



Climate Governance Programme • Austria & Germany

Where global climate policy is designed and delivered — an undergraduate immersion in the UN's European climate infrastructure

The architecture of global climate governance is designed on two axes in continental Europe. Vienna hosts the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency — the institutions that translate climate policy into energy, industry and technology transitions. Bonn hosts the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change itself — the institutional heart of every COP negotiation since 1995.

The Climate Governance Programme • Austria & Germany places undergraduate delegates inside both. Over ten days, delegates move from Vienna to Cologne to Bonn — with a working visit to Germany's international cooperation agency (GIZ) in Frankfurt — engaging directly with the officials, negotiators and applied scientists who are actively shaping how the Paris Agreement is implemented.

This is the flagship undergraduate offering within the GYLDC Climate & Environment pillar. Delegates who distinguish themselves in the programme are nominated for the annual COP youth track and other UN convenings on climate action.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

PILLAR	Climate & Frontier Science
PRIMARY TIER	Undergraduate
AVAILABLE FOR	All tiers (separate cohorts)
DURATION	10 days
NEXT ITERATION	August 2027
LOCATION	Austria & Germany
LANGUAGE	English
COHORT SIZE	25–35
CERTIFICATION	GYLDC + GSLDC
FEE	On application



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

©The Global Moment

The years between the current decade and 2030 are the decisive window for delivery on the Paris Agreement. Every UN member state is now required to submit an updated Nationally Determined Contribution, and the implementation architecture — carbon markets, loss-and-damage financing, adaptation frameworks, industrial transition — is being built in real time inside the institutions this programme visits. Participants engage with these processes not as observers but as the next generation of professionals who will make them work.

©What Participants Experience

The programme opens in Vienna with structured engagement at the UN Office at Vienna, UNIDO and IIASA, focused on the applied science and industrial dimensions of climate transition. Delegates then move to Cologne and Bonn for the core UNFCCC immersion — including a formal engagement with the UNFCCC Secretariat and dedicated sessions on the COP negotiation process, loss-and-damage finance, and climate adaptation. The programme concludes at GIZ in Frankfurt with a focused session on how Europe's largest development cooperation agency delivers climate finance in partner countries.

©Why GYLDC

This programme has been delivered in partnership with Guangdong University of Foreign Studies since its launch. The 2024 iteration engaged UNIDO, IIASA, GIZ, UNFCCC, UN-Habitat, UNOPS and IHEID — a partner roster that few undergraduate programmes anywhere in the world can match. Delegates enter Bonn and Vienna with GYLDC's institutional credentials, meeting officials who are rarely accessible to outside groups.



©WHO THIS IS FOR

This programme is designed for undergraduate students whose academic or career trajectory intersects with climate policy, energy transition, international development or environmental governance. The programme is deliberately cross-disciplinary — it welcomes students from technical, social science and humanities backgrounds alike.

Suitable participants typically include: undergraduates in international relations, environmental studies, energy engineering, economics, public policy, law, or language and translation programmes with a global affairs focus; student leaders active in sustainability, climate or model UN activities on their home campuses; participants preparing for graduate study in international development, environmental policy or global affairs; and students on GYLDC's partner university programmes at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies and comparable institutions. English working proficiency is required.

©LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the conclusion of the programme, participants will have:

- Developed a working knowledge of the global climate governance architecture — the UNFCCC process, the Paris Agreement implementation framework, and the roles of UNIDO, IIASA and adjacent institutions in translating policy into action.
- Established direct professional relationships with UNFCCC Secretariat officials, UNIDO programme managers, IIASA researchers, and GIZ climate finance specialists.
- Completed and defended a proposal for a COP side event or intervention on a topic of the delegate's choice, evaluated by UN officials in the actual working setting of the UNFCCC campus.
- Built cross-cultural fluency in navigating European institutional environments — from Vienna to Bonn to Frankfurt — a competency directly transferable to graduate study, internship and career settings in international organisations.
- Formed a lasting connection to GYLDC and a clear pathway into the annual COP youth track.

©COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The programme is structured against the six global-competency dimensions of the United Nations Youth Leadership Development Programme:

CREATIVITY	LEADERSHIP	DECISION-MAKING
COLLABORATION	COMMUNICATION	EXECUTION

©CURRICULUM ARCHITECTURE

The programme unfolds in three sequenced phases. Pre-programme online modules establish the substantive foundations; the on-site immersion translates that foundation into direct institutional experience across two countries; and the capstone crystallises the learning into a defensible output — a COP side event proposal presented at the UNFCCC campus itself.

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
<i>Pre-Programme Online Module</i>	<i>On-Site Immersion — Austria & Germany</i>	<i>COP Side Event Capstone</i>
▶ The UN climate architecture and the Paris Agreement ▶ Global governance under multipolarity — opportunities and challenges ▶ Women's leadership in global climate governance ▶ UN internship and career paths — a shared experience session ▶ Delivered by former UN USG Fabrizio Hochschild, former ASG Janos Pasztor, and Peking University climate faculty ▶ Two intensive days online in the month prior to departure	▶ Vienna: UN Office at Vienna, UNIDO, IIASA ▶ Vienna: multilateral diplomacy roundtable at the UN campus ▶ Cologne: University of Cologne — climate and sustainable campus ▶ Bonn: UNFCCC Secretariat — dedicated engagement ▶ Bonn: UNOPS, UN-Habitat, UNITAR, UNESCO-UNEVOC ▶ Frankfurt: GIZ — European climate finance in developing countries	▶ Team-based capstone: propose a COP side event or intervention ▶ Coaching by UNFCCC officials and GYLDC faculty ▶ Presentation at the UN campus in Bonn ▶ Feedback and evaluation by UNFCCC and GIZ specialists ▶ Winning teams nominated for the COP youth track



©SIGNATURE INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

Note — Named partners are indicative. Delivery partners are curated on a case-by-case basis per cohort.

The programme is anchored in direct engagement with the institutions that operationalise global climate policy in continental Europe. Every partner below hosts a substantive session — a briefing by senior officials, a working meeting on live policy files, or a structured tour of programmatic work.



UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The Secretariat that coordinates every COP negotiation; delegates receive a dedicated engagement at the UN campus in Bonn, including sessions on the COP process, loss-and-damage finance, and climate adaptation.



UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Vienna-headquartered UN agency for inclusive and sustainable industrial development; delegates engage on the industrial dimensions of climate transition — from clean energy to green hydrogen to sustainable supply chains.



International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)

Vienna-based independent research institute providing scientific analysis to UN and national policymakers; delegates receive dedicated academic and capability training on integrated assessment modelling for climate policy.



Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Germany's federal international cooperation agency; a Frankfurt-based session on how European climate finance is delivered in partner countries, particularly across Asia, Africa and Latin America.



University of Cologne

One of Germany's oldest and most established universities; delegates engage with the university's climate and sustainable campus initiatives, providing a comparator to the delegates' own home institutions.



UN-Habitat · UNOPS · UNITAR · UNESCO-UNEVOC

Bonn-based UN agencies whose mandates intersect climate governance — human settlements, project implementation, training and research, technical and vocational education. Delegates receive successive briefings from each.

©FEATURED FACULTY

Note — Named faculty are indicative. Delivery faculty are curated on a case-by-case basis per cohort and confirmed approximately 60 days prior to commencement.

The programme's faculty combine former UN senior leadership, current agency officials, and specialists in the applied science and finance of climate transition. Named faculty may vary between iterations; the profiles below are representative of the calibre confirmed for each cohort.



Fabrizio Hochschild

Former UN Under-Secretary-General; Special Adviser to the Secretary-General

Mr. Hochschild delivers the programme's opening framing on the multilateral system and its role in the climate transition. His pre-programme online lecture on UN history and achievements provides delegates with the essential contextual grounding for engagement in Vienna and Bonn.



Janos Pasztor

Former UN Assistant Secretary-General on Climate Change

Mr. Pasztor is one of the world's most senior former UN officials on the climate portfolio. His pre-programme session on global climate governance and UN career paths gives delegates unmatched insight into how the UN's climate architecture actually functions — and how they might enter it professionally.



Ms. Tan Lu Yue

Senior Carbon Analyst, London Stock Exchange Group; Special Adviser (Asia), Sustainable Finance Research Institute

Ms. Tan represents the applied finance dimension of climate governance — carbon markets, sustainable finance, and nature-based solutions. Her session, framed for undergraduate delegates, translates the abstract architecture of Paris Agreement implementation into the concrete markets and instruments that make it work.

©SAMPLE ITINERARY

Note — Itinerary shown is illustrative. Actual programme is curated on a case-by-case basis per cohort.

The schedule below is illustrative of the 2024 iteration. The exact 2027 programme will be released four months prior to commencement. Delegates receive a fully detailed handbook upon confirmation of enrolment.

DAY	FOCUS	SIGNATURE ACTIVITIES
Day 1	Arrival — Vienna	Arrival in Vienna; check-in; welcome briefing on the multilateral system in continental Europe.
Day 2	UN Vienna	Full-day at the UN campus (VIC); UNIDO briefing on inclusive industrial development; UN roundtable on multilateral diplomacy and stakeholder engagement.
Day 3	Vienna University	University of Vienna — climate and sustainable campus session; Vienna city investigation on climate-resilient urban design.
Day 4	IIASA & Cross-Cultural	Full session at IIASA on integrated assessment modelling; academic and capability training; peer exchange dialogue on China–EU relations.
Day 5	Vienna to Cologne	Rail transfer to Cologne; arrival and orientation; evening cultural programme.
Day 6	Cologne — Old City & Uni	Investigation of Cologne's climate-resilient urban design; University of Cologne — climate and sustainable campus session.
Day 7	Bonn — Cross-Culture	Transfer to Bonn; Bonn Museum Quarter — cultural understanding; Bonn central station district investigation on climate-adaptive urban design.
Day 8	Bonn — UN Agencies	Successive briefings: UNOPS on project delivery; UN-Habitat on human settlements; UNITAR on training and research; UNESCO-UNEVOC on TVET.
Day 9	UNFCCC & Capstone	Dedicated engagement at the UNFCCC Secretariat; youth dialogue on climate leadership; capstone presentations on COP side event proposals; closing ceremony.
Day 10	Frankfurt & Departure	Transfer to Frankfurt; GIZ session on European climate finance in partner countries; farewell dinner; departure preparations.

©WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE

Every delegate completing the programme leaves with a defined package of credentials, professional relationships, and pathways into further international engagement. These are structured to deliver durable value beyond the programme itself.

Formal Certification

Certificate of Completion co-signed by GYLDC and GSLDC, valid for academic and professional credit recognition.

Letters of Recommendation

Selected participants receive personal letters of recommendation from senior UN officials — the strongest possible credential for graduate school and career applications.

COP Youth Track Nomination

Priority nomination for the annual COP youth track, including the current COP host country's dedicated youth programming.

Publication Opportunities

Winning capstone proposals published in the International Journal of Youth & Sustainability (ijys.org), with editorial support from GYLDC faculty.

Follow-on Convenings

Priority nomination for the Asia-Pacific Green Low-Carbon Development Forum (Asian Development Bank youth track) and other UN youth convenings.

Alumni Network Membership

Automatic entry into the GYLDC global alumni network — several hundred fellow participants across cohorts and geographies.



©APPLICATION

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis until each cohort fills. Early application is strongly advised, as Schengen visa processing requires a minimum of six weeks and cohort places are typically filled four months prior to commencement.

Eligibility

Undergraduate students (Years 1–4). Working English required.

Cohort

25–35 delegates, curated for balance of discipline, home university and regional origin.

Fee

On application. Fee covers programme delivery, ground programme, materials and certification. International travel and accommodation are separate.

Contact

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