Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

March 2026

DAAD Regional Office New Delhi

DAAD Regional Office Jakarta

Call for Papers/Presentations: Alumni for SDG

Alumni for Sustainable Development Goals
International Web Talk Series 2026

The DAAD Regional Offices in New Delhi and Jakarta are pleased to jointly invite you to participate in the upcoming International Web Talk Series – ***"Alumni for SDG",*** focussing on one of the most crucial Sustainable Development Goals: **SDG 15: Life on Land** to be held from **13 -14 July 2026**.

This two-day virtual initiative will convene alumni of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH) from South Asia and Southeast Asia regions to exchange knowledge, research findings, and innovative solutions to global challenges. It will provide a platform to showcase SDG-related research, connect with experts, explore academic and research collaborations, promote interdisciplinary science communication, and strengthen subject-specific as well as regional alumni networks.

This particular web talk series has been conceptualised to enable exchange of innovative ideas and deliberations pivotal for implementation of one of the relevant SDGs on the overarching topic of "***Harnessing Artificial Intelligence to Advance SDG 15: Life on Land."***

The SDG Report (July 2025) notes that only 17.6% of global land is under formal protection—well below the 30% target set for 2030. Hence, the objective of SDG 15 is to *protect and restore terrestrial ecosystems, promote sustainable forest management, combat desertification, reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.*

SDG 15 addresses these challenges in order to protect food security, livelihoods, and environmental stability. The prominent SDG 15 targets are:

- Ecosystem conservation
- Sustainable forest management
- Land degradation neutrality
- Biodiversity loss prevention

Over the past decade, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a key tool for biodiversity conservation and environmental monitoring. Advances in deep learning, remote sensing, and data analytics now enable AI to track deforestation and wildfires, detect illegal wildlife trade, and support conservation planning.

However, the wider adoption of AI requires ethical and inclusive implementation to address risks such as bias, misuse, privacy and data protection concerns, intellectual property issues, and unequal access. AI systems also lack transparency and may sometimes generate inaccurate outputs and hallucinations.

This year's web talk series will address the following topics:

A. AI Technologies for Terrestrial Ecosystems

AI holds the potential for mapping, modelling and monitoring the vast expanse of terrestrial ecosystems on Earth, which are undergoing continuous and complex changes. The spatial and temporal scales of these changes, and the interconnected nature of the processes – such as deforestation, desertification, habitat fragmentation, degradation – contribute to accelerating biodiversity loss. The volume of data and complexity of processes necessitate the use of an advanced self-learning analytical tool such as AI. The foundational use of machine learning models, the availability of high-resolution satellite imagery, and other GIS-based environmental databases make AI-driven terrestrial ecosystem monitoring, modelling and mapping an ideal use case for AI integration.

Individual entries encompassing the integration of AI within the following thematic areas are requested for submission:

- Deforestation and land use change detection
- Land degradation and desertification assessment
- Forest inventory and restoration planning
- Habitat fragmentation and landscape connectivity analysis
- Wildfire risk modelling and early warning systems
- Policies for conservation planning

B. AI for Biodiversity Conservation

AI offers analytical capacity to address the highly heterogeneous, dynamic, and nonlinear nature of ecological systems and their data. Biodiversity conservation and management require a holistic understanding of ecological conditions, existing and modified patterns, population estimation, and habitat classification, among others. AI models, capable of handling heterogeneous data and utilizing deep learning, are suitable for identifying hidden patterns and detecting anomalies in high-volume data. Additionally, early warning signals of ecosystem stress and subtle disturbances can be detected using AI. This can allow timely

decision-making to threats such as invasive species, illegal logging, habitat encroachment and biodiversity decline.

Individual entries encompassing the integration of AI with the following topics are requested for submission:

- Species identification and population estimation
- Habitat suitability modelling
- Tracking wildlife for preventing illegal wildlife trade
- Biodiversity monitoring using computer vision & acoustic AI
- Governance framework and policy for biodiversity conservation

The Web Talk Series 2026 seek to explore how artificial intelligence can responsibly accelerate progress toward SDG 15 while addressing ethical, ecological, legal and governance challenges. Through interdisciplinary dialogue, the series aims to bridge technological innovation and sustainable land stewardship in the Global South.

Contributors are requested to indicate their preferred thematic track while submitting their abstracts. Interdisciplinary submissions bridging both tracks are strongly encouraged.

Who can submit abstracts:

Former scholarship holders of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH) from South Asia region (India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka) as well as from Southeast Asia region (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Timor Leste) are invited to apply by submitting an abstract.

Abstract Length:- 2000 characters

Abstracts should include the following:

- Problem statement
- AI/ML methods or analytical approach
- Data sources
- Key findings (or expected contribution)
- Explicit relevance to SDG 15 targets
- Good practice examples, if any

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

March 2026

DAAD Regional Office New Delhi

DAAD Regional Office Jakarta

Format and Dates:

This event will feature a two-day series of web talks focused on the role of AI in advancing SDG 15 (Life on Land). Each session will highlight the research work of 3–4 researchers per day (depending on the number of submissions). Each presenter will be allocated a time slot of approximately 10 minutes, followed by Q&A. The web talks are scheduled to take place via Webex online tool at **15:30-16:30 IST / 17:00 - 18:00 WIB** on the following dates:

Day 1: 13 July 2026 – AI Technologies for Terrestrial Ecosystems

Day 2: 14 July 2026 – AI for Biodiversity Conservation

To participate with your entry submission, please take the following survey by clicking on the link: https://www.daad.de/surveys/637981?lang=en

Application deadline is 15 April, 2026

The entries will be shortlisted by an expert committee. Submission of your entry/proposal is **only** via the survey link above. For related queries, please write to:
DAAD India: alumni.newdelhi@daad.de / DAAD Indonesia: labudza@daad.de