



# Call for Applications: Think Tank School 2021

## At a Glance

Duration: 4 months, 08/09 – 2/12/2021

Location: Berlin, Brussels (tbc) and Online

Language: English

Application Deadline: 08/08/2021

## About

The Think Tank School is a unique training program that empowers the next generation of Germany-based think tankers by expanding their skills and networks to increase the impact of their work. It is built on a holistic competency framework reflecting the variety of roles required of think tankers today. The four-month curriculum of the 2021 pilot cohort consists of three training modules on topics such as policy analysis and advice, political communication, and public engagement as well as project management and fundraising. In between the training modules, fellows apply the acquired knowledge to individual policy projects from their fields of expertise. All training modules are scheduled as in-person sessions in Berlin and Brussels. During the self-organized project phases, weekly community calls support the fellows with the implementation of their projects and provide additional input. The Think Tank School combines different forms of learning that put the professional development of the fellows at the center and support the knowledge transfer to the fellows' organizations.

The Think Tank School is an offer of the [Think Tank Lab](#), a project of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS). It is kindly supported by the Stiftung Mercator and the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

*Please note: If the Covid-19 Pandemic does not allow for in-person meetings, all training, including the study trip, will be conducted online (or in a hybrid model). The program may be subject to change.*

## Target Group

The Think Tank School is open to think tank employees who work in the research department of a think tank based in Germany and have 2-5 years of relevant professional experience. Career changers are also welcome to participate. We strongly encourage underrepresented groups to apply. The 2021 pilot cohort offers 12 spots.

## Competency Profile & Learning Objectives

The Think Tank School is based on a holistic understanding of competencies as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The topics covered in the Think Tank School are based on our competency framework that was developed in conversation with think tankers and adult education experts. At the beginning of the Think Tank School, the fellows set their own learning goals based on their previous experience and knowledge.

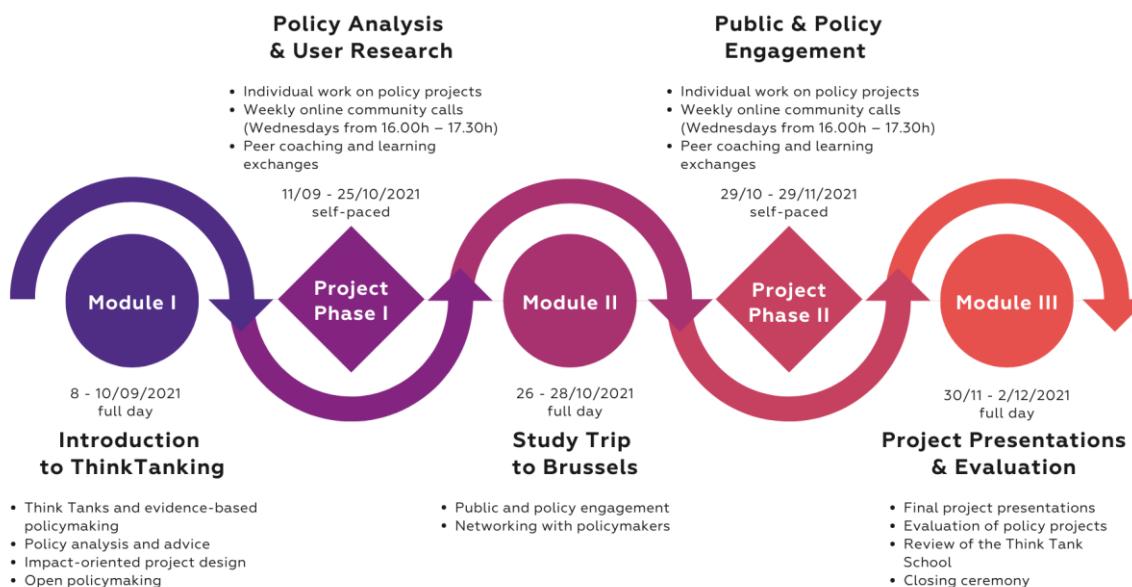


After participating in the Think Tank School, the fellows will have the competencies to:

- critically reflect and consciously shape their own role in the democratic policy-making process,
- initiate innovative, target group-oriented and impact-oriented policy projects in the focus areas they are working on,
- cooperate with other think-tankers and stakeholders for a common policy goal, and
- bring development impulses into their organizations.

## Curriculum Overview

The Think Tank School combines different forms of learning that maximize engagement between participants, trainers, and policymakers, and put the professional development of the fellows at the center. Please note that the program may be subject to change.



## Structure

The Think Tank School consists of a combination of three training modules, including a study trip, and two practical and self-organized project phases.

### Training Modules

In interactive seminars, experts provide practical knowledge, tools, and key frameworks for innovative and impactful think tank work. The fellows are encouraged to translate these concepts into their own work environments.

### Policy Projects

All fellows apply to the Think Tank School with a policy problem that they would like to work on during the School or are already working on in their everyday work. During the School, they apply the newly acquired tools to their policy problem and develop individual policy projects to tackle the chosen problems.

### Study Trip

The training includes a study trip to Brussels to get to know the political landscape in the EU capital, network with EU policymakers and gain ideas and inspiration for one's own work (if the Covid-19 pandemic and possible travel restrictions allow).

### Peer Learning and Learning Exchanges

At the beginning of the training, fellows form tandems in which they advise and accompany each other in the implementation of their policy projects. Through peer coaching formats they are enabled to support each other professionally. In addition, self-organized work visits to the organizations of other program participants are encouraged.

### Community Calls

During the project phases, weekly community calls are held online where the fellows present their project progress. In addition, thematic inputs are provided by experts every other week.

### Networking Activities

Throughout the program, networking activities and social events take place for the fellows to get to know each other, as well as to connect and exchange ideas with policymakers, funders, and other key stakeholders from the think tank landscape.

## Why Participate

For fellows, the Think Tank School provides a unique opportunity to both learn new skills and practices and to apply and test those skills in the context of your policy project. You will receive guidance and feedback to design and implement an innovative and effective policy project. In addition, you will be able to meet and network with peers, policymakers, and think tank stakeholders, to expand your professional network. After participation in the Think Tank School, fellows will become members of the [Bosch Alumni Network](#), a global platform which brings together around 7,500 former and current fellows, grantees and employees of the Robert Bosch Stiftung and its partners, as well as [MercatorGlobe](#), the alumni network of Stiftung Mercator.

For organizations, the Think Tank School offers an applied way to systematically train and empower your think tank staff, provide a safe space to try out new methods as well as gain insights into new approaches to think tank work. The transfer of knowledge from the School to the organizations is a central component of the program.

## Expectations from Fellows

Active participation in all training modules and community calls is expected from all Think Tank School fellows. In addition, fellows are expected to independently read the accompanying course reader as well as work on their individual policy projects. The policy project should be implemented before the final module.

## Tuition Fee

Participation in the Think Tank School is possible in the pilot year 2021 at a special rate of 750 EUR. An early-bird rate of 500 EUR is available until 25/07/2021. We encourage you to get in touch with your HR officer to see if your think tank can financially support your participation in the Think Tank School. A limited number of partial scholarships is available in case of need. Please get in touch if this applies to you.

The tuition fee covers:

- all expert lectures, learning activities, and networking events,
- all online community calls with expert inputs,
- Lunch and coffee breaks during the in-person trainings and activities,
- Diploma upon completion of the Think Tank School,
- Access to the Think Tank Lab community.

Travel to and accommodation costs in Berlin and Brussels are to be covered by the participants themselves.

## How to Apply

To apply for a spot in the Think Tank School 2021, please fill out the online application form and submit all supporting documentation by **08/08/2021**.

The application requires:

- a one-minute video or a written essay (max. 300 words) in which you describe your motivation to participate in the Think Tank School,
- a description of the policy problem you want to work on during the training,
- a letter of support from your organization, highlighting the permission to participate in all trainings and community calls, and the support you will receive with the implementation of your policy project (e.g. the opportunity to publish your analysis on the organization's website, support with organizing an event or else)
- your CV (2-3 pages maximum).

To apply, click [here](#).

## Selection Procedure

The selection of participants for the Think Tank School will be made by the Think Tank Lab team. In the selection process, we strive for a diverse group in terms of organizations, policy areas, demographics, and gender balance.

The selection and announcement of participants will take place by 18/08/2021.

## Information Webinar

For interested participants and organizations, an information webinar takes place on July 13, from 11-12h.

Should you be interested in participating in the information webinar, please register [here](#).

## Contact

**Weronika Perlinski**  
Project Officer Think Tank Lab

[perlinski@dgap.org](mailto:perlinski@dgap.org)