

## Strategic partnerships and thematic networks

What are the goals of the programme?

In recent years German universities have been striving to enhance their international profile by building strategic partnerships and thematic networks with one or several universities abroad. In most cases, their partner universities have an excellent reputation or possess a specific profile which matches or compliments their own very well.

This programme pursues two lines of action and supports partnerships of various types:

### **Programme line A – Strategic partnerships:**

Programme line A supports partnerships which include one or more subject areas and/or comprise different levels or scopes of cooperation. In contrast to partnerships exclusively managed by individual departments, this programme encourages more intensive partnerships at the university level. By concentrating on top-level strategic partnerships, the programme aims to improve the overall quality of research and instruction. Furthermore, it hopes to create new synergies by coordinating the activities of the participating instructors more closely. These can be innovative instruction methods, in which on-site and digital courses are coordinated and integrated into a didactically persuasive overall concept involving all of the partnering institutions. Not only will this foster more knowledge sharing between the partners, but – thanks to its cross-disciplinary approach – also strengthen interdisciplinarity at the university. These partnerships will become an essential part of the university's internationalisation strategy and enhance the attractiveness of the university on the whole.

This programme supports measures which cultivate such partnerships. The funding focus is on deepening one or a few selected partnerships (max. five per application). Partnerships with large existing consortiums (e.g. Coimbra Group, Universitas 21, LERU, etc.) are not eligible for funding unless the proposal calls for an intensive project between specific partners.

The awarded funding should be used to promote the exchange of instructors, establish joint degree programmes and PhD programmes, and carry out research projects. Funding should also go toward initiating and expanding additional structured programmes with the partner university (or universities). The coordinators should also support the university in procuring additional funding for the partnership.

**What are the goals of the programme?****Programme line B – Thematic networks:**

Programme line B encourages network-building between German and selected foreign universities on a subject-related or thematic level. This programme line supports research-related, multilateral, international networks comprised of a limited number of distinguished foreign partners.

The inclusion of non-university research institutes in Germany and abroad is not only permitted, but encouraged. The programme hopes to motivate outstanding foreign researchers from renowned partner universities to conduct their research in Germany by offering them attractive working conditions. Secondly, it aims to position participating German universities at the forefront of the international research sector through the establishment of competence centres.

The DAAD's current programmes primarily focus on developing internationalisation measures or supporting bilateral cooperation through partnership programmes. In order to continue developing international networks, there is a need for flexible and combinable funding instruments for research and teaching. The objective of this new programme is to enable German and foreign graduates, doctoral candidates, postdocs and university instructors to study, work and conduct research at their partner universities abroad and in Germany.

**Who can apply?**

All state and state-recognised German universities may apply. Funding cannot be awarded to partnerships which already receive funding through special cooperation programmes, such as "German Study Programmes Abroad", "Exceed" and "Leadership Training Centres in Africa".

This programme can only fund a maximum of two projects per university.

**What can be funded?**

Universities submit a proposal outlining the measures they plan to implement in order to intensify a strategic partnership or build a thematic network.

The following measures are fundable:

- Creation of cooperative projects, such as educational partnerships, joint degree programmes, dual degrees, joint research projects, etc.
- All measures which contribute to expanding or deepening the partnership, such as workshops, strategy-development meetings, summer schools, etc.
- Development of complementary digital courses which must be integrated into a comprehensive overall concept with on-site activities
- Short-term visits and guest lectures by German and foreign university instructors which also contribute to strengthening the partnership
- Exchange of German and foreign university administrators
- Study and research visits for foreign and German students, graduates and young researchers (usually up to six months)
- Personnel costs for coordinating or managing the partnership
- Expenses for travel to the partner universities
- Participation at conferences
- Expenses for joint scientific publications
- Cost of materials for advertising, presentations, etc.

**What kind of funding is provided? How high is the funding volume?**

This programme can award a total of 250,000 euros per project per year to finance measures which build strategic partnerships and thematic networks. Universities may apply for up to four years of funding and additional project completion funding, if applicable.

**What are the prerequisites for participation?**

The applying university should already have an internationalisation strategy in place. To be eligible for funding, the university must already maintain an intensive, cooperative relationship with its selected partner(s), which can be demonstrated through participation in any of the DAAD's structural programmes or other cooperation and research programmes.

Because of its focus on "partnership", foreign partners are obliged to cover project-related expenses which are not eligible for funding through this programme, e.g. access to their university's infrastructure, supervision and coordination, tuition fee waivers, mobility support, etc. The type of non-fundable expenses connected with the project should be outlined in the project description or report.

### What are the selection criteria?

- Programme line A: The concept and quality of the strategic partnership, the added value of the planned partnership for the internationalisation of the university, the importance of the strategic partnership as a component of the university's internationalisation strategy, the quality and level of preparation of the planned activities, also with respect to cross-linking several departments
- Programme line B: The excellence of the subject-related/thematic network, the internationality of the academic programmes, quality of supervision of young researchers, the feasibility of the proposal (with respect to the status and quality of the preparation and planning)
- The intensity and quality of the existing partnership (joint training programmes, research projects, publications, etc.)
- The quality of the proposed cooperative project (e.g. joint degree programmes, educational partnerships with structured mobility, exchange of university lecturers, research projects, publications, summer schools)
- Possible components of digital learning concepts
- Potential for innovation
- Sustainability
- Involvement of the foreign partner(s)
- Plausibility of the financing plan

### Application details

The university administration must endorse applications to either programme line. For programme line A, responsibility is generally assumed by a central university department (e.g. the International Office or representative of the university's executive board), and for programme line B, the coordinating faculty or department.

Due to limited funding, this programme can only accept two applications per university. This applies to universities which are currently receiving funding for one project. Universities, which have already been granted funding for two projects, are not eligible for funding through this programme.

Universities are asked to submit their application and required attachments to the DAAD by **30 October 2014** via the DAAD portal. The form, which must be signed by a representative of the university executive board, is available as a download at [www.daad.de/strategische-partnerschaften](http://www.daad.de/strategische-partnerschaften), along with information and guidelines on the programme and application procedures. All applications are reviewed by an evaluation panel. The panel's final decisions are expected to be announced in February 2015.

To offset the expenses of preparing the application, universities can receive reimbursement for preparatory trips – also for small groups of university staff (visit [www.daad.de/strategische-partnerschaften](http://www.daad.de/strategische-partnerschaften)).

**Submission  
deadlines**

**Please submit your proposals only via the DAAD portal:**

<https://portal.daad.de/irj/portal>

**Submission deadline for application: 30.10.2014**

Applications uploaded via the DAAD portal will only be considered if they are **complete** and submitted by the given deadline. If attachments are missing (see the funding guidelines), we will not consider your application. Likewise, we regret that applications sent by post or e-mail will not be considered.

**Contacts and  
further informa-  
tion**

Birgit Siebe-Herbig

Head of Section 511 – Internationalisation of Study and Teaching

[siebe@daad.de](mailto:siebe@daad.de)

Tel.: +49 (0) 228 882 -168

Kirsten Habbich

Head of Section 511 – Internationalisation of Study and Teaching

[k.habbich@daad.de](mailto:k.habbich@daad.de)

Tel.: +49 (0) 228 882 – 206

Karin Heistermann

Section 511 – Internationalisation of Study and Teaching

[heistermann@daad.de](mailto:heistermann@daad.de)

Tel.: +49 (0) 228 882 - 8791

Helen Schomer

Section 511 – Internationalisation of Study and Teaching

[schomer@daad.de](mailto:schomer@daad.de)

Tel.: +49 (0) 228 882 - 8787