

The Right Livelihood College (RLC) at the Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany, offers a DAAD-funded PhD research scholarship on:

**Protected and Conserved Area management and planning, nature  
conservation and local participation**

**Project background**

The Right Livelihood College (RLC) is a transdisciplinary global research and education initiative of universities and the Right Livelihood Foundation awarding the "Alternative Nobel Prize" ([www.rightlivelihood.org](http://www.rightlivelihood.org)). Supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), one of the nine RLC Campuses worldwide is based at the Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany.

In cooperation with the Succow Foundation and Prof. Michael Succow who was awarded the "Alternative Nobel Prize" in 1997, we offer a 3.5-year PhD scholarship for candidates from a country in Central Asia, the Caucasus or Mongolia, to carry out an empirical applied PhD research project related to the topic "Protected and Conserved Area management, nature conservation and local participation".

**Topic background**

An increasing number of new concepts of Protected and Conserved Areas have been established worldwide to promote and demonstrate a synergetic relationship between humans and the biosphere and to comply with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Conserving landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation, and at the same time, fostering economic and human development which is integrated and socio-culturally sustainable for people living in and around Protected and Conserved Areas, including OECM, is, however, challenging. Given that especially the livelihoods of the rural poor depend on land and natural resources, many policies and strategies have been designed to improve local livelihoods in and around Protected and Conserved Areas.

The call for this PhD research project is aimed at critically addressing some of these concerns and knowledge gaps by empirically assessing questions of Protected and Conserved Area management and planning, nature conservation and local participation in a case study in a selected country in Central Asia, the Caucasus or Mongolia.

Applicants have to develop an individual PhD research proposal (max. 5 pages) narrowing down a concept for a thesis, suggesting a case study and outlining a suitable and feasible research methodology. The proposal has to be submitted together with the application.

### **The PhD scholarship call**

Qualified applicants should be citizens of a country in Central Asia, the Caucasus or Mongolia, and currently reside there. They should hold an excellent master's or equivalent degree in social sciences, environmental sciences, agricultural and natural sciences, humanities, geography, development studies, or related disciplines from recognized institutions of higher education. Practical working experience and proficiency in empirical research methods is an asset. Fluency in English is mandatory.

The scholarship is funded by the DAAD. It covers a scholarship for a two months language course in Germany from August 1, 2026, and a subsequent 40 months of a Junior Researcher position at ZEF, University of Bonn, starting from October 1, 2026, and respective costs for travel and empirical research. In the first year, the candidate will participate in the ZEF Doctoral Studies Program in Bonn.

The application should consist of:

- ✓ Hand signed checklist  
[epos\\_checklist.pdf \(daad.de\)](#)
- ✓ DAAD application form:  
[daad\\_epos\\_application\\_form.docx](#)
- ✓ Letter of motivation
- ✓ CV in EUROPASS format (including current date) – see template under:  
<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae>
- ✓ Copies of Academic Degrees (certified English translation if necessary)
- ✓ Copies of Academic Transcripts, incl. grading-scale (certified English translation if necessary)
- ✓ Letter of recommendation from your current employer (including current date); the letter must have an official letterhead, a signature and a stamp
- ✓ Certificate(s) of Employment from the employer(s) (including current date) that show proof of a minimum of two years of relevant working experience; the letter(s) must have an official letterhead, a signature and a stamp
- ✓ Recommendation letter from your university
- ✓ Short PhD research proposal narrowing the research scope (max. 5 pages)

All documents are to be submitted in English. Closing date for applications is April 5, 2026. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Please send your applications via e-mail to:

Dr. Till Stellmacher: [t.stellmacher@uni-bonn.de](mailto:t.stellmacher@uni-bonn.de)

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