Guidelines for Writing your Graduate Research Statement

The Graduate Research Statement (GRS) should be a kind of essays of no more than 4 pages (1.5 - spaced, in 12 point font, standard margins). One additional page may be included for references, images, or figures, if applicable.

The GRS should describe a development problem which interests you and should contain research questions, proposed methods linked to the research questions and literature references.

Innovative research is the key to BIGS-DR. BIGS-DR is interested in first class doctoral students with innovative research ideas. You should show creativity in identifying a research theme and related research questions, and demonstrate creativity in proposing solutions.

Guiding questions and hints are:

- What issues in the development agenda are you most passionate about? Write your essay in your own voice. It is important that you show your enthusiasm of, commitment to and understanding of the proposed work.

- Do you possess the technical knowledge and skills necessary for conducting this work? Include enough details to convey your knowledge of the topic.

- Is your research plan feasible for the allotted time and available resources?

- What are the expected research outputs and their relevance? How will your research contribute to sustainable development outside the academic context?

- Do not forget to mention the challenges you may face conducting this research.

- If you refer to a figure, graph or image in your essay that is not your own, be sure to credit the source. Essays with figures, graphs, images or text elements lacking proper citations will be marked down by reviewers.

- Your GRS may be covering an innovative topic related to the ZEF research areas (http://www.zef.de/researchareas.html) in a broad sense or to another research area.

We do not pre-view research statements and specify research topics. We only consider and review complete applications. The purpose of the GRS is to demonstrate the applicants' general ability to develop and conceptualize a research idea which will enable us to learn about your interests and capabilities to identify a research topic.