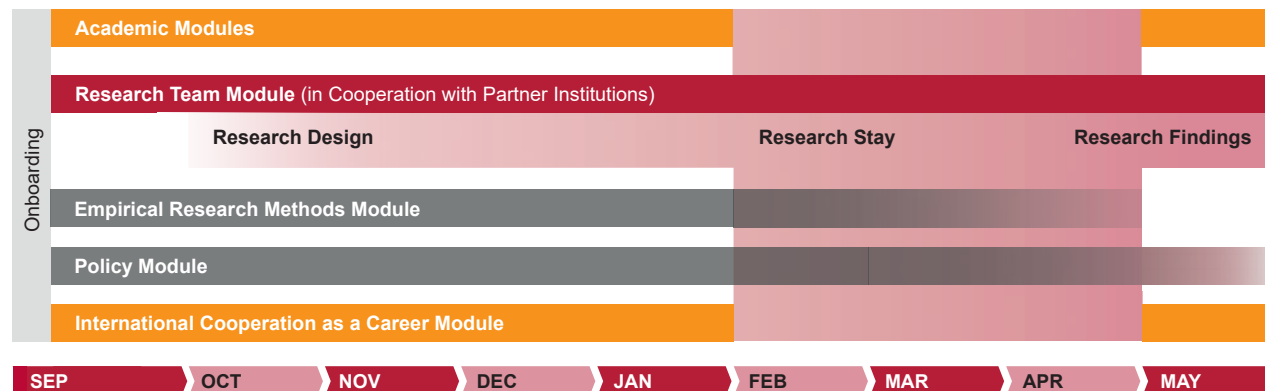
Chair of the Hamburg Sustainability Conference  
Former UNDP Administrator





## Schedule of the 62<sup>nd</sup> PGP 2026/27

The programme comprises the following modules:



## 62<sup>nd</sup> Postgraduate Programme

Our 62<sup>nd</sup> PGP starts on 1 September and runs for a period of nine months. The PGP takes place in Bonn. It includes a three months research stay abroad.

The research team is at the heart of our programme. This core component involves preparing and implementing an empirical research project that offers policy advice, all in close collaboration with partner institutions. To equip you with the necessary methodological skills, we additionally provide a comprehensive module on empirical research methods.

You will also participate in ten intensive three-day academic modules, gaining insights into fundamental topics in international cooperation and engaging with current issues related to development and sustainability. Our policy module includes a simulation game, where you will experience government negotiations. Moreover, you will learn how to provide policy advice based on your own empirical research.

The module on international cooperation as a career provides specific advice on possible career paths and individual competencies for the professional field. Through personal contacts to key actors in international cooperation, the Postgraduate Programme is a gateway to a career in this sector.



*"Taking part in the Postgraduate Programme for Sustainability Cooperation, I did not only gain more theoretical understanding of development cooperation but learned how to integrate my legal background into policy-oriented practice. During the field research in Germany and Indonesia, I experienced profound personal and professional growth, working hands-on with partner organisations, local communities and my team colleagues, who ultimately became like family."*

**Neele Hoffmann (participant 60th PGP)**  
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)



## Who is the programme for?

- Good to very good Master's degree in economics, social sciences (e.g. political science/international relations, sociology, development studies, social anthropology, regional sciences, social science-oriented sustainability research) or 2nd state examination in law or 1st state examination teaching degree.
- Qualifying degree must have been completed within the 5 years preceeding the start of the course.
- English language skills (C1); proficiency in German (C1) is desired; good knowledge of another widely used language (preferably a UN language or Portuguese) is an asset.
- German or EU citizenship (including Schengen area), or German residence permit
- Stays in or transnational life connections to Africa, Asia and Latin America are an asset (e.g. internships, voluntary services, work or study visits).
- Personal motivation to work in global cooperation for sustainable development.

Even if, at first glance, your CV does not seem to point straight to the programme at IDOS, we encourage you to apply. We know that life experiences are diverse. Perhaps internships or stays abroad were not possible or your studies were prolonged due to COVID-19, finances or health issues. Diversity of experience enriches our professional field.

The application period for the programme starting on September 1st is annually between December and March. Application is possible with a transcript of records. The grade for the Master's degree can be submitted by August 31. We look forward to receiving your application!



*„The PGP was a learning experience on many levels: the exchange with IDOS scholars, PGP peers, and international partner organizations helped me learn about and reflect on development cooperation in many ways. Beyond that, joining the PGP network, with people working in different areas of development cooperation, helped me understand and navigate the professional field better, which has clearly shaped my career path.“*

**Anna Holeck (participant 60th PGP)**

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

## Scholarship

The programme is free of charge. All participants receive a scholarship of € 1,500 per month. IDOS covers additional costs for the research stays.



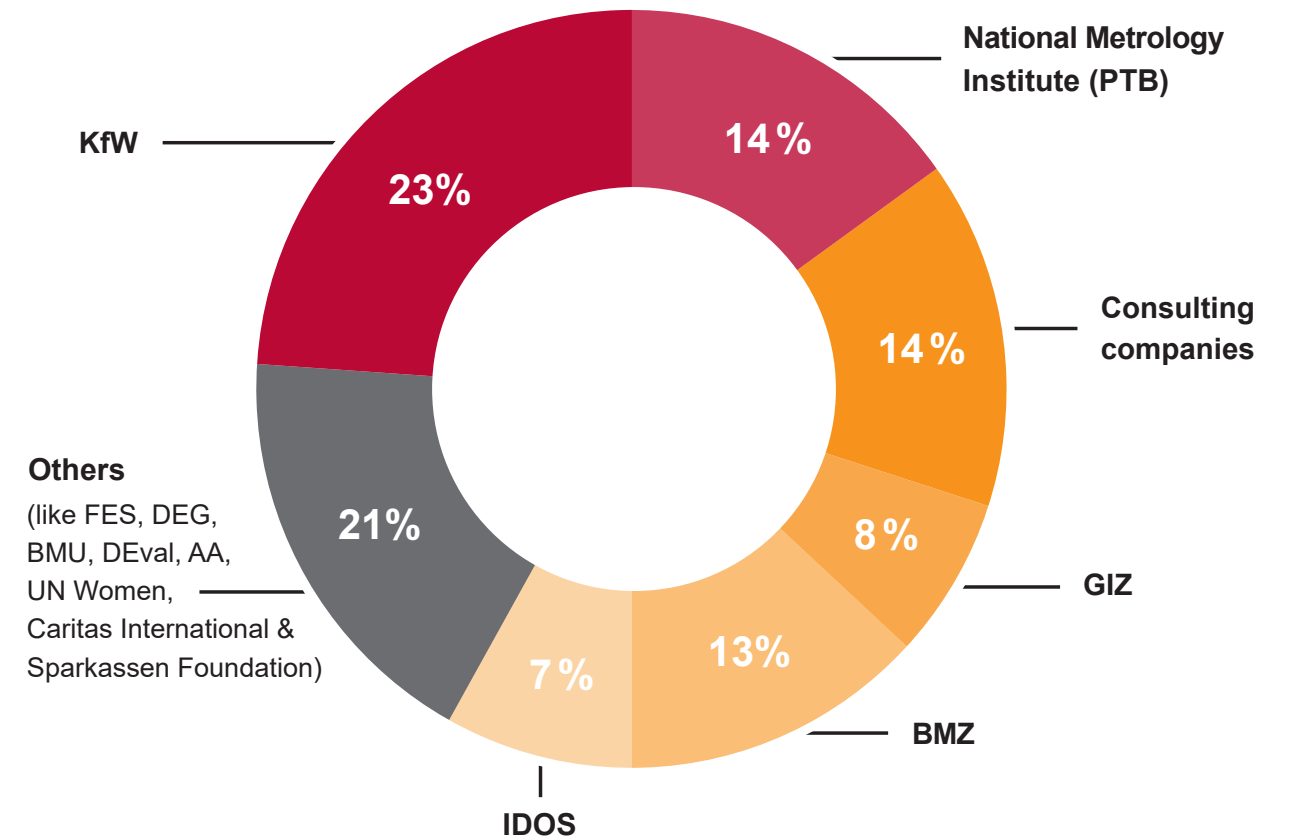
## Benefits for Participants – through your participation, you ...

- ideally prepare for a professional career in international cooperation;
- strengthen your personal and professional competencies;
- expand your knowledge on sustainable global development;
- reflect your positionality and privileges in a world shaped inequalities and postcolonial power structures;
- engage with real-life sustainability challenges;
- gain insights into the interface of research, policy advice and practice;
- become part of our valuable networks.

... OUR RESEARCH TEAMS HAVE COLLABORATED WITH  
PARTNER INSTITUTIONS WORLDWIDE, INCLUDING IN...



... OUR GRADUATES FROM THE 50TH-60TH PGP  
FOUND THEIR CAREER STARTS HERE:





## Become part of our network

After the successful participation in the PGP, you are part of our IDOS alumni network, consisting of around 1,000 former participants. Our alumni work in a wide variety of international cooperation institutions. Many alumni are also actively involved in our programme, for example by contributing to the programme as mentors or providing orientation on career paths in their institutions.



## How to apply?

The application period for the PGP each year is between December and March; applications are possible through our portal within this period. After a careful internal pre-selection, 48 candidates are given the opportunity to personally present themselves as part of the main digital selection process. An expert committee composed of researchers and practitioners decides on admission to the programme, taking particular account of the applicants' professional qualification, social competences, including the ability to work in a team, and motivation for the professional field.

### Application period for the 62<sup>nd</sup> PGP:

<b>Application period:</b>	January 2026 – March 2026
<b>Internal preselection:</b>	May 2026
<b>Main selection:</b>	June 2026
<b>Start of 61st PGP:</b>	1 September 2026

*„Through the Postgraduate Programme, I gained a comprehensive overview of potential employers and career paths in the field of international cooperation in Germany, which enabled me to secure an exciting position in the sector despite the current crisis. Gaining hands-on experience at the intersection of academia and policy-making was essential in helping me determine my long-term career goals. It was the most valuable academic and professional experience I have had so far in Germany.”*

**Ana Carolina De Paula Romano (participant 60th PGP)**

European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI)



# Contact



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- Instagram page by PGP participants: [pgp\\_idos](#)