

Guidelines for impact-oriented project planning and monitoring

Table of contents

Introduction and overview	2
1. Impact structure and indicator catalog as a framework for impact-oriented project planning 2	
1.1 The levels of the cause-effect relationship	2
1.2 The indicator catalog	3
2. How do I plan my project in an impact-oriented way?	3
2.1 Fill in the project planning overview	3
2.2 Fill in project description	6
3. Impact structure for the funding program "Excellence in Higher Education in the Development cooperation - exceed"	6
4. Indicator catalog for the funding program "Excellence in Higher Education in the Development cooperation - exceed"	8

Introduction and overview

The DAAD relies on impact-oriented monitoring (WoM) to ensure that funding programs and projects successfully achieve their objectives. As an applicant university, you use WoM in funding programs to present the intended effects and ways of achieving the objectives of your project. Further information on WoM and its added value for universities and the DAAD can be found in this [video](#).

To prepare your project application, you should first read the WoM handout before completing the project planning overview and the project description.

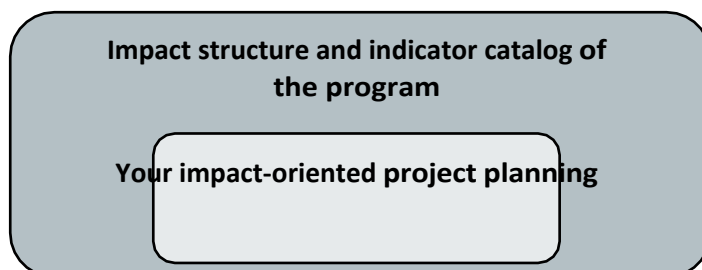
After a brief introduction to the basics of WoM, we will introduce you to the most important steps for planning your project in an impact-oriented manner. As a basis for this, you will find the impact structure and the list of indicators of the funding program in the second part of the handbook.

You can also watch this [video](#) on how to submit an application with impact-oriented project planning.

Answers to the most important questions about WoM can be found in the [FAQ on impact-oriented monitoring](#).

1. Impact structure and indicator catalog as a framework for impact-oriented project planning

The impact structure (see 3) and the indicator catalog (see 4) of the funding program form the framework for your impact-oriented project planning. The impact structure serves to **illustrate the funding logic** of the program and represents the goals that the DAAD wishes to achieve with the program. The indicator catalog illustrates how the DAAD reviews the effectiveness of the program.



1.1 The levels of the cause-effect structure

The impact structure consists of five impact levels:



Longer-term effects (impacts)

The impacts describe the intended longer-term, direct or indirect effects of a program.

Goals (outcomes)

At the outcome level, the short and medium-term effects (= program objectives) that the DAAD wishes to achieve with its funding program are defined. The program objectives result from the use of the outputs and contribute to the achievement of the impacts.

Results (outputs)

The output level shows the intended results, services and changes (outputs) that result from the measures / activities and form an intermediate step towards the program objectives (outcomes).

Measures / activities

The measures / activities of a program correspond to the eligible measures provided for in a funding program (see funding framework). The implementation of the measures / activities leads to the program results (outputs).

Inputs

Input is required for the implementation of measures / activities. Input includes funding from the DAAD as well as human, technical and infrastructural resources of the grant recipient, the on-lending recipient and/or other partners.

1.2 The indicator catalog

The inputs, measures / activities, results (outputs) and short- and medium-term effects and objectives (outcomes) specified in the results framework are assigned program indicators, which are listed in the indicator catalog (see 4). The DAAD reviews the effectiveness of its funding programs through the structured survey of program indicators in the annual reports. At the same time, the results are an important basis for program management.

Note:

An indicator is a variable or factor (quantitative or qualitative in nature) that measures and reflects the changes brought about by a measure in the form of a simple and reliable instrument.

2. How do I plan my project in an impact-oriented way?

In **impact-oriented project planning**, you plan from the desired project objectives (outputs) to the desired project results (outputs) and the measures / activities.

2.1 Fill in the project planning overview

You present your impact-oriented project planning in the **project planning overview**. The table-like project planning overview depicts the impact logic of your project. It is important to keep it **short and clear** by naming specific project objectives (outcomes), project results (outputs) and measures/activities¹. You are welcome to use an [example of a completed project planning overview](#) as a guide.

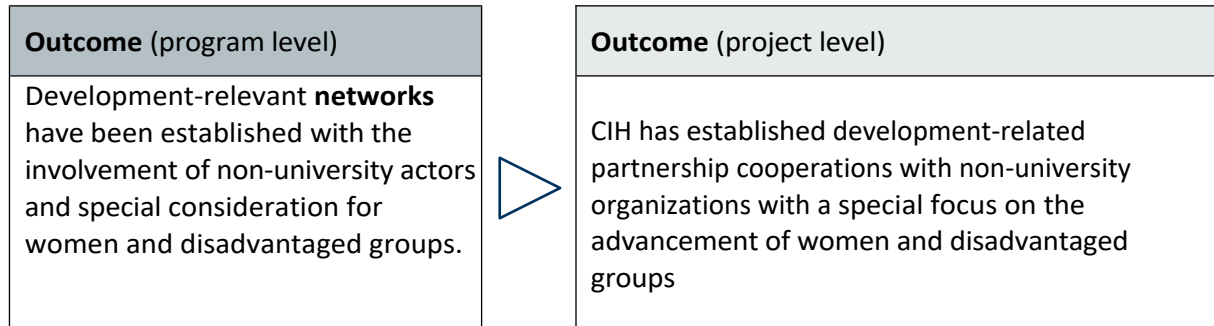
In project planning, you have creative freedom with regard to the formulation of your results (outputs) and objectives (outcomes) as well as the ways of achieving the objectives; the project objectives must be consistent with the program objectives stated in the impact structure.

¹You do not need to formulate any impacts for your project.

You proceed as follows in your impact-oriented project planning:

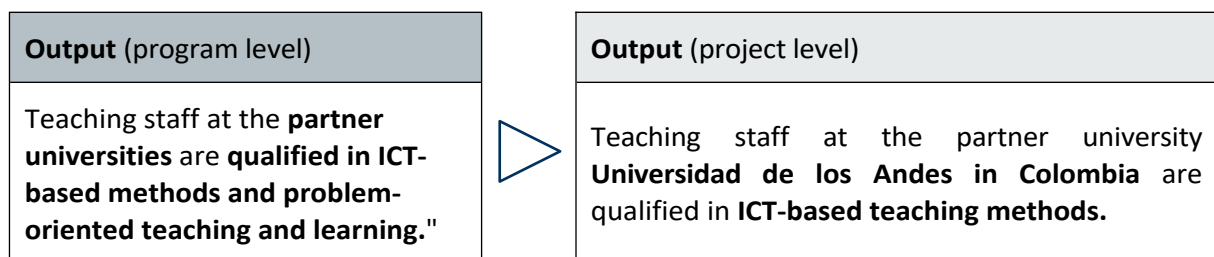
a) The first step is to formulate the **project objectives (outcomes)**. Based on the program objectives (in the impact structure), you specify your desired project objectives.

Example 1: Specification of a project objective (outcome)



b) In the second step, you formulate the **project results (outputs)**. The intended results (outputs) are visible and quantifiable. Based on the results (outputs) at program level, you specify your intended results (outputs) (e.g. which universities, which degree program, etc.).

Example 2: Specification of a project result (output)



c) In the third step, you define 1 to 2 meaningful indicators for each project-specific output or outcome on the basis of the project concept. (e.g. number of courses and number of participants).

- **Specification:**
You can specify program indicators that apply to your project for your purposes. You can also formulate your own indicators if required.
Formulate the project indicators only for the essential aspects of the outputs and outcomes of the project.
- **Value assembly:**
Specify for all indicators how much of something is to be used, implemented and achieved in the project and within what time frame (**value assignment**). This is the only way to check the achievement of objectives. Experience values from similar projects, specifications from your university or even dialog with partners and experts provide points of reference for setting values.

Make sure that the indicators for your project correspond to the **SMART criteria**:

- Specific: Precise and clear in terms of quality and quantity (Who? What? How?)
- Measurable: measurable with reasonable effort and at reasonable cost
- Attainable: Target realistically achievable within the given framework
- Relevant: meaningful with regard to the intended changes
- Time-bound: Time-bound

Example 1 Specification / value assignment of an indicator for a project objective (outcome)

Outcome (program level)		Outcome (project level)
Teaching staff at the partner universities are qualified in ICT-based methods and problem-oriented teaching and learning .	▷	Teaching staff at the partner university Universidad de los Andes in Colombia are qualified in ICT-based teaching methods .
Indicator (program level)		Indicator (project level)
Number of qualified teaching staff (incl. teaching doctoral students), differentiated by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of qualification (e.g. technical, didactic) 	▷	10 university teachers at the Universidad de los Andes , including at least 4 women , are qualified in the field of ICT-based teaching methods by the end of 2026 .

Example 2 Specification/value assignment of an indicator for a project result (output)

Output (program level)		Output (project level)
Practice-oriented curricula/teaching modules that are in line with the state of the art and relate to the 2030 Agenda are (further) developed.	▷	A Master's curriculum on sustainable development has been developed jointly with Ha-wassa University and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) in Ethiopia .
Indicator (program level)		Indicator (project level)
Number of newly developed or revised curricula, teaching modules, courses or other study programs, broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type (e.g. curricula, teaching modules) • Title/Topic • New or revised • Level (e.g. Bachelor, Master) • Status of implementation (e.g. coordinated, tested, offered) • Involvement of non-university stakeholders (e.g. business) • Number of partner institutions involved in the development 	▷	The Master's degree course in Sustainable Development , developed jointly with Hawassa University and GIZ , will be offered from winter semester 2026 .

d) In the fourth step, name the **sources of information** and **methods** required to collect the data for measuring the indicators. See also the [example of the project planning overview](#).

e) Finally, list the **key assumptions and risks** in the last column. Keep the description brief. An example of an assumption for the introduction of a new degree program is that the formal requirements of the partner university for the introduction of a Master's degree program must be met and the timely approval of all committees must be obtained. A risk in this regard is that the decision-making processes within the partner university may be lengthy and can hardly be influenced.

2.2 Fill in project description

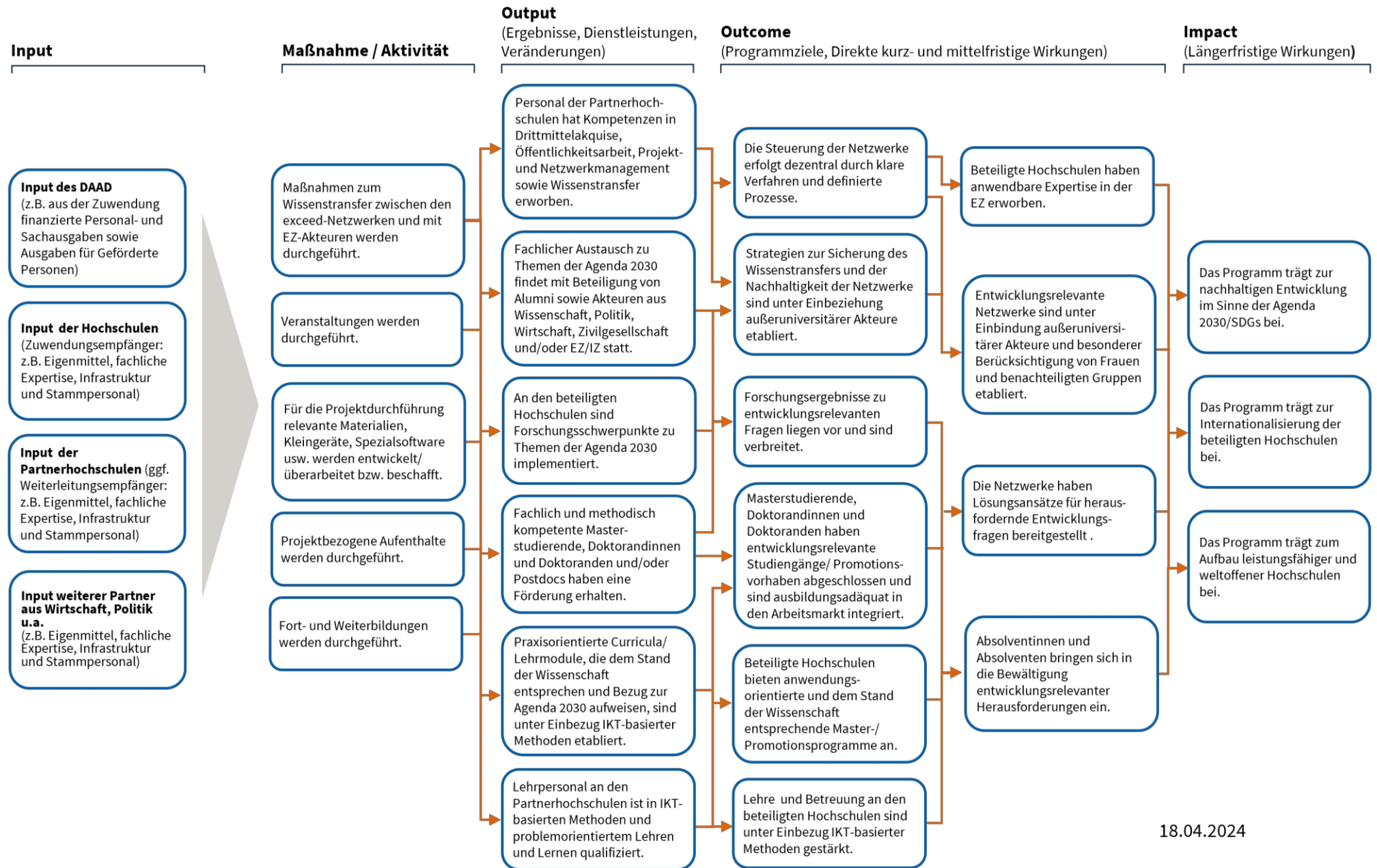
In the project description, you describe your project in terms of technical content and the measures / activities in relation to the objectives of your own project. In doing so, you take into account the impact logic, program objectives and selection criteria. You should also draw up a timetable for your project.

Impact-oriented project planning is taken into account in the evaluation with **selection criterion 1** "Relation of the project to the program objectives (in accordance with the impact structure) and impact-oriented planning with indicators that meet the SMART criteria".

Checklist for the selection criterion of impact-oriented project planning:

- ✓ Clear relationship between the project **objectives** (outcomes) and results (outputs)
- ✓ Clear reference of the **project** to the **program** objectives (outcomes) and the **program** results (outputs)
- ✓ The project description clearly sets out which measures / activities are to be implemented over time and how these contribute to the **project-specific** results (outputs) and objectives (outcomes)
- ✓ Project-specific indicators correspond to the SMART criteria

3. Impact structure for the "Higher Education Excellence in Development Cooperation - exceed" funding program



18.04.2024

4. Indicator catalog for the "exceed - higher education excellence in development cooperation" funding program

The following **program indicators** have been defined for the exceed - Higher Education Excellence in Development Cooperation program, for which the DAAD requests data as part of the annual reporting of the universities. This data is used by the DAAD for program management and accountability.

Measures / activities and assigned program indicators

Measure / Activity	Indicator
Measures for knowledge transfer between the exceed networks and with development cooperation actors are carried out.	Number of knowledge transfer measures carried out by universities (since the start of funding), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of measure (e.g. exceed-internal measure, measure with development cooperation actors) Implementation status
Events are held	Number of events held (in the reporting year), differentiated by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title/Topic Venue/country Duration (in days) Format (e.g. workshop/seminar, symposium/conference, excursion) SDG reference Degree of digitalization (e.g. presence, blended learning) Initiation of research projects (yes/no) Involvement of external actors (yes/no) Participation of alumni (yes/no)
Materials, small devices, special software, etc. relevant to the project implementation are developed/revised or provided. creates.	Expenditure on materials, small appliances, special software, etc. (in euros) (in the reporting year)
	Qualitative description of the most important materials, small devices, special software, etc. and their use in the project (in the reporting year)
Project-related tasks are carried out.	Number of people supported (in the reporting year), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Country of nationality (DAAD key) Status New funding in the reporting year (yes/no) Type of funding Duration of funding in the reporting year Total duration of funding

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject group (DAAD key) • Field of study (DAAD key) • Sending country (DAAD key) • Destination country (DAAD key) • Type of financing: • Participation format
Further and advanced training is provided	<p>Number of training and further education courses held (in the reporting year), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title/Topic • Venue/country • Duration (in days) • Format (e.g. workshop/seminar, symposium/conference, excursion) • SDG reference (free text) • Degree of digitalization (e.g. presence, blended learning) • Type of qualification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional - Interdisciplinary - Administrative - Didactic

Program results (outputs) and assigned program indicators

Output	Indicator
Staff at the partner universities have acquired skills in third-party funding acquisition, public relations, project and network management and knowledge transfer	<p>Number of staff at partner universities participating in further education and training courses on third-party funding acquisition, public relations, project and network management and/or knowledge transfer (in the reporting year), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title/Topic • Place • Provider • Duration • Format (e.g. workshop/seminar, symposium/conference, excursion) • Type (acquisition of third-party funding, public relations, project and network management, knowledge transfer) • Gender (f/m/d)
Professional exchange on Agenda 2030 topics takes place with the participation of	<p>Number of participants in the events held (in the reporting year), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender (f/m/d) • Alumni involved

alumni and stakeholders from academia, politics, business, civil society and/or DC/IC.	<p>Number of participants in further education and training (in the reporting year), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender (f/m/d) • Trained teachers
Research priorities on topics related to the 2030 Agenda are implemented at the participating universities.	<p>Number of research and advisory products developed on Agenda 2030 topics with the participation of at least two partners per network (since the start of funding), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title/Topic • Type (e.g. project/research proposal, consulting) • Implementation status (e.g. in conception, submitted, accepted/commissioned) • Partners involved
	<p>Number of graduates who have received a scholarship for a doctorate (since the start of funding), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender (m/f/d) • Nationality • Start of funding/scholarship cohort (year) • Desired degree (PhD) • Study progress (studies started, studies advanced) • On schedule (yes/no) • Comment on the progress of the study • Start of funding (MM/YYYY) • End of funding (MM/YYYY)
	<p>Amount of third-party funds raised for projects outside the DAAD-funded project in which 2030 Agenda topics are addressed (in the reporting year)</p>
	<p>Qualitative description of the jointly realized research projects with reference to the topics of the 2030 Agenda (since the start of funding)</p>
Master's students, doctoral candidates and/or postdocs with technical and methodological expertise have received funding.	<p>Qualitative description of the selection process (with special consideration of the inclusion of women) (since the start of funding)</p>
	<p>Number of (successful) applications for a scholarship (in the reporting year), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender (m/f/d) • Nationality • Sending country • Destination country • Type of scholarship (Master, PhD, Post-Doc) • Subject group • Type of funding applied for • New/further promotion • Application successful (yes/no)

<p>Practice-oriented curricula/teaching modules that are in line with the state of the art and relate to the 2030 Agenda have been established using ICT-based methods.</p>	<p>Number of newly developed or revised curricula, teaching modules, courses or other study programs (since the start of funding), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type (e.g. curricula (=complete degree programs), teaching modules) • Title/Topic • Newly developed or revised • Level (e.g. Bachelor, Master) • Primary teaching-learning format (degree of digitization) • Definition of learning outcomes (yes/no) • Use of ICT-based methods in (further) development (yes/no) • Use of ICT-based methods in teaching (yes/no) • Implementation status (conception phase started, draft available) • Involvement of non-university stakeholders • Number of partner institutions involved in the development <p>Qualitative description of the practical orientation and development policy relevance of the curriculum, teaching modules, courses or other study programs (since the start of funding)</p> <p>Qualitative description of the involvement of external actors and the added value of involvement for practical orientation (since the start of funding)</p>
<p>Teaching staff at the partner universities are qualified in ICT-based methods and problem-oriented teaching and learning.</p>	<p>Number of teaching staff qualified in problem-based teaching and learning (incl. teaching doctoral students) (in the reporting year), differentiated by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender (f/m/d) <p>Number of teaching staff qualified in ICT-based methods (incl. teaching doctoral students) (in the reporting year), differentiated by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender (f/m/d)

Program objectives (outcomes) and assigned program indicators

Outcome	Indicator
The networks are managed decentrally using clear procedures and defined processes.	Number of procedures and defined processes with partner participation for network management presented by higher education institutions (since the start of funding), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation status
	Qualitative description of the decentralized management of the networks through clear procedures and defined processes (since the start of funding).
Strategies to ensure knowledge transfer and the sustainability of the networks have been established with the involvement of non-university stakeholders.	Number of <u>roles</u> defined by universities <u>for the networks</u> in the exceed projects (since the start of funding), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation status
	Number of <u>strategies</u> developed by universities <u>for network orientation</u> (since the start of funding), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation status
	Number of <u>knowledge transfer strategies</u> developed <u>by</u> universities (since the start of funding), differentiated by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation status
	Qualitative description of the strategies developed and established to ensure knowledge transfer (since the start of funding).
	Number of <u>strategies</u> developed by universities <u>for the financial and operational sustainability of the networks</u> (since the start of funding), differentiated by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation status
	Qualitative description of the strategies developed and established to ensure the sustainability of the networks (since the start of funding).
	Number of projects that have emerged as spin-off projects from the exceed program (since the start of funding), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title Implementation status Partners involved (free text)
	Qualitative description of the spin-off projects (since the start of funding).
Research findings on development-related issues are available and widespread.	Number of graduates who have submitted or completed their doctorate (since the start of funding), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender (m/f/d) Nationality

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of funding/scholarship cohort (year) • Desired degree (PhD) • Study progress (thesis submitted, studies completed) • On schedule (yes/no) • Comment on the progress of the study • Start of funding (MM/YYYY) • End of funding (MM/YYYY)
	<p>Number of research and advisory products developed on Agenda 2023 topics with the participation of at least two partners per network (since the start of funding), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title/Topic • Type (e.g. project/research proposal, consulting) • Implementation status • Partners involved (free text)
	<p>Number of publications on the research focus realized with the support of the DAAD, in which scientists from the exceed program are involved (in the reporting year), differentiated by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title/Topic • Type (e.g. article in peer-reviewed journal, contribution to scientific anthology, incl. conference proceedings, scientific monograph) • Created as part of a doctorate funded by the program? (yes/no) • Published in an open access medium? (yes/no/planned)
	<p>Qualitative description of the available research results and their dissemination (since the start of funding).</p>
	<p>Number of active conference participations (in the reporting year), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender (f/m/d)
	<p>Number of scientific awards, prizes, etc. (in the reporting year), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type/name of the prize
Master's students and doctoral candidates have completed development-relevant degree programs/doctoral projects and are eligible for training.	<p>Number of scholarship holders who have completed their studies (since the start of funding), broken down by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender (m/f/d) • Nationality • Start of funding/scholarship cohort (year) • Desired degree (e.g. Bachelor, Master) • Study progress (thesis submitted, studies completed)

adequately integrated into the labor market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On schedule (yes/no) Comment on the progress of the study Start of funding (MM/YYYY) End of funding (MM/YYYY)
	Qualitative explanation of the reasons for scholarship discontinuation (in the reporting year)
	Qualitative descriptions of the whereabouts of graduates from the funded projects and their activities (based on tracer studies) (since the start of funding)
Participating universities offer application-oriented and state-of-the-art master's/professional programs.	Number of coordinated or already introduced curricula, teaching modules, courses or other study programs (since the start of funding), differentiated by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type (e.g. curricula (=complete degree programs), teaching modules) Title/Topic Newly developed or revised Level (e.g. Bachelor, Master) Primary teaching-learning format (degree of digitization) Definition of learning outcomes (yes/no) Implementation status (internally coordinated, tested, offered, accredited) Involvement of non-university stakeholders Number of partner institutions involved in the development
	Number of planned study places for courses that have been revised or newly developed with the support of the program (since the start of funding)
	Number of applicants for study programs that were revised or newly developed with the support of the program (since the start of funding), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender (m/f/d)
	Number of students in study programs that have been revised or newly developed with the support of the program (since the start of funding), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender (m/f/d)
	Number of lecturers in courses that have been revised or newly developed with the support of the program (since the start of funding)
Teaching and mentoring at the participating universities are to be carried out with the inclusion of ICT	Number of coordinated or already introduced curricula, teaching modules, courses or other study programs (since the start of funding), differentiated by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type (e.g. curricula (=complete degree programs), teaching modules) Title/Topic

based methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly developed or revised • Level (e.g. Bachelor, Master) • Primary teaching-learning format (degree of digitization) • Use of ICT-based methods in (further) development (yes/no) • Use of ICT-based methods in teaching (yes/no) • Implementation status (internally coordinated, tested, offered, accredited)
Participating universities have acquired applicable expertise in development cooperation.	Increase in development cooperation expertise among the project teams of the participating universities (since the start of funding)
	Qualitative description of the extent to which universities are increasingly dealing with development-related issues (e.g. in courses, seminar papers, theses, through the publication of publications or as part of university strategy) and how the topic of development cooperation has been diffused within the university (since the start of funding)
Development-relevant networks have been established with the involvement of non-university actors and special consideration for women and disadvantaged groups.	Number of exceed networks (since the start of funding), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of the network • Partner structure: North-South-South • Specialist focus • Regional focus
	Number of active cooperation partners in the funded networks (since the start of funding), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of the institution • Location of the institution (DAAD key) • Area (science/research, business, civil society (e.g. NGOs), public sector/politics) • Partnership status (defined in the grant agreement (with MoU), other partners (with MoU), other partners (without MoU)) • Development of the partnership (e.g. newly acquired, unchanged, consolidated) • Added value for the project
	Number of specialist networks in which the funded exceed projects actively participate (since the start of funding), broken down by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of the network • Specialist focus • Regional focus • Participation of non-university stakeholders (e.g. science/research, business, civil society, public sector/politics) • SDG reference • Central tasks of the network • Added value for the project

	Qualitative description of the development of the partner structure in the exceed networks (since the start of funding).
	Qualitative description of the partners involved in the networks (e.g. involvement of non-university partners and especially of DC/IC actors, alumni) (since the start of funding)
	Qualitative description of the development relevance of the networks (contributions to the development of the partner countries, topics, activities) (since the start of funding)
The networks have prepared solutions for challenging development issues.	Qualitative description of the innovative solutions developed within the exceed networks for challenging development issues in the partner countries with reference to the SDGs (since the start of funding).
	Qualitative description of the implementation of the innovative solutions developed for challenging development issues in the partner countries (since the start of funding).
Graduates are involved in overcoming development-related challenges.	Qualitative descriptions of the involvement of graduates from the funded projects in projects or initiatives that contribute to overcoming development-related challenges (e.g. based on tracer studies) (since the start of funding)