**Alexander von Humboldt Foundation: *Climate Protection Fellowship Programme***

**FINAL REPORT  
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**Summary**

Subject of the evaluation

The subject of this evaluation is the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation’s International Climate Protection Fellowship Programme (IKS). The objective of the IKS is to contribute to both climate protection and climate-related resource conservation as well as in a political capacity to the BMUB’s *International Climate Protection Initiative* (e.g. BMUB, 2015 b). The IKS combines short- and long-term *funding tools.*

Mission of the evaluation

The aim of the evaluation is to investigate whether the IKS goals are being achieved and to check “to what extent the programme has an impact on climate protection and climate-related resource conservation as well as adaption to climate change in developing countries and transition economies” (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, 2016a, p. 13).

The evaluation is based on the DAC criteria (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, 2016a): relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (OECD, 2009b). Two further aspects are also to be examined: the fellows’ (1) geographical origins and whereabouts, (2) as well as their fields of work (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, 2016a).

Evaluation concept and methodological design

The IKS funding instrument (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, 2016a, p. 10) will undergo a *contribution analysis*. For this purpose, an overall impact model will be developed, taking account of the context of general social conditions and the relevant field of IKS actors. The evaluation will be hypothesis-driven using a multi-method study design which means that both qualitative and quantitative data as well as primary and secondary data are included in the evaluation.

The qualitative surveys will comprise guided individual interviews (*n* = 26) – with nine representatives of the groups of actors involved in the IKS and with relevant individuals affiliated with the programme (hosts, climate experts, representatives of home institutions). The data from the standardised online surveys of fellows (*n* = 60) and hosts (*n* = 40) will be evaluated, first and foremost, quantitatively and statistically. The qualitative data will be evaluated by an analysis of content. The qualitative and quantitative data from all collection tools will be triangulated in the context of the evaluations.

Main results

*Relevance*

Thematically, the IKS seems to be sufficiently broadly-based to achieve its goals with regard to climate protection and climate-related resource conservation. There is *no* suggestion that it would be necessary or advantageous to exercise greater control over topics.

Fellows describe themselves as experts who have continued working in climate related fields after completing their international climate protection fellowship. Most of them have returned to a developing or transition country. Fears that the intended effects of the IKS might not come about because fellows did not return to a developing or transition country after the IKS therefore seem to be unfounded.

With reference to the fellows interviewed, the IKS seems to manage to attract junior executives with practical work experience. Five of the nine fellows interviewed already had connections with Germany when they submitted their applications. Most of the fellows interviewed thought the IKS had had a positive impact on their own careers.

The benefits of the IKS seem to have been recognised by German policy-makers. According to the two BMUB representatives who were interviewed, (a) the goals of the IKS and the German government coincide and (b) the IKS has a good reputation at the BMUB. Hardly any synergies between the IKS and programmes run by other similar funding organisations were identified.

The IKS seems to satisfy the fellows’ needs very appropriately (c.f. the positive overall evaluation and the willingness to recommend the IKS to peers). *Across the board,* the IKS is described by interviewees as influential in solving the problems of development in the fellows’ countries and regions of origin.

Potential individual improvements to IKS were collated. For areas in which fellows report problems/weaknesses and strengths of their own, it could be considered whether mutual coaching could be helpful. The fellows’ wish for greater networking within the IKS should be examined by those responsible (e.g. implementation potential).

*Effectiveness*

Awareness of the IKS amongst the target group is rated as good. Applicants usually found out about the IKS from others’ recommendations.

The multi-level selection procedure was consistently rated positively; the disciplinary and cultural diversity of the selection committee was seen positively. Selection committee members *and* fellows were convinced that all (including unsuccessful) candidates benefited from the selection meeting. With regard to the selection procedure, there does not seem to be an urgent need for improvement.

All the fellows described their careers as international. The fellows interviewed also mostly mentioned that their internationality had increased after completing the fellowship. On the basis of their current professional positions, it can be assumed that the IKS succeeds in reaching future decision-makers in science-related fields and relevant future actors in bilateral collaboration with Germany. The fellows’ current and proposed positioning should prove beneficial to the desired impact of the IKS (e.g. bilateral collaborations, more sustainability in national politics).

The results of fellows’ academic publishing and their own reports about their weaknesses with regard to academic publishing suggest that relevant continuing education and support offers would be meaningful. It should, however, be remembered that the focus of the IKS is precisely *not* exclusively in the academic field. Moreover, in certain cases, the (specialist) public already appears to have become aware of the fellows’ expertise.

The results referring to networking were unremarkable (fellows’ own reporting): overall, fellows reported on a medium level of networking (i.e. within and outside of the Humboldt Foundation). In some cases, they seemed to wish for greater integration in the Humboldt Network.

In the online survey, almost a third of hosts reported that they had already visited their fellows. From the Humboldt Foundation’s point of view, this is a very positive finding. The potential positive associations invoked by the fellows’ countries of origin or by Germany were rated by both hosts and fellows as being more than averagely correct. Overall, this is very pleasing in terms of future bilateral collaborations.

The fellows interviewed reported that their own expectations regarding the IKS had been fulfilled and that, professionally, they had benefitted greatly from the programme (especially with reference to newly-acquired knowledge, enthusiasm). In some areas, those responsible could examine the potential for *comparatively* minor improvements (e.g. individual international reputation, rhetorical and publication skills).

Fellows are active in knowledge transfer/implementation (e.g. disseminating specialist information). Additional potential for improvement could lie in successful media activity. In the future, fellows could be helped to extend the target group for their individual knowledge transfer.

*Efficiency*

All the evidence indicates that the IKS is very efficient – in general, with regard to the selection procedure as well as with regard to the Humboldt Foundation structures involved.

*Impact*

Fellows were convinced that, in the future, the IKS would result in a “renowned network of climate experts”. All in all, interviewees (including representatives of the BMUB) believed that IKS contributed to the International Climate Protection Initiative and to *reinforcing bilateral collaboration between Germany* and developing countries/emerging economies in the field of climate protection/biodiversity conservation.

*Sustainability*

Both hosts and fellows rated the likelihood that fellows’ potential career prospects would reflect the long-term goals of the IKS as above average. Approx. every fifth fellow either held a climate-related position (e.g. as a decision-maker) or was playing an active role in climate negotiations for a developing country/emerging economy.

The probability that fellows and hosts would cooperate in future was generally rated as very likely. Common scientific interests seem to be the decisive precondition in this context. This point emphasises the importance of suitable mentoring hosts for the IKS’s long-term success.

Despite the assessment that future collaborations between fellows and hosts were very likely, bilateral relations generated by the IKS (still) seem to be relatively rare. Further assessment would require more experience within the IKS, above all with regard to year groups which completed the funding period some time ago, or also perhaps from comparable funding programmes.

In the context of the evaluation various continuing education opportunities for fellows are suggested. For clarity’s sake, they are bundled here: (a) media advocacy activities to enhance the public visibility of the work/person and reinforce climate-related knowledge transfer/implementation, (b) improved networking (e.g. time management, identifying appropriate opportunities, communication training), (c) collegial training in line with fellows’ strengths and weaknesses (e.g. scientific publishing, human resources management, time management).

*Conclusion*

Overall, it emerges that the IKS is a respected, effective programme for promoting individuals. Only certain specific points could be identified where the programme might offer room for further improvement.

Future evaluations should focus on examining the impacts of the IKS: (a) former fellows’ career paths (e.g. whether they hold leadership/decision-making positions), (b) long-term commitment to climate-related areas and (c) actual collaborations with former hosts and/or institutions/individuals in Germany.