



The prevailing patterns of economic and social development prioritise growth, focusing on certain outcomes at the expense of others. As we have seen, such development agendas often fail to deliver progress for all and to respect our planetary boundaries. Climate change, biodiversity loss and widespread environmental degradation – on land and at sea – are increasingly tied to development pathways that perpetuate or exacerbate inequality, poverty, and hunger. These dynamics are visible in many arenas: from contested claims over marine commons and marginalisation of small-scale fishers, to resource grabbing and carbon colonialism. Multiple ongoing, overlapping crises are reinforcing these global problems. In the face of development blind spots, system complexity, and concurrent and cascading climate change impacts, an approach that combines the specialised knowledge of various disciplines is crucial to address the interconnected nature of social, economic, and environmental issues and to visualise a future that is genuinely progressive and sustainable for all. Simultaneously meeting the global challenges of achieving sustainable and inclusive development requires strong interdisciplinary and international research collaboration. Sustainability niches and other promising opportunities are visible and deserve in-depth research on drivers and barriers. However, research at the interface of environment and development is often hampered by traditional academic boundaries, including in Germany. New ideas and fresh research approaches, as well as inter-disciplinary and international exchanges, are hence needed.

To achieve these exchanges, German research institutes [ATB](#), [GIGA](#), [IGZ](#), [RWI](#), [PIK](#), [ZALF](#) and [ZMT](#), all members of the Leibniz Association, organise the annual **Leibniz Environment and Development Symposium (LEADS)**. LEADS fosters interdisciplinary exchange and stimulates collaboration on global societal challenges among and between early-career researchers and senior scholars, within Germany and internationally. This year's LEADS will be hosted by the **Social Science Groups** at the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) in Bremen on **10-11 December 2025 (lunch to lunch)**. Prof. Dr. Gerardo Damonte (PUCP, Lima, Peru) will deliver a keynote lecture on resource use conflicts in Peru.

LEADS 2025 will follow the established format of paper presentations and discussants. Early-career researchers are invited to present their already advanced papers, at a stage that would benefit from a round of constructive comments before submission. Each paper/presentation

gets a discussant, who reads the paper in advance. Each author presents their paper and is followed by a feedback presentation by the discussant, followed by an open round of discussion. This provides more feedback and discussion than one can obtain in standard conference settings.

Therefore, we invite submissions of original research papers, in particular by early-career researchers, that address challenges at the interface of environment and development. Submissions by researchers from within and outside the Leibniz Association are equally welcome.

LEADS will provide ample opportunities for academic discussion and networking, where participants are encouraged to explore new research collaborations.

Please send your submission (at least an extended abstract, ideally a full draft paper, in English) in PDF format by email to sara.herrmann@leibniz-zmt.de by **15th of October 2025**. Decisions will be communicated by the 31st of October. Final papers (completed or draft version) are due by 1st of December. The conference language will be English. Invited presenters have to cover their own travel expenses; participation is free of charge.

For further information, send an email to sara.herrmann@leibniz-zmt.de.

Academic committee: Tilman Brück (IGZ/HU), Marie Fujitani (ZMT), Philipp Grundmann (ATB), Jann Lay (GIGA), Lasse Loft (ZALF), Ben Nagel (ZMT), Anette Ruml (GIGA), Maximiliane Sievert (RWI), Barbora Šedová (PIK) and Achim Schlüter (ZMT, Uni Bremen).

Local organisers: Achim Schlüter, Ben Nagel, Sara Herrmann.

Organized by:

