



# THINK TANK Lab

A JOINT  
PROJECT BY

DGAP

MERICs  
Mercator Institute for China Studies

KINDLY  
SUPPORTED BY

STIFTUNG  
MERCATOR

Robert Bosch  
Stiftung

## Call for Applications: Think Tank School 2022

### At a Glance

Duration: 6 months, from April 26 to October 20, 2022

Location: Berlin, Brussels, and Online

Language: English

Application Deadline: March 27, 2022

Tuition Fee: regular: €950; early bird: €700 available until March 13, 2022

### About

The Think Tank School is a unique training program that empowers the next generation of think tankers to further develop their skills for effective think tank work and expand their network in the German and international policy community. It is based on a competency framework that is specifically developed to reflect the variety of roles required of think tankers today. The Think Tank School combines different forms of learning that focus on the professional development of the fellows and support knowledge transfer to the fellows' organizations.

The 2022 curriculum of the Think Tank School covers a period of six months and consists of four training modules conducted as in-person meetings in Berlin and Brussels as well as three self-organized project phases. In the training modules, think tankers, policymakers, and trainers provide input on a range of topics such as policy analysis and advice, political communication, project management, and fundraising. In between the training modules, fellows apply the acquired knowledge to individual policy projects from their fields of expertise. During these self-organized project phases, biweekly community calls provide the fellows with feedback on their projects and additional input.

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.

*"I can still feel the energy buzzing from this extremely helpful experience: The Think Tank School is a unique opportunity for early stage think tankers to connect, network and learn from each other on so many different levels!"*

– Vittoria Meißner, Research Advisor, Institut für Europäische Politik (Think Tank School Fellow 2021)

## 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 two to five years of relevant professional experience. Career changers are also welcome to participate. We value diversity and strongly encourage underrepresented groups to apply. The 2022 cohort offers up to 15 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 collaboration with think tankers and adult education experts, tested in our pilot cohort in 2021, and revised on the basis of the feedback we received. At the start of the Think Tank School, fellows set their own learning goals based on their previous experience and knowledge.

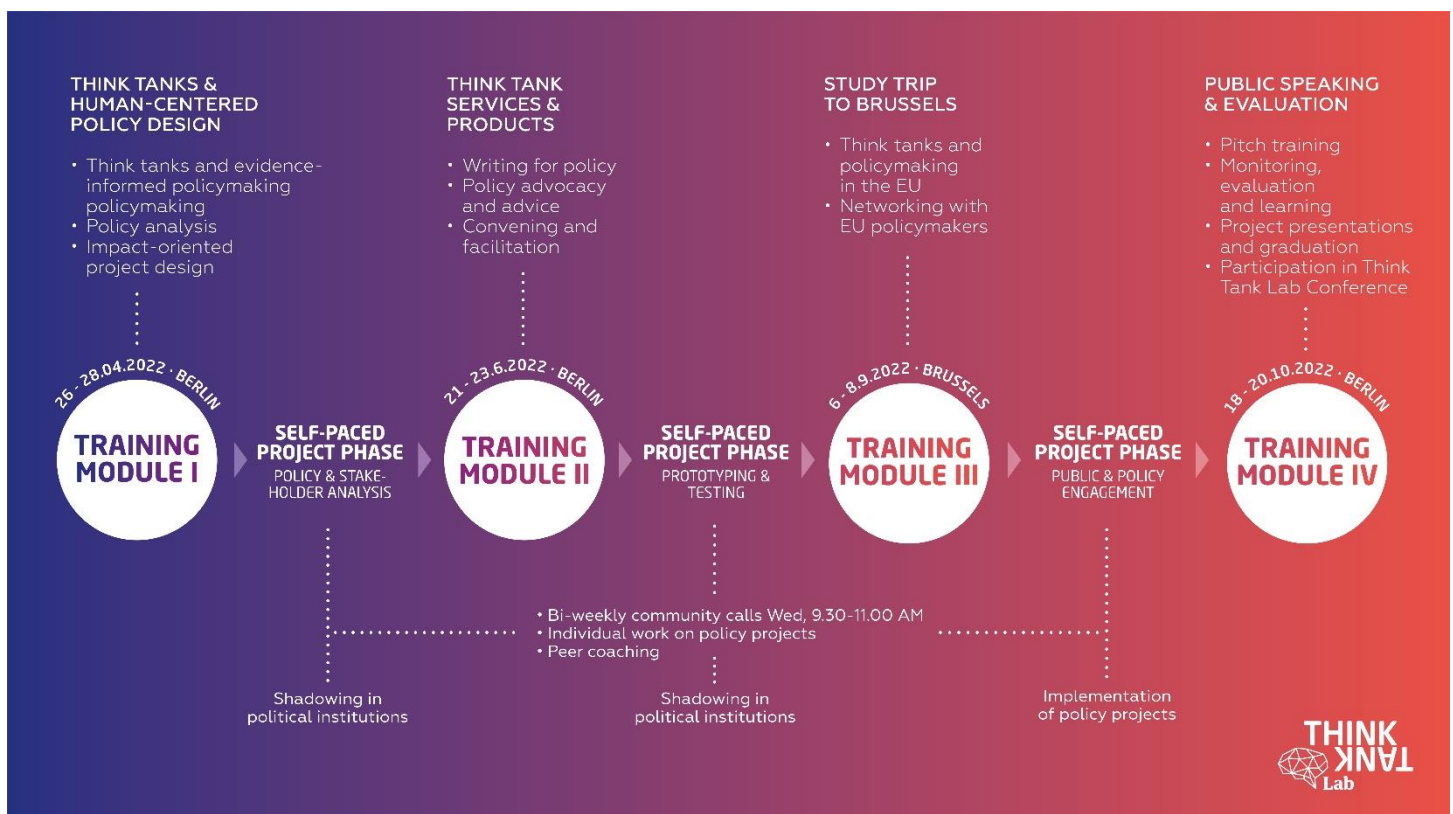


After participating in the Think Tank School, fellows will be able to:

- critically reflect and consciously shape their own role in the democratic policy-making process,
- develop and implement innovative, target group-specific and impact-oriented policy projects in the fields 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

Please note that the program may be subject to change. 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.



## Structure

The Think Tank School consists of a combination of four training modules, including a study trip, and three 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. Step-by-step, they develop and implement individual policy projects to address their chosen problems.

### Study Trip

The third module of the Think Tank School is a study trip to Brussels that gives the fellows the opportunity to get to know the political landscape in the EU capital, network with EU policy-makers, and gain new ideas for their own work (if the COVID-19 pandemic and possible travel restrictions allow).

### Peer Learning and Learning Exchanges

At the beginning of the Think Tank School, 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.

### Shadowing

In order to get to know the needs of important stakeholders, get a look behind the scenes of real-life political processes, and broaden their own network, fellows will do shadowing in institutions relevant to their work, such as ministries, parliamentary offices, or media outlets. This shadowing can last from half a day to two weeks, depending on the availabilities of both fellows and host organizations.

### Bi-Weekly Community Calls

During the project phases, bi-weekly community calls are held online in which the fellows present their project progress and receive feedback from their peers. Expert webinars provide additional thematic input.

### 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.

*"Coming from a scientific background, the Think Tank School helped me to understand real-life policy problems and the role of think tanks in impacting the policy process. The School's excellent team in tandem with the guest lectures taught me how to transform my technological knowledge into arguments and storylines." – Camilla Oliveira, Project Manager, Agora Energiewende (Think Tank School Fellow 2021)*

## Why Participate

**For fellows:** The Think Tank School provides you with a unique opportunity to both learn new skills 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 participating in the Think Tank School, all fellows will become members of the [Bosch Alumni Network](#), a global platform that 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 is a practical way to systematically train and empower your think tank staff, gain insights into new approaches to think tank work, build your network with other think tanks, and provide a safe space to experiment with new forms and designs for projects. The transfer of knowledge from the School to your organization is a central component of the program.

## 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. Fellows of the 2021 cohort invested an average of one to five hours per week in the Think Tank School outside of the training modules and community calls, depending on whether their policy project was part of their regular work portfolio. The policy project should be implemented before the final module.

## How to Apply

To apply for a spot in the Think Tank School 2022, please fill out the [online application form](#) and submit all supporting documentation by **March 27, 2022**.

The application requires:

- A one-minute video or a written essay of max. 300 words in which you describe your motivation for participating 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 that highlights the permission for you 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 opportunity to publish your analysis on the organization's website, support with organizing an event, etc.); and
- Your CV (max. 2 to 3 pages).

## Tuition Fee

Participation in the Think Tank School costs 950 EUR. An early bird rate of 700 EUR is available until March 13, 2022. A limited number of partial scholarships is available; please reach out directly in case of need.

The tuition fee covers:

- All expert lectures, learning activities, and networking events;
- All online community calls with input from experts;
- 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.

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

## Selection Procedure

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

The participants of the 2022 cohort will be announced no later than April 6, 2022.

## Information Webinar

For interested participants and organizations, an information webinar will take place on **March 15, 2022, at 12:00 PM**. Should you be interested in participating in the information webinar, please register [here](#).

*"The best part of the Think Tank School was the warm atmosphere that really fostered a group spirit and encouraged us to be very open with each other. I would recommend the Think Tank School to anyone who is relatively new in the industry and interested in a systematic reflection about our work and how best to go about it."* – Anne Flotho-Liersch, Program Coordinator, German Marshall Fund of the United States (Think Tank School Fellow 2021)

You can see the profiles of the previous participants [here](#).

**Interested in joining this unique learning experience?**  
**[Apply here!](#)**

## Contact

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