



Call for Applications

ABCD Future Environmental Leaders Scholarships 2026

For Doctoral Students from the Global South

Application deadline of November 15th, 2025

I. Introduction to the Global Water and Climate Adaptation Centre (ABCD-Centre)

The "Global Water and Climate Adaptation Centre – Aachen, Bangkok, Chennai, Dresden (ABCD-Centre)" is a collaborative initiative involving RWTH Aachen University, Asian Institute of Technology, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, United Nations University – Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and Resources (UNU-FLORES), and Technische Universität Dresden. This consortium strives to comprehensively address the worldwide challenges of water security and climate adaptation.

The ABCD-Centre's work is organized into three interconnected research clusters:

1. **Cluster I:** Focuses on "Water Security, Water Resources Management, Secure Water Supply, and Water Treatment."
2. **Cluster II:** Centers around "Ecosystem Resilience and Nature-Based Adaptation Measures."
3. **Cluster III:** Concentrates on "Transfer Strategies for Climate Adaptation: Traditional Knowledge, Local Economies, and Societal Acceptance."

One of the primary goals of the ABCD-Centre is to provide research-focused training to Future Environmental Leaders, who will facilitate the translation of research findings into practical applications. Additionally, the Centre encourages innovative research projects related to water and climate change adaptation. As part of these efforts, the ABCD-Centre is pleased to announce the ABCD Future Environmental Leaders Scholarships for doctoral students from Developing Countries. These scholarships enable recipients to conduct research at RWTH Aachen University, Technische Universität Dresden, or UNU-FLORES in Dresden, Germany. conduct research stays at RWTH Aachen University, at Technische Universität Dresden or at UNU-FLORES in Dresden, Germany.

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II. Current Opportunity: Two ABCD Future Environmental Leaders Scholarships 2026

Applications are now open for **Two scholarships**, each lasting 9 months, targeting doctoral students from Developing Countries. The aim is to support research that can be translated into practical solutions. The research stay options are:

- **RWTH Aachen University, Aachen, Germany**
- **Technische Universität Dresden, Germany**
- **UNU FLORES (UNU Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and Resources), Dresden, Germany**

The research stays are scheduled from March 1st, 2026, to November 30th, 2026.

Applicants are encouraged to propose research projects aligned with the thematic areas of **ABCD-Centre Clusters I, II, and III**. While the call is open to a wide range of topics, priority will be given to proposals addressing the following themes:

- **Topic A):** Modelling Water Infrastructure, Innovative Methods in Digitalization for Digital Twins, Habitat Modelling
- **Topic B):** Innovative Monitoring for Ecosystem Resilience and Nature-Based Adaptation Measures
- **Topic C):** Climate-Driven Water Extremes in Urban Areas
- **Topic D):** Sustainable Business Models for Unconventional Water Resources
- **Topic E):** Eco-friendly Materials and Sustainable Building Solutions for Climate Adaptation

Eligibility:

Applicants must be doctoral students who have commenced their PhD studies within the last three years, registered as full-time PhD students at universities in Developing Countries.

III. Features of the ABCD Future Environmental Leaders Scholarships

The scholarship typically includes components for mobility, accommodation and living expenses, insurances, and travel. The breakdown is as follows:

- Monthly accommodation and living expenses: 1.200 €
- Monthly insurance allowance: max. 105 €
- One-time travel expense stipend: max. 1.000 €

Additionally, up to 1.000 € can be allocated for research project materials and equipment through the host institution.

IV. Application process

Applicants should compile the following documents into a single PDF file and send it to abcd-centre@rwth-aachen.de by the **application deadline of November 15th, 2025**:

1. Personal motivation for the research stay (2-3 pages)
2. A sample of a written scientific paper
3. Recent Curriculum Vitae
4. Two recent letters of recommendation from the home institution related to the research project
5. Statement of the ability to work online if remote work is required
6. Enrollment certificate and current transcript of records (not older than six months) from the home institution
7. Passport copy

At the application stage, the applicant's supervisor and the home university must agree on the following points:

- A research topic aligned with the clusters' themes
- A detailed timeline of the entire doctoral project
- Description of the research project to be conducted in Germany, including a timetable and plans for future third-party funded research projects
- Planned contributions to the ABCD-Centre's outreach activities

V. Selection Criteria and Process

Selection is based on academic merit, a strong motivation to contribute to the field, and the quality of the research proposal. The Steering Committee of the ABCD-Centre carries out the selection process. Equal opportunities and diversity are emphasized. Preference is given to candidates willing to spend the full nine-month period in Germany and those interested in translating research findings into policy papers. Proficiency in English, effective communication skills, and adaptability to research in Germany are vital.

VI. Additional Information

- A mandatory scholarship and experience report must be submitted three months before the scholarship ends.
- Applicants are encouraged to seek guidance from their local International Office and DAAD office for stay-related inquiries.
- Rules and regulations by the DAAD and the German Federal Foreign Office apply, along with those of the host institutions.
- Upon selection, scholarship recipients sign a contract with the host institution detailing terms and conduct.

For inquiries, contact: abcd-centre@rwth-aachen.de

