THINK TANK SCHOOL 2024
CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

AT A GLANCE
Program: four thematic training modules, three self-paced project phases, regular peer calls
Duration: six months, from May 14 to November 7, 2024
Location: Berlin, Brussels, and Online
Language: English
Application Deadline: April 7, 2024
Tuition Fee: EUR 1,175 (excl. statutory VAT)

ABOUT
The Think Tank School is a unique training program for early-career professionals that is specifically tailored to the requirements and demands of the think tank sector.

The six-month program offers fellows the opportunity to take the next step in their careers by developing their skills for effective think tank work, expanding their professional network in the policy and think tank community, and applying innovative methods to an individual research project of their choice.

“The Think Tank Lab created a rich program that showed us, fellows, in many different ways how to achieve more impact as think tanks and research institutes.”

— Ana Helena Palermo Kuss, Advisor to the President, ZEW – Leibniz Centre for European Economic Research
WHO CAN PARTICIPATE
The Think Tank School is open to think tank professionals who have:

• Research and analysis roles in a think tank or policy-oriented research institute based in Germany; and
• One to five years of professional experience in the sector or other relevant fields.

Career changers are also welcome to participate. We do not impose age restrictions for applicants. The program offers 15 to 18 spots per cohort.

We reserve the right to allocate a limited number of places to think tankers from European organizations. If this applies to you, please get in touch directly.

You can check the profiles and projects of the previous participants here.

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK & LEARNING OBJECTIVES
The Think Tank School is based on a competency framework that was specifically developed to reflect the variety of skills required to excel as a think tanker in an ever-changing environment.

• Decipher the political system to find optimal points of entry for policy engagement.
• Tailor think tank research to the needs of target audience(s) for maximum relevance and impact.
• Design innovative policy projects that respond to genuine needs.
• Understand and evaluate the success of think tank initiatives in influencing policy outcomes.
• Build your professional network in policy and society.
• Engage with stakeholders to pool knowledge and ground research in reality.
• Deliver and communicate policy recommendations with compelling messaging and outreach.
• Embed research in a larger narrative to turn findings into catalysts for change.

• Manage yourself and your project efficiently to be able to drive change.
• Understand fundraising processes and develop a healthy fundraising mentality.

After participating in the Think Tank School, you will be able to:

➢ Critically reflect and consciously shape your dynamic role as a think tanker;
➢ Develop and implement innovative and relevant projects that are designed to impact policy;
➢ Cooperate with peers and stakeholders toward a common policy goal; and
➢ Provide your organization with impulses for its further development.
**PROGRAM AND STRUCTURE**

Embark on a transformative journey with our comprehensive learning program.

**THINK TANK SCHOOL 2024 - CURRICULUM**

*The program may be subject to change*

**THINK TANKS & EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICYMAKING**
- Roles and functions of think tanks
- Policy relevant research
- Impact-centered project design

**THINK TANK SERVICES & PRODUCTS**
- Writing for policy
- Policy advocacy and advice
- Convening and facilitation

**STUDY TRIP TO BRUSSELS**
- Policy making and advice in the EU
- Think tanks and the media
- Fundraising basics

**PUBLIC SPEAKING & EVALUATION**
- Presentation and public speaking
- Knowledge transfer
- Project evaluation and graduation

**TRAINING MODULE I**

**SELF-PACED PROJECT PHASE 1**
Problem analysis, self-directed learning

**TRAINING MODULE II**

**SELF-PACED PROJECT PHASE 2**
Project planning and implementation

**TRAINING MODULE III**

**SELF-PACED PROJECT PHASE 3**
Project evaluation and engagement

**TRAINING MODULE IV**

**SELF-PACED PROJECT PHASE 4**
Individual work on policy projects
- Shadowing and research visits
- Online community calls and peer coaching

The program combines different learning formats, prioritizing your professional growth while supporting knowledge transfer to your organization.

**Training Modules in Berlin and Brussels:**
Interactive seminars led by experts provide practical knowledge, tools, and key frameworks for innovative and impact-driven think tank work. Translate these concepts into your own environments to foster professional development.

**Shadowing and Research Visits:**
Gain firsthand insights, a behind-the-scenes look at real policy processes, and inspiration in your policy field or work by shadowing key stakeholders or conducting research visits to relevant institutions.

**Policy Projects:**
Apply newly acquired tools to a policy problem of your choice. Develop and implement an individual project step by step, with the flexibility to collaborate on joint projects.

**Peer Learning and Learning Exchanges:**
Participate in peer coaching formats to support each other and provide advice on how to implement the policy projects. You are encouraged to establish learning exchanges with fellow participants' organizations.

**Online Community Calls:**
Engage in two community calls per project phase to present project progress and receive peer feedback. Expert webinars offer additional thematic insights.

**Networking Activities:**
Connect and exchange ideas with peers, policymakers, funders, and key stakeholders through networking activities and social events.
WHY PARTICIPATE
For fellows: Unlock your potential at the Think Tank School – a unique opportunity to acquire and test new skills within the context of a practical policy project. Get expert guidance, implement innovative projects, and expand your professional network by connecting with peers, policymakers, and think tank stakeholders. Plus, become a member of the Bosch Alumni Network and MercatorGlobe, joining global alumni communities fostering cross-sectoral exchange and collaboration.

For organizations: Enhance your think tank’s capabilities through the Think Tank School – systematically train and empower your employees, gain insights into innovative approaches, and expand your network with other think tanks. The School provides a safe space for experimenting with novel project forms and designs while ensuring a seamless knowledge transfer back to your organization.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FELLOWS
Active participation in all training modules and community calls is expected of all Think Tank School fellows. In addition, participants are expected to read the course material and work on their individual projects independently. The policy project should be implemented before the final module.

TUITION FEE
Participation in the Think Tank School is possible for a fee of EUR 1,175 (excl. statutory VAT). A limited number of partial scholarships are available in case of financial needs; please contact us directly if required.

The tuition fee covers:
- All expert lectures, learning activities, networking events, and site visits;
- All online community calls with additional input from experts;
- All learning materials, including project templates, background resources, and a learning journal;
- Lunch and coffee breaks during the in-person trainings and activities;
- Diploma upon completion of the Think Tank School; and
- Access to the Think Tank Lab community and alumni networks.

The fee does not include travel and accommodation to Berlin and Brussels. Participants are responsible for arranging and covering these costs themselves.

INFORMATION WEBINAR
For interested participants and organizations, an information webinar will take place on March 7, 2024, from 12:00 – 01.00 PM. To participate, please register here.
“The Think Tank School’s structured approach to addressing policy challenges helped me to recognize underlying systems and engage with key stakeholders. The program supported me in becoming better at my job, enabling me to be a changemaker.”

– Mauricio Böhl, Researcher, IDOS – German Institute of Development and Sustainability

HOW TO APPLY
To apply for a spot in the Think Tank School 2024, please fill out the ONLINE APPLICATION FORM and submit all supporting documentation by April 7, 2024.

To apply, you must submit ALL of the following:

☐ A motivation statement (two-minute video or 300-word essay) describing why you would like to participate, and how you will apply what you have learned to your work.

☐ A description of the policy problem (300-word essay) you would like to work on during the program.

☐ Details about the stakeholders that you would like to interview and shadow and why you have selected them.

☐ A letter of support from your organization stating that you will be allowed to participate in all trainings and community calls. It should also describe the type of support you will receive in implementing your policy project (e.g., the ability to publish your analysis on the organization’s website, assistance in organizing an event, etc.).

☐ A short written bio (100 to 150 words) and your resume (two to three pages).

SELECTION PROCESS
Participants will be selected on the basis of their experience and expertise, their chosen problem, and on how the Think Tank School will support them at this point in their career. The Think Tank Lab team will also take into consideration the background of other participants to ensure a diverse cohort.

The participants of the 2024 cohort will be announced no later than April 17, 2024.

INTERESTED IN JOINING THIS UNIQUE LEARNING EXPERIENCE?
APPLY HERE!

Find more information on www.thinktanklab.org
For further questions, please reach out to thinktanklab@dgap.org