



Programme Information

International Climate Protection Fellowship

for postdocs

With the International Climate Protection Fellowships for postdocs, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation enables researchers to implement long-term research proposals (12-24 months) in the field of climate protection or climate-related resource conservation in Germany.

Up to five International Climate Protection Fellowships are granted annually to postdocs, funded under the International Climate Initiative (IKI)¹. The fellowships target postdocs from non-European transition and developing countries (see [list of countries](#)). Candidates draw up their own research proposal and implement this in collaboration with a host in Germany. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation runs the programme in liaison with the Centre for International Postgraduate Studies in Environmental Management (CIPSEM) at TU Dresden, the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU), the Renewables Academy AG (RENAC), the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Federation of German Industry (BDI). The call for proposals is subject to the allocation of corresponding funds to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

Programme objectives:

The global challenge posed by climate change can only be met by cross-border international collaborations. By enabling future decision-makers and multipliers to share knowledge, methods, and techniques with specialist colleagues in Germany, this programme promotes this objective. Issues relating to practical applicability in the fellows' own countries are also taken into account. In the spirit of the Agenda 2030 and the related Sustainable Development Goals, the programme would like to contribute to achieving these goals by fostering postdocs with their undertakings and projects to combat climate change, to develop and implement adaptation strategies, to preserve ecosystems and biodiversity as well as fostering the sustainable use of the oceans and seas. Furthermore, it addresses sustainability topics relating to natural resources, resource-efficient consumption, and urban development. The programme also promotes the development of long-term contacts and collaboration with colleagues in Germany.

Target group:

The programme is aimed at postdocs doing research in **the field of climate protection or climate-related resource conservation** in their country of origin; they should have **leadership skills**, which must be proven by references and convincingly demonstrated in the application.

Postdocs from all disciplines who have been engaged in issues relating to climate change may apply.

¹The International Climate Initiative (IKI) became the responsibility of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) in 2022. The IKI programme cooperates with its founding ministry, the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), as well as the Federal Foreign Office.

Fellowship specifications:

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation awards a monthly **fellowship amount of 2,700 EUR**, plus a **mobility allowance** and a **subsidy towards the cost of medical and liability insurance**. A **lump sum for travel expenses** and an **initial subsidy** are also paid. Before the start of the fellowship, the Humboldt Foundation provides an **intensive German language course in Germany** lasting one or two months (including for accompanying partners).

In addition, a family allowance for accompanying partners and/or children under 18 will be granted if they are staying in Germany for at least three months. The following benefits may also be applied for:

- a subsidy towards the cost of medical and liability insurance for an accompanying partner and/or children under the age of 18;
- a flat-rate allowance for single parents with accompanying children;
- an extension of the fellowship for research fellows accompanied by children or for a maternity period.

There are further support options for research fellows with **disabilities or chronic illnesses**.

The second sponsorship year can be divided up into two further **blocks** lasting at least three months each.

Research stays outside Germany are possible under certain conditions, provided that these are required for carrying out the research (up to 25% of the planned total sponsorship period and only outside the months in which compulsory events are planned).

Hosts in Germany can apply for an **allowance for research costs** to the value of 800 EUR per month (natural sciences, life sciences and engineering) or 500 EUR (humanities and social sciences).

Upon successful completion of the stay in Germany, various forms of **alumni sponsorship** can be granted to alumni who are still actively involved in research, particularly for promoting contact with collaborative partners in Germany.

Common **programme activities** during the first twelve months of the fellowship period allow fellows to gain an overview of specialist topics and important players in the fields of climate protection and climate-related resource conservation. Participation is obligatory. The following mandatory timetable is designed to facilitate networking amongst the fellows:

January, February 2026: intensive German language course in Bonn (optional)

March 2026: three-week introductory seminar at several locations in Germany

April 2026 – February 2027: work on research-based projects

June 2026: Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's Annual Meeting, including reception held by the President of the Federal Republic of Germany in Berlin (optional)

Autumn 2026: two-week study tour through Germany

January/February 2027: closing seminar and reception in Berlin

Afterwards: continuation of the research proposal for the period applied for;
individual trainings and participation in programme events of the
Foundation (optional)

For details on the above-mentioned benefits and further information on the fellowship and the research stay in Germany, please refer to the [Guidelines and Information for International Climate Protection Fellows](#).

The Humboldt Foundation assumes that candidates will abide the [Rules of Good Scientific Practice](#) and the legally binding principles of scientific ethics during the application and sponsorship periods.

Application requirements:

- **First university degree** (Bachelor's or equivalent), completed less than twelve years previously, counting back from the application deadline (1 February of each year);
- **Leadership skills** demonstrated by initial experience in leadership positions and/or appropriate references;
- Completion of **doctorate or comparable academic degree** (Ph.D., C.Sc. or equivalent) in the field of climate protection or climate-related resource conservation: either less than four years prior to the application deadline or by 31 August of the selection year;
- **Scientific publications** in peer-reviewed journals according to international standards;
- Conception of a **research-based project in the field of climate protection or climate-related resource conservation, that must be agreed in advance with the host**;
- **A detailed statement by a host in Germany, including a mentoring agreement**;
- **Letter of recommendation** from the doctoral supervisor and one other person preferably not working at the applicant's own institute who can give substantiated comments on the applicant's subject-specific qualification and leadership skills;
- **Citizenship of a programme country** (see [list of countries](#)) which is also the applicant's habitual residence and place of work;
- **Very good knowledge of English and/or German**, documented by appropriate language certificates.

Eligible applicants must have lived and worked in an eligible country (see [list of countries](#)) for at least twelve months during the last 18 months prior to the application deadline. All stays outside the eligible countries (including Germany) are taken into account, regardless of their duration and reason. Any person who, regardless of their country of residence, has supported themselves for more than six out of the last 18 months with financing from a German institution or who has studied or worked on a doctorate at an institution in Germany is not eligible to apply.

Those who have already received sponsorship from the Humboldt Foundation are not entitled to apply to this programme but are encouraged to use the appropriate alumni sponsorship programmes.

Those who were sponsored in the context of the International Climate Protection Fellowships are excluded from applying for other fellowships offered by the Humboldt Foundation.

Selection criteria:

- **Academic and professional career to date** (mobility, determination, expertise, academic success);
- Assessment of the **scientific qualification** (quality of submitted key publications);
- **Leadership skills** (initial experience in leadership positions and/or appropriate references);
- **Quality, originality and relevance of the research proposal** (innovative idea, convincing selection of methods, clear focus and feasibility, relevance to climate protection or climate-related resource conservation, viability of the host institution chosen, communication strategy);
- **Future potential** (further development in the field of climate protection or climate-relevant resource conservation in academia and industry, career prospects).

An individual's personal and educational background – including and especially with regard to equal opportunities and accessibility – are also taken into account in the selection procedure.

Application and selection procedure:

Applications can only be submitted online. The completed application form, including the necessary additional documents, must be submitted no later than **1 February of each year**.

Visit the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's website for further [information on the online application process and all necessary documents](#) as well as access to the online application system. A confirmation of receipt will be issued immediately after the application has been submitted to the Humboldt Foundation.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their documents are complete. Seriously incomplete applications will not be included in the selection procedure in some circumstances.

The intended host in Germany must upload their confidential statement with the signed mentoring agreement and data privacy statement in a secure area of the application. The applicant will send the link to access the application form via e-mail to the designated persons.

After reviewing the applications, an independent selection committee will decide, by the end of June each year, which candidates will be invited to participate virtually in a **selection meeting** lasting several days. The committee is composed of international leaders from academia and industry working in the relevant fields. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation usually also obtains independent peer reviews. The selection meeting will take place in September and applicants will present their proposal to the selection committee and the other applicants as well as attending individual interviews held by the selection committee. Further information on the selection procedure can be found in the [FAQs](#) on the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's website.