

A large, detailed globe is the central focus, covered in a black grid pattern. It is situated in a modern museum or gallery space with high ceilings and industrial-style architecture. In the background, there are glass railings and people walking on upper levels. The globe shows a map of the world with a focus on the Americas.

DAAD STRATEGY 2025

daad.de

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THE DAAD WORLDWIDE



DAAD STRATEGY **2025**

3	Preface
6	The DAAD at a Glance
8	Change by Exchange – “Strategy 2025” in Brief
10	Our Goals
12	Our Strengths
14	Challenges and Opportunities
20	What We Want to Achieve by 2025



› Prof Dr Joybrato Mukherjee

President of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

DEAR READERS,

Knowledge knows no boundaries, and internationality is an integral part of science and academia. In terms of scope and intensity, however, the internationalisation of higher education systems has reached an entirely new level. It reflects the global interconnection of all areas of life and the relativisation of space and time through digital transformation. International research has always been embedded in and influenced by a global political context. These general conditions have undergone enormous transformation in recent years. At the same time, the global landscape of academia, research and innovation has been shaped by dynamic developments and shifting influence around the world.

Against this backdrop, foreign academic policy has become increasingly important. One major challenge is to define and represent the interests of German higher education and research, while also considering the interests of our partner countries

and organisations. Engaging in international discourse, we shall continue to defend the values, to which the German academic system owes its strength: working in partnership, promoting academic freedom and contributing to finding common solutions to the world's most pressing problems. This can only be achieved when science, politics and civil society work hand-in-hand.

With these aims in mind, the DAAD has now positioned itself to address the challenges of the coming decade. Our “Strategy 2025” takes into account that correlations between our core business – promoting academic and scientific exchange – and the social and political conditions of internationalisation have become even more important to achieving our given tasks. This demands a clear statement regarding the goals and values, to which the DAAD is committed to upholding through its activities.

The “Strategy 2025” defines three overarching goals which shall shape the activities of the DAAD in the coming years:

1. By furthering international exchange, we aim to strengthen higher education and academic excellence, expand the perspectives of science, and tap individual potentials.
2. By means of internationalisation, we wish to do our part to benefit science, industry, and society.
3. With the “Strategy 2025” we recognise our obligation to assume global responsibility and contribute to the productive and peaceful development of our planet.

The DAAD is well prepared to carry out these tasks. There is a broad-based, historically rooted consensus in Germany that the tax revenues appropriated to finance our activities are well-invested resources. Thanks to this consensus and the resulting generous and reliable support provided by our political representatives, the work of the DAAD is made possible. The DAAD’s global network serves as the basis for developing funding policies which aim to achieve these goals and, at the same time, help higher education institutions, policymakers and partner organisations pursue their own international activities. The activities of the DAAD comprise a diverse array of funding programmes which provide varying types and levels of support. This enables the DAAD to strengthen global academic networking at both the individual and systemic level. In the field of international academic collaboration, the DAAD serves as a liaison between its members – universities and student bodies – and politics, industry and civil society.

One of the central challenges in the coming years will be to perform this intermediary, advisory role in a more consistent and visible manner. The process has already begun. For example, the DAAD is currently developing the “Competence Centre for International Academic Collaborations” which bundles the expertise of the DAAD in personalised form to initiate and carry out international projects. Or the political dialogue which the DAAD initiated as part of its funding programmes “Lehramt.International” and “HAW.International”. The DAAD is currently reorganising and institutionally anchoring its global network of offices so that it can perform its role as a regional hub of knowledge even more effectively in the future.

The DAAD will implement its goals in three strategic fields of activity. The first field, “Recognising and supporting potentials worldwide”, refers to individual funding measures. Essentially, these activities aim to provide outstanding applicants from Germany and abroad from all academic levels with excellent education and research opportunities, measures for developing their professional profile, and intercultural experience. The second field of activity “Strengthening the strategic academic network” is targeted at higher education institutions in Germany and abroad. To this end, we will work to build international partnerships and professional networks, and in so doing, contribute to solving global challenges. The third field of activity, “Providing expertise for international relations” will position the DAAD as a pioneer in current discourse regarding the internationalisation of higher education and research, as well as an influential agent in the political and societal decision-making process.

In all three fields of activity, German universities shall remain our primary contact partners, the goals and needs of whom we represent. In close partnership with our members, we will work to ensure that the German higher education system meets the following targets by 2025:

- secure Germany's standing among the top five target destinations for international students and doctoral candidates;
- increase the academic success of international students to the average rate of success of German students;
- increase the share of international academics at German universities to 15 percent;
- enable 50 percent of students at German universities to gain substantial international and intercultural experience through a study visit abroad, virtual international experience, or "internationalisation at home".

In 2025 the DAAD will celebrate its 100th anniversary. What started as a small student project has become a globally established institution. In 1925 our work consisted of supporting several students from Heidelberg with their studies in the United States. Today our scholarship holders and alumni provide the basis for our activities and the appreciation of the DAAD in Germany and abroad. Generation after generation, these young people are the ones who put life into our slogan "Change by Exchange". During their careers many of them promote international exchange and cooperation from positions of responsibility in teaching and research, higher education management, and many other occupational fields. These committed individuals comprise the foundation upon

which the DAAD has continued to grow – into an internationalisation agency of German universities, as a source of knowledge and expertise for shaping international relations, and as the leading authority on foreign academic policy in the German scientific system.

I wish you an enlightening read.

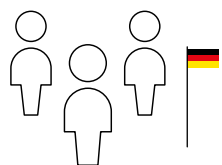
Sincerely,



Prof Dr Joybrato Mukherjee

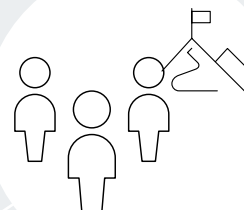
Bonn, July 2020

THE DAAD AT A GLANCE



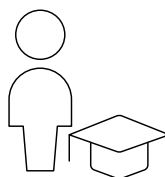
1,545,000

funded individuals from Germany
since 1950



1,060,000

funded individuals from abroad since
1950



145,659

funded students, graduates and
researchers in 2019



594 million

euros, the DAAD's annual budget



33,000

students enrolled in German
transnational education
programmes worldwide



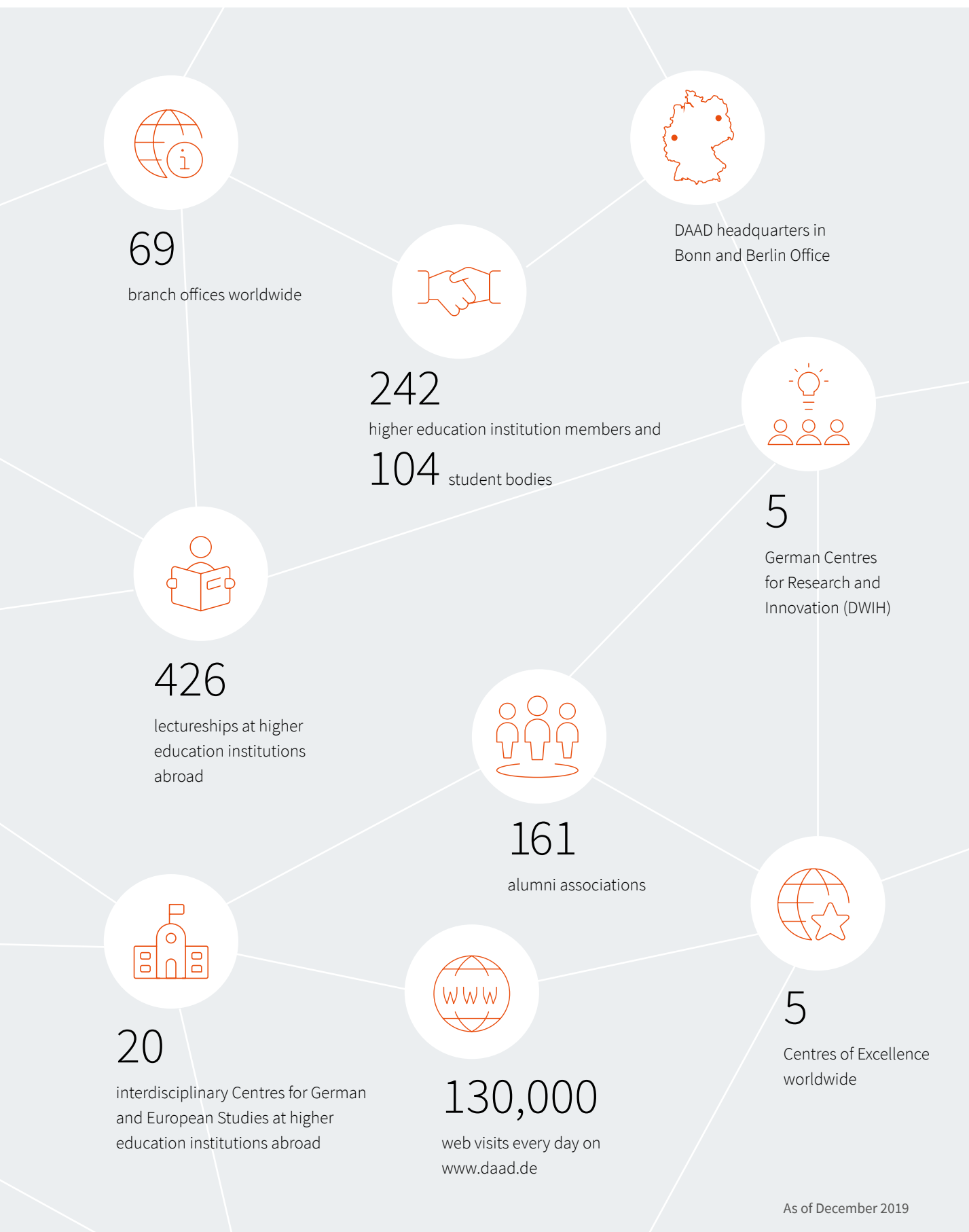
46,600

students from Germany granted
funding for an Erasmus stay
abroad



over 2 million

visitors reached at international
education fairs around the world





CHANGE BY EXCHANGE – “STRATEGY 2025” IN BRIEF

We are...

the world's largest funding organisation for international academic cooperation and the international exchange of students and researchers. Our members are German institutions of higher education and their student bodies. Our presence in more than 100 countries worldwide serves as the basis of our international expertise.

We support...

talented students and researchers in their pursuit to gain international academic training and experience, to develop their personality and generally increase scientific

knowledge. We help higher education institutions enhance their international profile and create the international campus. We support the expansion of sustainable international networks which promote open discourse and provide relevant contributions to solving global problems. We advise our partners in their efforts to expand and further develop collaborative ventures. We actively participate in international discourse on the role of tertiary education for society and play an influential role in shaping foreign academic policy and overcoming crises and conflicts.

Our goals

- Promote excellence and broaden perspectives of education and science through international exchange
- Enhance international collaboration for the benefit of science, industry and society
- Assume global responsibility and contribute to development and peace

Our strategic fields of activity

Recognising and supporting potentials

worldwide: Our scholarships are the primary instrument for promoting and professionally qualifying young academic talent. They offer outstanding German and international candidates at all academic levels access to excellent education and research opportunities, subject-oriented professional training, and intercultural experience. We continually develop our scholarships to be user-friendly, needs-oriented, and digitally supported, and in so doing, strengthen excellence, diversity, and academic exchange. We work to ensure that Germany secures a leading place among the world's host countries by improving the quality, custom fit, success, and career entry of international students, offering them personalised, transparent, and competence-based paths to Germany.

Strengthening the strategic academic

network: We support higher education institutions to strategically position themselves in a global context and actively participate in the international campus. We strengthen international partnerships and professional networking, and thereby contribute to solving global challenges. We offer programmes, advanced training courses and advisory services to help universities make the most of their potential. We continually develop our portfolio to adapt to the needs of higher education institutions and society. We make use of the opportunities that digitalisation offers in order to increase the efficacy and sustainability of global cooperation. In the future, we shall anchor digitalisation as an integral component in our funding programmes.

Providing expertise for international

relations: We possess an extraordinary wealth of knowledge of the higher education systems and science policy developments around the globe. We provide our knowledge and expertise to higher education institutions and partner organisations worldwide in the form of publications, databases, continuing education measures and advice services. We actively participate in discourse on the internationalisation of higher education and science. We strongly advocate German as a language of science and Europe as a living example of multilingualism. We promote scientific and academic freedom and all who rely on it, and we stand up for these principles in Germany and abroad through political dialogue and science diplomacy. We use data to benefit institutional learning and make it available to universities, policymakers, and organisations.



OUR GOALS

1 Promote excellence and broaden perspectives of education and science through international exchange

The aim of international exchange is to enable top-performing individuals to study, teach and research at locations where they can optimally develop their potential. It has always been the case that international experience strengthens academic excellence. In an increasingly interconnected globalised world, international experience is the key to innovative solutions, with which research

problems can be viewed from various angles. The global knowledge society needs this wealth of diverse perspectives in order to keep pace with the rapid changes affecting the living conditions of humanity. The goal is to be well-equipped to address the challenges of the future. Germany must do its part to achieve this goal. Consequently, our work aims to attract talented individuals to Germany as a place of innovative science and industry, while enabling students, instructors, and researchers in Germany to gain international experience.

2 Enhance international collaboration for the benefit of science, industry and society

The increasing significance of knowledge-based structures, accelerated further by digitalisation, has produced a world in which academia is exerting an ever-growing influence on industry and innovation, as well as issues of political and societal relevance. An internationally networked research environment is essential to Germany's performance; it comprises the foundation for knowledge-based participation in political discourse, e.g. about Europe's future or the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Political decision-making processes require an increasing degree of scientifically sound advice for responding to the complexity of globally determined relationships. Partnership-based scientific networking serves as a role model in times of increasing nationalistic and lobbyist-driven egoism. It has a positive impact on the respective environment on a local, regional, and national scale. We firmly believe that longstanding partnerships between higher education institutions in different countries safeguard the continuity of cross-border exchange and spawn synergistic effects by bundling the resources of all participants. Mutual trust and equal partnership form the foundation upon which institutional, national, and European interests can be successfully promoted and negotiated among partners.

3 Assume global responsibility and contribute to development and peace

The overarching challenges, to which only science and academia can provide valid answers, are not exclusively limited to the Global South. Climate change, species extinction, flight and displacement, poverty and epidemics affect us all, and industrial nations are often the predominant cause of these problems. Current migration movements have made it exceedingly clear how crises in distant regions of the world can directly impact Western countries. It is vitally important, therefore, that globally networked researchers and academics work together to find solutions to these challenges. A basis of academic exchange is prerequisite if the scientific field in Germany is to assume a relevant role in this process. At the same time, international academic cooperation serves to mitigate existing inequalities and injustices, advance the development of the Global South, prevent conflicts, and surmount crises. We are committed to promoting "capacity building" and establishing productive structures at higher education institutions in emerging and developing countries. We support German universities in their efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, as well as jointly coordinate research projects on global issues. We also support measures which aim to build personal character and promote willingness to assume responsibility for society as essential elements of academic qualification in a national and international context.



OUR STRENGTHS

As an organisation of German universities and student bodies, we are the first to identify changes occurring in the higher education sector and respond accordingly by adapting our funding portfolio with our members. At the same time, German higher education institutions help us by devoting their efforts, infrastructure, and significant resources toward accomplishing our goals. In close exchange with policymakers, industrial partners, and civil society, we represent the international interests of Germany's universities. The framework conditions for teaching and research in Germany are largely determined at the level of the German federal states, as is the funding of our member organisations. Consequently, the dialogue with

representatives of federal states is so important to our work. We see our task as one of **finding common ground between diverging expectations of science and academia at various political levels.** In the interest of German higher education institutions, we create openings and opportunities which allow our federally and nationally influenced higher education system to remain internationally connected and ensure its viability for years to come.

Another defining characteristic is the diversity of our target groups and tasks. We support exchange in both directions – from Germany to the world and vice versa – at all academic levels. As the National Agency for

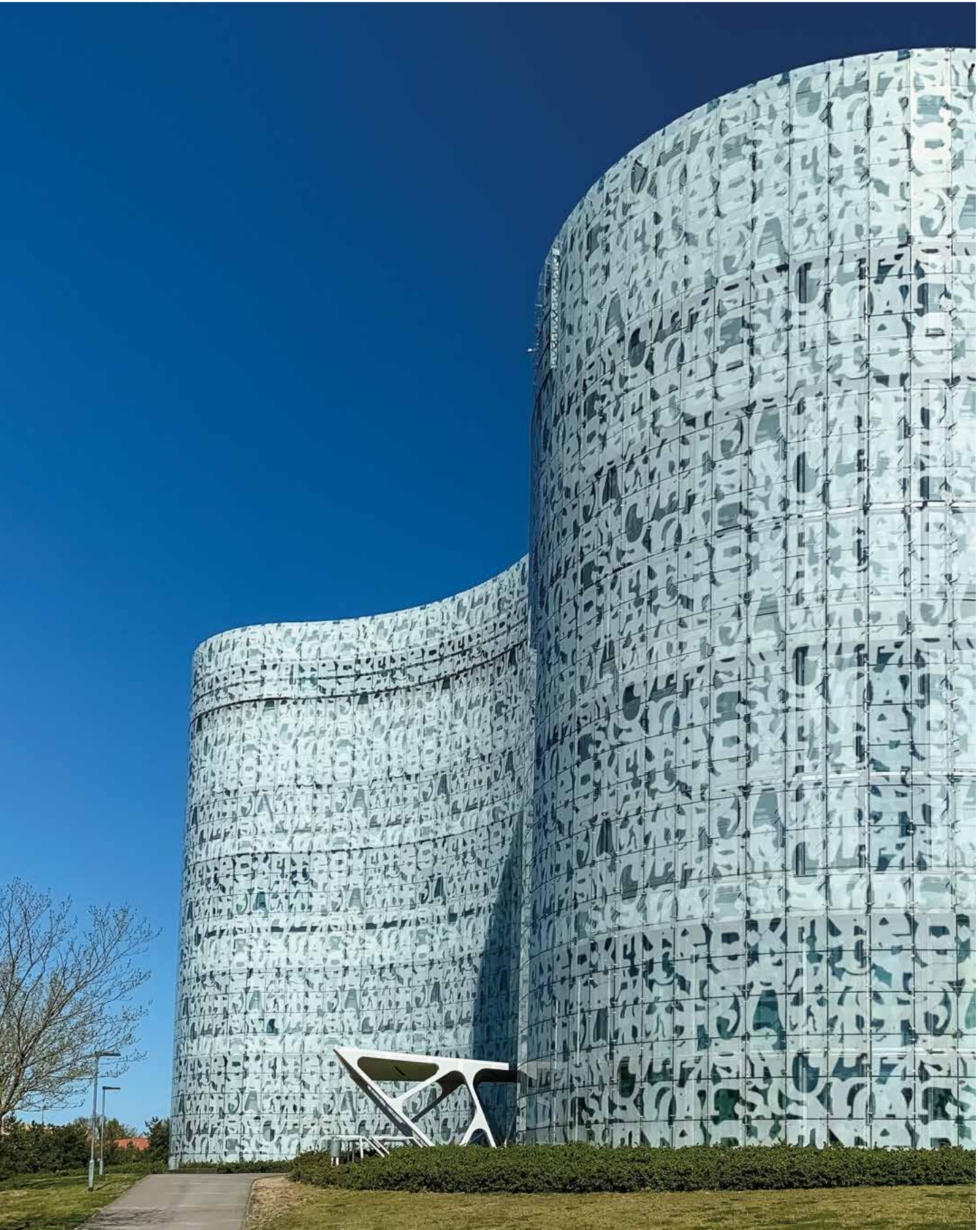
EU Higher Education Cooperation, we are committed to further developing the European Higher Education and Research Area and promoting European integration. As one of Germany's key players in the area of international science marketing, we reach out to students and instructors, junior researchers, and experienced academics around the world. We offer assistance to higher education institutions in Germany and many other countries with building international structures. We strengthen the international competence of individuals, networks, and institutions. Indeed, the spectrum of our activities is as diverse as the broad range of higher education institutions in Germany. For example, a university of applied sciences with close contacts to the local industry provides different impulses and requires different formats than a comprehensive university with a medical faculty, or an art or music academy whose teaching and learning culture is entirely focused on promoting individual artistic talent. The interplay of these measures at varying levels places us in a position to **contribute systemically and sustainably to building a global scientific network**. In this regard, we set new standards for professional and effective internationalisation of higher education institutions.

Our worldwide network is the basis for our specific role in the German and international higher education and scientific sector. We are represented in over one hundred countries worldwide and maintain close contacts with their respective higher education systems. For instance, more than 420 DAAD-funded instructors ('Lektors') teach at universities around the world and are thus integrated in the higher education system of the respective partner country. The same applies for the networks and foreign institutional structures we have initiated, such as our transnational education projects and the Centres for German and European Studies. These are accompanied by a network of German and foreign alumni which has grown over many decades, a network of supporters unlike any in the world. Our global presence ensures that we identify trends and developments in science and society at an early stage and, thanks to our extensive experience, we can properly contextualise and evaluate them. The expertise we have acquired in regions around the world serves as an important guide for our funding activities. It is this expertise that we offer higher education institutions, policymakers, and partner organisations to serve as the foundation of their own international activities.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *The internationalisation of science and academia is an integral component of a larger global-political context which, in turn, shapes its development. While the process of globalisation continues at all levels of society, and the importance of knowledge for human coexistence steadily increases, we are seeing the rise of antagonistic forces which are having an impact on the general conditions for academic cooperation in many places. Meanwhile, the environment in which we operate continuously adapts to technological and social developments. New trends and changing circumstances require the DAAD to occasionally review and modify its own positions and concepts. In this dynamic environment, we see ourselves as a trendsetter for the German higher education and scientific system. In the future, we intend to continue conducting our activities in a way that addresses these changes, corresponds to the needs of universities and society, and contributes to the welfare and peaceful coexistence of all on our planet.*



Digital transformation

Thanks to digitalisation, global cooperation in teaching and research is less attached to geographic location and time restraints than ever before. Students, instructors, and researchers can now collaborate on topics and projects over great distances. We are convinced that, despite these changing times, the personal experience of living, studying, and researching abroad will retain its special value in the future. However, virtual exchange can certainly enhance the impact of a visit abroad. It also allows new target groups access to international experiences. Digitalisation offers opportunities to collect and utilise data for customising and personalising information, orientation and advice schemes for various target groups. And digitalisation offers completely new possibilities for using science communication effectively and cultivating dialogue between the academic, political, and social spheres. We believe that systematically integrating digital elements into our programmes creates opportunity for more participation, efficiency, and sustainability. However, not all science nations share the same views on data security, the protection of intellectual property, or safeguarding the privacy of those who use digital services. Therefore, we would like to effectively support German higher education institutions in assessing the opportunities and risks of digitalisation at the international level.

Sustainability and the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda calls for a transformation to globally sustainable development which, for the first time, obliges industrial and

developing countries alike to assume their share of responsibility. Its core elements include cooperation in global partnerships which consistently takes sustainability into account and introduces a “bold” and concretely measurable transformation. Education at all levels is a goal in itself in the 2030 Agenda. All people should have access to inclusive, equitable and high-quality education and have the possibility of benefiting from life-long learning opportunities. As part of our work, we are actively contributing to achieving this goal through scholarships, collaborative projects, and competence-building measures. At the same time, our higher education and research-based programmes provide important impulses for achieving ancillary sustainability goals, e.g. in the areas of climate, health, and resource protection. A partnership-based approach is central to the character of our organisation. Collaboration in mutual interest and impact-oriented programme-planning, monitoring, and evaluation are equally important factors for the success and lasting impact of our funding activities. In the future, we wish to offer more specific incentives to encourage higher education institutions to devote themselves more fully to implementing the 2030 Agenda on a sustained, long-term basis.

Diversity and equal opportunity

Open access to higher education significantly contributes to greater equality. It is our goal, therefore, to continually increase the participation of lesser represented social groups in our programmes. Diversity and inclusion are distinctive characteristics of especially high-performance science systems. A diversity of personal backgrounds represents a veritable



storehouse of knowledge and experience which encourages the development of new concepts and approaches in teaching and research. We see diversity as an opportunity to increase the quality of our funding activities. With greater participation, we can achieve even higher social and political acceptance, integrate a multitude of talented minds from diverse contexts into German and foreign universities, and increase the possibility of new impulses and

academic creativity. Therefore, we shall strive to develop all our programmes in such a way that encourages participation of lesser represented target groups, strengthens the diversity of our funding recipients, and thus adequately reflects the increasingly heterogeneous profile of the students.

International professionals for science and industry

The performance of our higher education and research system is the best guarantor for its international reputation. Thanks to a steady increase in budget resources and targeted funding of young academic talent, Germany's appeal remains as strong as ever. This comes at a time of growing demand for highly qualified professionals in the scientific and industrial sectors. Germany is dependent on attracting an increasing number of international talents. The shortage of specialists requires a concerted effort by all stakeholders so that Germany can continue to maintain its status among the world's most popular host countries for highly qualified, young professionals. German higher education institutions play a decisive role in this context; as participants in the response to global migration events, they contribute significantly to attracting talented, young, international academics. The international graduates of German universities are especially well-suited to meet the growing demand for highly qualified professionals in Germany. We wish to support this in a more targeted fashion – by providing prospective students in their home countries with information, language instruction, and subject-related preparation, by offering scholarships for study in relevant disciplines, and implementing measures that promote academic success and career entry.

Innovation and transfer

Not only technological but also social innovations are increasingly determining the competitiveness of national economies and

the resilience of their societies. Higher education institutions are playing a decisive role in generating innovations in teaching, education, and research. The ability to develop innovative solutions depends on universities having a sufficient pool of creative and highly qualified academics. Their performance is essentially influenced by interdisciplinary and international perspectives. Encountering new approaches and ideas, confronting different cultures of knowledge and patterns of thought help to sharpen one's power of judgement and expand one's possibilities of creative performance. Cross-border mobility and collaboration – which are indispensable for basic research – are also essential prerequisites for applied research and innovation. For Germany, participating in the international transfer of ideas, concepts, and new solutions is a matter of future sustainability. With regard to collaboration with industrial countries, we are developing new subject-oriented programme formats which specifically strengthen academic exchange in technological fields of innovation.

Global issues

As our globalised world becomes increasingly interconnected, the need for scientifically sound solutions to the major issues of our time has become all the more urgent. To resolve these issues, it is just as essential to intensify collaboration with developing countries and support their efforts to establish viable research systems, as it is to work in close alliance with top-performing partner institutions at leading science locations. In view of the pressing and even existential global challenges we face, e.g. in the areas of climate, nutrition, and health, science

must play an even greater role in politics and society. Science communication has become more important than ever in this regard. Internationally networked universities and research organisations are the only institutions capable of promoting this knowledge transfer. New forms of collaboration and dialogue with all relevant stakeholders are needed so that science can adequately assume its global responsibility in a progressively interconnected world. We intend to strengthen this dialogue in multiple ways: by cultivating a network of scholarship holders, creating forums of exchange in our projects, and promoting research and study of the relevant issues.

Foreign academic policy in times of growing instability

Many countries are currently facing crises and upheaval. To make matters worse, national self-interest is increasingly taking precedence over multilateral cooperation. Science must now stand up for international cooperation as a constitutive element of teaching and research. At the same time, German higher education institutions and scientific organisations bear an important responsibility for strengthening civil societies in countries where information and freedoms are significantly restricted. Foreign academic policy can provide access where other channels of communication fail. Especially in politically tumultuous times, academic cooperation can create sustainable relations and fortify critical opinion. In the future, we shall continue to defend the value of international science, provide proof of its use, and facilitate exchange even under conditions of crisis and conflict. We also recog-

nise that one of the central strengths of our societal model and academic system is that it teaches young people to endure the friction of diverging opinions and engage in negotiation processes to reconcile them.

Restrictions to the freedom of science

We are currently seeing numerous attempts to restrict the freedom of science in many places around the world. More and more academics are being confronted with censorship and bans from their workplaces or have to leave their home countries altogether. This also impacts international cooperation. Exchange students and visiting lecturers from Germany have also been confronted with restrictions which occasionally force them to make difficult decisions or put them in dangerous situations. These developments can impede cross-border collaboration, leaving coordinators of exchange programmes struggling to cope with new problems. We intend to help German higher education institutions and research organisations to better prepare for these challenges and provide assistance when making decisions and evaluating the situation in the respective partner country. Within the scope of our possibilities, e.g. in our transnational education projects, we shall continue to advocate for the freedom of expression and academic autonomy.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE BY 2025

- *Internationalisation has become a focus of strategic planning at many higher education institutions. This has resulted in a growing number of stakeholders who are committed to promoting internationalisation at these institutions. There is an increasing need to properly integrate international activities into their overall institutional concepts and get all university members on board. This is even more important in view of recent tendencies in Germany and abroad to question the use and value of the globalised knowledge society. The only way to counter such criticism is to provide evidence of the far-reaching positive effects of international science and academia. In our three strategic fields of activity, we aim to strengthen the excellence of international higher education, increase participation, and present proof of sustainable successes.*



1

Field of activity: Recognising and supporting potentials worldwide

Scholarship holders and alumni remain in long-term contact with one another and with partners from Germany and around the world. Our scholarship programmes correspond to the needs of our target groups and feature integrated digital elements throughout. Personalised, transparent, and competence-based paths to Germany facilitate access to prospective students, improve their academic success and career opportunities, and decisively contribute to attracting highly qualified professionals.

We highly value our international scholarship holders and alumni in their function as ambassadors, multipliers, and friends of Germany. We are strongly committed to supporting them on their academic path in Germany and offering them opportunities to engage in open dialogue and contact with one another and their German partners. Subject-related formats and programmes play a prominent role in this context. We also value our current and former funding recipients from Germany who forge contacts with partners worldwide and – drawing on their knowledge and experience gained abroad – contribute to keeping Germany an open and internationally integrated country.

Our scholarship programmes for students and doctoral candidates at German higher education institutions are continuously developed according to their requirements. The built-in flexibility of these programmes enables us to adapt them more precisely to the needs of potential applicants. This encourages even more prospective candidates to apply and ensures broad participation in our programmes. An important element is

the target-group-friendly approach with its stronger focus on virtual formats and social media. Application and selection procedures are designed to promote diversity and equal opportunity. We specifically offer scholarships to target groups which typically have below-average access to academic mobility. This has helped increase the number of internationally experienced students and the diversity of their profiles.

Digital transformation is a key to further developing our programmes for our current and former funding recipients from Germany and abroad. We are strengthening the impact of our existing programmes by augmenting them with blended-learning formats in the preparation and follow-up phases of study abroad. New programmes combine virtual teaching and learning elements with shorter phases of classroom instruction. In this way, we can provide under-represented target groups a chance to gain international experience. In addition to the traditional university degree, new forms of certification, such as micro-credentials, are becoming more common. To

support life-long learning, we are currently developing modules which finance continuing education measures for specialists. These are particularly targeted at our international alumni. By offering professionally oriented, subject-related programmes and the possibility to engage with their peers, we hope to help them cultivate and maintain a lasting bond to Germany.

As Germany's most important promoter of international higher education and research marketing, we work to ensure that Germany maintains its leading role among host countries worldwide. The goal is to make academic paths to Germany more easily accessible to prospective foreign students, specifically reach out to talented individuals, and develop potentials by means of professional expectation management. In cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, we aim to form a new basis for **academic orientation and preparation of international applicants**. The key is to personalise academic orientation with digital tools and create study-preparatory virtual programmes, possibly combined with classroom instruction phases in the home countries. We are calling for a national reform of the admission procedures to higher education in Germany so that German higher education institutions can continue to attract the best suited international students.

In order to ensure that Germany remains an attractive study destination in the long term, it is crucial that international students achieve the same academic success as their fellow German students. We continue to participate in empirical research studies on the **academic success of international students** and use these findings to inform our

future funding activities and advisory services. We support German universities with accompanying their international students in a comprehensive process that culminates in career entry. In this way, we contribute to **attracting highly qualified and optimally prepared international professionals** for Germany as a place of science and industry. Our goal is to provide the **best-possible professional qualification for international academics**. This objective carries over to almost every other educational goal – from degrees in STEM to certificates in the arts.

German language skills are key to the successful completion of one's studies and participation in everyday life in Germany. We are committed to offering international students extensive supervision and integration measures, in which German language instruction plays a central role. As more and more prospective students around the world see Germany as an attractive host country that offers outstanding career prospects, the interest in the German language has surged as well. As a result, the expectations of German studies majors have increasingly shifted toward obtaining professionally relevant competence. The German studies departments in many countries are often inadequately prepared to meet this demand. In response, we have instructed our "Lektors", who teach German language and German studies at higher education institutions around the world, to become multipliers of "German as a foreign language". We support the German studies departments abroad in their efforts to adapt their curricula to the skills and needs of their students.



2

Field of activity: Strengthening the strategic academic network

We help universities strategically position themselves in a global context and participate in the international campus. We strengthen international partnerships and professional networking efforts, and thereby contribute to solving global challenges. By offering digital formats, we increase the efficacy and sustainability of global cooperation.

Many German higher education institutions have significantly enhanced their international profile in recent years and strategically positioned themselves with regard to their strengths, profiles, and goals. The implementation of these strategies requires universities to have certain structures in place which foster internationalisation. The aim is to establish sustainable procedures for accepting and supervising international students, instructors, and researchers, providing German students with needs-oriented support to enable them to study abroad, and anchoring internationalisation across the board in all institutional processes. We support higher education institutions in their efforts to **strategically internationalise their operations and shape the international campus**, allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and walks of life to study and research together and share their knowledge and experience with others. In the future, we shall focus more specifically on increasing the percentage of international teaching and research staff at German universities and thus make internationality in teaching and research on campus a tangible experience for all students.

Our cooperation programmes foster international networking between higher education institutions, with whom **international partnerships** are coordinated and filled with vibrant exchange. We shall continue to adapt our portfolio to the needs of the universities and society. One of our innovative approaches aims to strengthen internationalisation in still under-represented subjects (e.g. teaching degree programmes) and traditionally more nationally oriented higher education institutions (e.g. universities of applied sciences). In so doing, we hope to generate greater participation and equal opportunity, and subsequently achieve a wider acceptance of internationalisation. In order to promote a sustainable impact, we are following a more systemic approach which combines individual mobility funding with the establishment of structures at higher education institutions, targeted marketing measures and the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge in politics and society.

A central goal in promoting collaboration between German and foreign universities is to participate in **solving global challenges**. In numerous programmes, German and foreign researchers work together on the urgent



issues of tomorrow, such as climate, energy, health, the future of Europe, and the social state. Only internationally networked science can achieve practical solutions. Moreover, the aggregation of data, academic cultures, and perspectives promotes greater creativity and innovation in research.

Professional networking will remain a priority of our funding activities. This begins with theme-based networking schemes for our scholarship holders and alumni in the form of individual and project funding, extends to temporary research networks and culminates in the creation of institutional structures like the German Centres for Research and Innovation (DWIH) and the Centres for German and European Studies. Our transnational education projects play a central role in this respect as they promote long-term collaborative ventures between German and foreign higher education institutions.

Digital transformation has created new possibilities for increasing the **impact and sustainability of global cooperation**. These include the individualisation and personalisation of the “student journey”, the digitalisation of administrative structures for academic exchange, the establishment of digitally aided collaborations, the development of digital, transnational study programmes, and the expansion of digital areas of competence with national and international partner institutions. Thanks to digitalisation, it is possible to rethink the sustainability of our projects. In the future, digitalisation will play an integral part in our funding programmes and will be correspondingly anchored therein as fundable measures.



3

Field of activity: Providing expertise for international relations

We provide our partners access to our unique, in-depth knowledge of higher education systems worldwide. We actively participate in discourse on the internationalisation of higher education institutions and advocate for the freedom of science. We convey our positions via political dialogue and science diplomacy and offer expertise and consultation for science collaborations.

Thanks to our extensive network of foreign offices, funding recipients and alumni abroad, we possess a singular store of knowledge on higher education systems and academic policy developments around the world. Not only do we offer our **regional expertise** in the form of data and information, but also through seminars, discussion formats and advisory services. At the “Competence Centre for International Academic Collaborations”, representatives of universities, politics and partner organisations receive assistance with creating and developing international cooperative relations. Peer-to-peer counselling plays a central role in this context. In view of the heightening conflicts and rapidly changing circumstances in many countries, such assistance is urgently needed.

We are steadily reinforcing our regional knowledge with scientific studies on topics related to internationalisation and systematic data analysis. In the future, we intend to more fully perform our role as a **partner of international higher education research**. Through our own contributions and focuses, our goal is to participate more actively in international higher education discourse. By commissioning surveys or participating in

studies of relevant research issues, we wish to present new themes and findings to the scientific community and make them widely accessible to the public.

We strive to incorporate our expertise in internationalisation even more systematically into innovative programme formats. These are sure to engender examples of good practice, **political dialogue**, and functioning networks. There are a large number of excellent players in Germany and abroad which have the financial capabilities and capacities to raise awareness of and advance important issues. New partnerships can lead to co-financed programmes, promote the expansion of existing programmes, and support their impact in a larger social context. We wish to fully tap the potential of our network toward the development of such programmes.

We are strongly committed to employing suitable processes which measure the **impact of our programmes** and justify the use of public revenues for our work. We will continue to professionalise impact-oriented monitoring and evaluation of our measures. We also intend to expand our **knowledge management system** so that digital data processing



can facilitate specific queries and assessments. We will use this acquired knowledge for promoting institutional learning as well as providing information and advice to our member institutions.

The interplay of regional expertise, higher education research, political dialogue, and knowledge management puts us in a position to act as a **driving force** in the current discourse on internationalisation of higher education and science and become actively involved in political and societal decision-making processes.

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