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“Biophysical and Socio-economic Frame Conditions
for the Sustainable Management
of Natural Resources”

Enhancing Networking and Partnerships for Biodiversity

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Abstract

Capacity building in developing countries in the field of sustainable management of natural resources is an important and significant issue in development policy. Training in higher education and networking among research institutions, enterprises, scientists and students worldwide cannot be valued high enough in achieving the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The DAAD already offers a large number of programs to increase scientific experiences, to exchange knowledge and to support and transfer information and technology. The DAAD promotes the worldwide co-operation and exchange between institutions of higher education as well as between these institutions and politics and economy, particularly the co-operation with developing countries. In this context, the topics of partnerships between higher education institutions and professional alumni networks are gaining a key position.

A cooperation between German institutions of higher education and one or several higher education institutions in developing countries can be a driver for enhancing the competences of the future decision makers and consultants in sustainable biodiversity management. Good experiences have been made with means of structural development at the foreign higher education institutions, like curriculum or module development as well as through initiating international study programmes, and the mutual recognition of academic degrees.

Such kind of partnerships often lead to the establishment of professional networks. Interdisciplinary or disciplinary networks enable alumni, German and foreign universities and representatives of the governments and businesses to interact and collaborate. Knowledge can be spread, up-to-date information provided and solutions to environmental, ethic, economic and geopolitical problems can be reconciled. Within the alumni program, designed for postgraduate continuous training of the DAAD scholars, summer schools, expert-conventions and regional workshops are organized.

The networks GAfooN (German Alumni Food Network) and GAWN (German Alumni Water Network) serve as examples for fruitful capacity building in the fields of sustainable resource management through networking. Similar networks for Biodiversity are in their initial stages at several universities and for several regions.

DAAD is supporting these kind of networks and partnerships for biodiversity through a new package of funding measures, which were launched for the first time in 2009. Measures for biodiversity are funded by the Federal Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ). Particularly of interest are academic co-operations, to anchor or improve the subject biodiversity in research and teaching, services and management, and/or stimulate and intensify the research transfer and scientific dialogue in higher education institutions with the goal to reach a sustainable effect in the developing countries (see www.daad.de/entwicklung/index.en.html).

Keywords: Alumni-networks, co-operation, higher education, partnership, scientific exchange, funding measures