

GRANTEE EXPERIENCE REPORT

Indo-German Centre for Sustainability (IGCS)

IGCS Research Exchange, Grant Period 2023

experience report

Atharv Ravi Thakare



Experience Report on IGCS Research Exchange, Grant Period 2023

IGCS Grantee

Atharv Ravi Thakare

Home Institute | Home Supervisor

Department Of Chemical Engineering, ICT- IOC, Bhubaneswar Campus | Dr. Kushal Sengupta

Host Institute | Host Supervisor

Max Planck Institute for Chemical Energy Conversion,
Mülheim an der Ruhr

Supervised by: Dr. Prof. Serena DeBeer

Research Topic

EPR studies of P-cluster of V-Nitrogenase

Starting/End date of the student exchange period

13.09.2023 – 30.11.2023



A promotional poster for IGCS grants. It features a smiling woman with long brown hair, wearing a yellow shirt and a backpack, standing in front of a red background with a white mandala pattern. The text on the poster includes the IGCS logo, the title 'Grants For Students and Researchers', the subtitle 'Conduct Research on sustainability topics in India or Germany', the main headline 'APPLICATION OPEN', and the sub-headline 'Floating deadline for the year 2024'. At the bottom, it provides a URL for more information: 'https://www.igcs-chennai.org/grants/'. The poster also includes logos for funding partners: DAAD, Ministry of Science and Technology, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, RWTH Aachen University, C I A U, and TU9.

About the IGCS Grants

IGCS awards scholarships to students and researchers from India and Germany with excellent academic records, very good English, and intercultural communication skills. The scholarship consists of a mobility grant and an accommodation grant according to DAAD funding rates, as a rule. Learn more about the funding opportunities at IGCS [here](https://www.igcs-chennai.org/grants/).

Experience Report on IGCS Research Exchange, Funding Period 2023

As a beneficiary of the IGCS scholarship, the participant has committed to sharing their valuable experience. This report is designed to encompass two distinct parts:

Part I: Written Testimonial

I was intern at Max Planck Institute for Chemical Energy Conversion, Mülheim an der Ruhr, North Rhine Westphalia, Germany. My aim was to understand the P-cluster of vanadium nitrogenase. I was in a very specialized laboratory; I felt I was too young to fit in. but my colleagues made me feel included. My host professor and supervisor were very considerate. I was given proper safety training before working in the lab. The people around me were very cheerful and devoted to their work. They taught me the meaning of 'work while you work and play while you play'. Initially, I had a complex- how am I going to fit in? what will they say? and so on. The lab where I worked had only PhD and post docs, so it was a very good opportunity for me to observe them while working, how are they planning their experiment, how are they managing their time, how to design an experiment...etc.

I was living in Mülheim an der Ruhr, the life was quite simple there. I was living just 700m away from my lab. I used to walk to the lab. If you are planning your visit in winters, please make sure you have enough warm clothes and shoes. My work life balance was at peak during my research visit.

The most important thing for your DAAD IGCS fellowship is planning! Once you find your suitable supervisor/host professor, be in contact with them constantly. Start writing proposal for your project, take help of your host professor/supervisor whenever needed; email them ask for their guidance, I am sure they will help you in each step. Plan your research stay for 12 weeks. Divide your project into simple weekly tasks. Make sure you have at least one reference/recommendation letter from your professor in the LOR format provided by DAAD IGCS.

Before starting your application, gather all of the documents in one place, then start your application. Take a German copy of your acceptance letter, if possible, it is not mandatory though. Also open a German bank account for your scholarship stipend. You may also use online banking platforms like Wise, Revolut. They also provide you a BIC number and an IBAN number like any other European bank.

Finding a roof in another country can be stressful and overwhelming. If you are visiting Germany, use WG-Gesucht.de app or you can contact the university office for some leads. In Germany it is hard to find an apartment for 4 months, people usually make contracts for a minimum of 1 year. Best way is to contact the students of the host professor prior and ask them for any leads around the university campus. For a short-term research stay of 4 months, you can request one of the students if they can sublease their apartment or room to you.

I worked hard on weekdays and travelled a lot on weekends. If you love exploring new places, do sign up for the Deutschland Ticket, it costs 49€ per month, and allows you to travel the regional and local transport countrywide (except the ICE trains). If you are staying in NRW, do visit the Cologne cathedral, Lindt chocolate museum, the art galleries around the state. If you love trekking you can go on a trek

around the Belgium border from Monschau. You can always ask your local colleagues about the travel precautions and the local delicacies.

Travelling to another country is quite an experience, if you've travelled before then you know how things work. If you are like me; then please try to avoid the mistakes I made.

First and most important, confirm your travelling dates with the host professor or host university then book your flight tickets. Second, confirm the accommodation bookings if you have arranged any. Ask the host professor regarding whether you need the city registration. If yes, request them if they can book an appointment for you. Please don't be late for your appointment. I will advise you to go on Wednesday, since they are appointment only. Otherwise, there is a much long queue outside the city registration office and you will have to wait for couple of hours.

For the finance you can open a bank account in the bank near you, but according to the German banking rules, if you are leaving Germany then you will have to close the bank account before leaving; and this whole process has done to be in person. So keep this in mind while planning or you can just use wise or revolut account; whichever you see fit to your needs. Take a travel and health insurance beforehand.

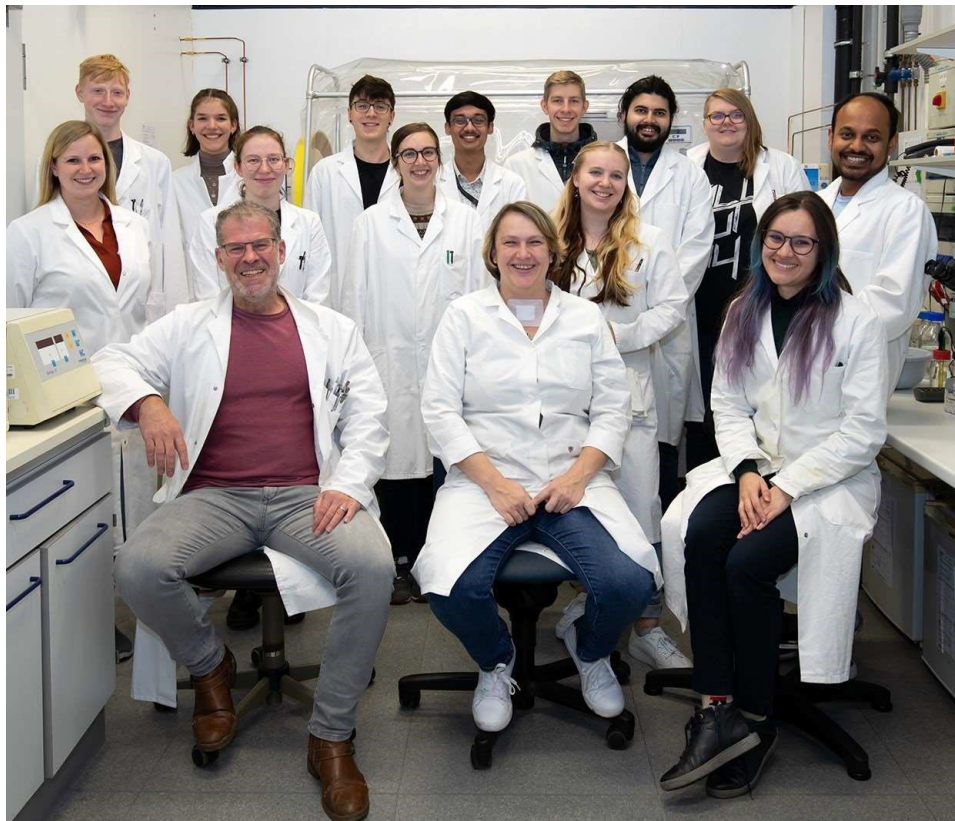
Book the visa appointments accordingly, I will suggest at least 2 months prior your departure. If you are going via Dubai and you have a layover more than 8 hours, remember you will have to take visa for the layover as well. So please double check the travel details before booking your flights. Ask the seniors or your host professor if have any doubts don't be afraid of asking questions. Overall, please be patient and take your time before deciding anything.

For me the research experience was beyond my imagination, I learnt from the experts in the field, I met a Nobel Laureate. I attended various talks and seminars. I talked with a lot of scholars had discussions with them, made good connections with all of them. In the end, this research stay helped me grow as a scientist and a good human being.

Best wishes to all who dream!

Part II: Digital Media

Grantees are invited to share their experiences in digital media, encompassing photographs, illustrations, or graphics within the context of the IGCS scholarship.



The Biolabs Team