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GIZ's Advisory Services on Governance

Corporate Strategic Evaluation – Short Report
Conducted by external evaluators commissioned by GIZ

Impressum

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The Corporate Unit Evaluation of GIZ reports directly to the Management Board. She is separate from and independent of GIZ's operational business. This organisation strengthens the independence. The Corporate Unit Evaluation is mandated to generate evidence-based results and recommendations for decision-making, to provide a credible proof of effectiveness and to increase transparency on the results.

The evaluation was conducted and the evaluation report prepared by external evaluators commissioned by the Corporate Unit Evaluation. All opinions and assessments expressed in the report are those of the evaluators. GIZ has prepared a statement on the results and a management response to the recommendations.

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Summary

Background, object and objectives of the evaluation

The topics addressed in governance projects by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH are becoming increasingly important in connection with international policy frameworks such as the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015. The Paris Agreement of December 2015 also crucially depends on the promotion of good governance. Changing contexts such as increasing fragility, as well as new issues and new partner needs, also call for governance approaches to be continually revised. Despite the growing significance of governance interventions, GIZ has not yet comprehensively examined their relevance, results and sustainability. The present corporate strategic evaluation on governance, commissioned by GIZ's Management Board, aims at closing this gap. The evaluation was designed to examine GIZ's involvement in the field of governance at three levels; (a) development of the governance portfolio and of the concept of governance, (b) the design of advisory approaches in the field of governance in various priority areas, paying particular attention to the given sectoral and political context, and (c) the relevance, results and sustainability of the advisory services on governance.

The evaluation included projects that have been given the PD/GG-2 marker for participatory development/good governance. These are projects that are designed to strengthen partners of German development cooperation in terms of (a) participatory development, (b) democratisation, (c) good governance and (d) human rights, and in which these objectives are anchored as the principal objective. In order to map the governance portfolios across countries and show how governance projects are linked to sector governance, projects were also included that pursue participatory development/good governance as a secondary objective (PD/GG-1 marker). In terms of commission value, around 80% of GIZ's ongoing overall portfolio (from 2012)

can be allocated to the two PD/GG markers (PD/GG-2: 22%; PD/GG-1: 57%). Based on the sectoral assignment, about half of the portfolio is relevant to governance (key governance themes: 29%; sector governance: 20%).

The corporate strategic evaluation aimed to assess experience with governance advisory services and their success to date, and to contribute towards the strategic development of the portfolio. The findings shall be used to enhance the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of GIZ's interventions in these areas and to generate recommendations for the future strategic orientation of the governance portfolio. In line with the objectives of the evaluation, the following overarching evaluation questions were addressed:

1. How and why has the governance portfolio developed globally and in individual regions?
2. How and why have the thematic priorities of advisory services on governance changed over the course of time?
3. How and why have the advisory approaches in the field of governance developed?
4. How successful have governance projects been?
5. How should the design of the governance projects be rated?
6. How are theories of change used for governance projects?
7. To what extent do the projects meet GIZ's recognised implementation principles (partner orientation, multi-level approach, multi-stakeholder approach)?
8. To what extent are institutionalisation and exit strategies embedded in the project design?
9. Which advisory approaches are implemented?
10. How effective are the advisory approaches within different contexts?
11. Are different advisory approaches implemented from one governance sector to another?
12. What strategies for implementing governance projects have proved to be particularly successful?
13. How do different contexts affect the

achievement of objectives and results?

14. To what extent do governance projects adequately address context factors?

Methodological approach

The evaluation follows a theory-based approach and combines the principles of realist evaluation with those of a contribution analysis. First, the historical development of the governance concept was traced by reviewing the literature and relevant documents. Based on that, the development of GIZ's governance portfolio and its advisory approaches in the field of governance in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s were reconstructed. This was followed by a quantitative portfolio analysis for the period from 2005 to 2018 for projects with PD/GG-2 marker and by sector. The next step was to assess the relevance, results and sustainability of governance approaches as well as the factors for success or failure. During this process, the effect of different contexts on governance projects was also examined. This evaluation synthesis, which covered 65 evaluation reports and three cross-section evaluations, generated hypotheses and identified relationships that were subsequently analysed using specific examples from country portfolios of governance projects. For this purpose, case studies were carried out in four countries (Afghanistan, South Africa, Viet Nam and Peru). The findings of the four case studies were processed in a case study synthesis.

Limitations resulted from a number of factors: Firstly, it must be assumed that the PD/GG marker was not always correctly allocated, which means that the portfolio analysis is inaccurate. Moreover, the reports included in the synthesis did not always robustly present the project's contribution to achieved outcomes, its advisory approaches and use of instruments, which limited the analytical options available during the evaluation synthesis. Due to their heterogeneity and low number, the case studies were not suitable for making generalizable statements beyond the individual cases and contexts. In some cases, findings were obtained based on assessments by partners. A basic willingness for reflection on the part of the partner was an essential prerequisite for successfully carrying out the case studies, but this was not always sufficiently given. In addition, the

analytical depth, and thus the insights gained, varied from one governance sector to another and was generally less pronounced than originally planned. As a consequence, for instance, it was only possible to a limited extent to allocate success factors to specific governance sectors.

Key findings, conclusions and recommendations

Some of the evaluation questions are highlighted here to present the key findings:

How successful have governance projects been?

The success of the governance projects was evaluated using the OECD-DAC criteria relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Taken together, the evaluation reports and case studies analysed during the corporate strategic evaluation confirm the high degree of relevance of the governance projects. The projects addressed relevant reform strategies and processes of the individual partners. Almost all projects were in line with international strategies or agendas. The reports also confirmed that the governance projects show considerable ability to adapt to changing framework conditions. Overall, the evaluation synthesis rated the relevance of the projects as very high, with an average score of 2.0. The effectiveness of the projects also achieved a very high rating. According to the evaluation synthesis, more than 70% of the reviewed reports obtained a score of 2.0 or higher for the effectiveness of governance projects. Both, the evaluation synthesis and the case studies, indicate that results were mostly achieved in an enhanced performance capacity of state institutions. At impact level, only a forecast of results was generally possible at the time of the present evaluation. This is because almost all evaluations conducted by GIZ are interim or final evaluations. Impact received an average rating of 2.4 across all reports included in the evaluation synthesis. While this rating is lower than the relevance and effectiveness ratings, it is still relatively good. According to the evaluation synthesis, the sustainability of the projects was also rated 2.4 on average. Together with impact, this criterion therefore received the poorest rating of all the OECD-DAC criteria. As in the case of impact, the

assessment of sustainability in the evaluation reports is rather based on a forecast, since the assessment was rarely made as part of ex-post evaluations.

However, the problems identified during the corporate strategic evaluation indicate that the extremely positive assessment of success should be challenged. For instance, using the partner's political strategies as the formal reference point for assessing relevance does not ensure that the political will and ability to enforce policies are in place so that reforms are really implemented. Referring to effectiveness, actual results are very heterogeneous and tend to be outputs and short-term outcomes rather than long-term outcomes or even impacts. Moreover, governance projects mainly deliver advisory services in the fields of technical and organisational consultancy and human capacity development (HCD). Further, governance projects do not adequately succeed in operating in policy fields outside the state sector, especially in those that would imply the involvement of civil society and private sector organisations and the promotion of policy networks. Results at impact level are also mainly described as strengthened state capacity. It should nevertheless be noted that governance projects do achieve very useful results with regards to certain objectives. This applies predominantly to the performance capacity and transparency of state institutions, policy coherence and coordination at various levels of the state and to access to state services. To a far lesser extent, governance projects are able to enhance the ability of individuals and organisations to resolve conflicts and to improve the overall conditions for development and for the success of development cooperation projects. The influence on political context factors also remains limited.

How should the design of the governance projects be rated? How are theories of change used?

The evaluation synthesis and the case studies pointed to numerous weaknesses in terms of the planning quality of governance projects and the respective underlying theory of change. The results levels were defined in very different ways, for instance. Often, it was not clear whether the results being described were outputs, outcomes or

impacts. As the underlying results mechanisms were not described in detail, the theories of change did not give a proper idea of how long-term outcomes and impacts will be achieved. Nor did the project design contain a clear strategy of how relevant actors and processes could be promoted to generate outcomes from the outputs. Despite the known importance of context factors, the projects did not adequately address the political, socio-economic, institutional and cultural frameworks. Nor do most of the examined projects sufficiently address the subject of target groups.

Which advisory approaches (advisory tools) are implemented?

The governance projects implement different advisory approaches to different degrees and combine them in various ways. Which approaches or methods are applied, crucially depends on the context and scope for action in the partner landscape. Technical and organisational advisory services and strategic HCD measures were the ones most frequently used. However, it also became clear that there is often a measure of uncertainty as to how policy advice should be designed within technical cooperation, which tasks and results can be allocated to it and how it can be distinguished from other advisory approaches.

What strategies for implementing governance projects have proved to be particularly successful?

The evaluation identified five closely connected elements that are pivotal for the successful implementation of governance projects. The multi-level approach was identified as one of the key success factors, provided it is strategically pursued and the implementation measures are linked with each other in an effective manner at the different levels. This is not always the case. The ultimate purpose of this approach is to form vertical networks between relevant actors at different levels of the political and administrative system. The multi-level approach has now been introduced in almost all governance projects regardless of the governance sector concerned. Scaling up has proved to be a precondition for achieving broad impact in governance projects. However, implementation was not always pursued sufficiently in the long run or equipped with the necessary resources. The exploitation of synergies, for

example by linking governance and sector governance projects, is another factor that promotes a broad impact. Its added value is not always recognised, however. Obstacles also exist due to the different results chains in the individual sectors and the fixed organisational and technical structures. The evaluation showed that strategies designed to safeguard sustainability are rarely incorporated into the project design and in considerations related to implementation, even though sustainability may possibly be more important than the achievement of broad-based outputs and outcomes. Nor were exit strategies part of the project design or the steering of implementation in the examined projects. Yet, such strategies are particularly important for governance projects in fragile contexts, which form an increasingly important part of development cooperation work.

How do different contexts affect the achievement of objectives and results? To what extent do governance projects adequately address context factors?

Both, the case studies and the evaluation synthesis, conclude that governance projects are highly sensitive to their given context. The main context factors that determine whether or not a project is successful include political will and political assertiveness, weak institutions and fragility as well as the partner country's values and regulatory policy focus. As the corporate strategic evaluation on governance shows, the context factors are rarely addressed on an ongoing and systematic basis despite the high context sensitivity of governance projects. To date, this would appear to be the case for both, during strategic project planning and project implementation. A consequence of this failure to address the context factors is that risks and potential as well as obstacles to achieving effectiveness and impact are not systematically identified.

In summary, the analysis allows the following **key conclusions** to be drawn:

- All governance projects should formulate an appropriate theory of change. This should be based on the specific conditions in the partner country and the changes to be

supported there.

- Good project design and an implementation strategy that is aligned to the given context and degree of complexity are vital in order to ensure that a governance project is not merely a stand-alone solution.
- Context factors must play a key role when planning, implementing and evaluating governance projects. This makes it essential to conduct ongoing analyses of the partner country's political economy.
- Given its value orientation, advisory services on governance must be extremely transparent. Providers of such services must constantly examine their interventions and display any contradictions.
- Governance projects designed to improve political and institutional frameworks must be in a better position than other project types to operate within actor-centred networks and multi-level political systems, to bring together actors with divergent interests and to bear in mind positive and negative incentives for political and institutional change.
- Governance projects must be sufficiently flexible to react to changing conditions and needs of partner organisations. Project management must closely examine how this flexibility affects sustainability.
- The relationship between conventional advisory services on governance and sector governance advice is not clear. There are no indications that advisory services on governance can be organised at least as successfully by means of sector governance alone.
- Policy advice is a necessary service provided by governance projects if they are designed to achieve structural change at the level of political and institutional frameworks. However, policy advice is one of the most complex forms of service provided by a governance project and is not one that governance projects can carry on providing on a permanent basis. In the long run, this service must be integrated into suitable state partner structures and/or professional non-governmental organisations.

- Planning, monitoring and evaluation must be interconnected throughout the intervention life cycle. Governance projects must be designed and implemented in a much more exploratory way. They also need a targeted orientation phase so that advice can be designed to suit the specific context, to build trust with the partner, identify local knowledge that can be used for providing advice, etc.
- The sustainability of the results of governance projects may be more important than the question of whether the results are achieved at output, outcome or impact level. A project might focus on generating just a few results at the system level and then continue to ensure that these results are sustainable.

Looking at the overall findings of the corporate strategic evaluation on governance, they can be summed up as follows: Whatever their context, advisory services on governance are not in a position to decisively or even significantly influence overall policy in a partner country and its macropolitical conditions. The results of governance projects are more modest and often hard to discern at macropolitical level. Notwithstanding all this, in partner countries with conditions conducive to development and with policy-makers who are ready and able to implement reforms, advisory services on governance can certainly make useful contributions. They can help to disseminate reforms and make them more deep-rooted, enhance the coherence of reforms, strengthen the capacity of state organisations, promote the participation of stakeholders and non-governmental actors and influence political conditions at local and sometimes at meso level, too. In fragile countries, advisory services on governance can help to strengthen pro-reform actors and raise and spread awareness of the need for change. Occasionally they can also promote stabilising political decisions. In countries, whose political systems are diametrically opposed to the values and regulatory policy expectations of German development cooperation, advisory services on governance may contribute – albeit modestly – to raising the quality of selected

policies and to conveying different values and regulatory policy principles to key actors. The corporate strategic evaluation on governance provided indications and evidence of many of these factors.

The following five **recommendations** are based on the overall findings of the corporate strategic evaluation on governance:

1. A strategy process should be launched at GIZ in order to elaborate, within an appropriate time frame, proposals for the resolution or clarification of the major design and strategy problems, as well as of the unanswered questions identified during the evaluation. This primarily concerns the topics addressed in Section 3 of the main report.
2. The Sectoral Department should be tasked with examining the theoretical foundation of GIZ's advisory services on governance and updating it in line with practical requirements (formulation of a policy paper similar to the former technical guidelines). This should be done based on the transformation concepts formulated by the Sectoral Department and on the comments made in Section 2 of the main report.
3. In the interest of managing expectations, a communication strategy and guidelines should be drawn up in order to present governance themes and the results of advisory services on governance to the public and in the political arena.
4. The Evaluation Unit should be tasked with formulating specific standards and methods for the evaluation of governance projects. These standards and methods should be based on the results of action taken in response to recommendation 1 and on the new evaluation concepts that were introduced following the evaluation reform at GIZ.
5. When the time is right, GIZ should launch a dialogue with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and other commissioning parties and clients (especially the German Federal Foreign Office and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature

Conservation and Nuclear Safety) to discuss future standards for advisory services on governance.

Structure of the main report

The main report is structured as follows: Section 1 starts by explaining the concept and methodological approach of the evaluation and its limitations. Section 2 is focussing to the theoretical basis and examines both the question of what governance is and what implications arise from the concept, and the theory of change that underpins advisory services on governance. Section 3 presents the key evaluation findings. It begins by looking at the development of the governance portfolio at GIZ and its advisory approaches in the field of governance (Section 3.1). It goes on to examine the relevance, results and sustainability of the projects (Section 3.2) and the key factors that influence the success of the advisory services provided (Section 3.3). Section 4 presents the key conclusions and recommendations.

The original main report (in German) can be downloaded [here](#).

Statement

Corporate Strategic Evaluations are conceived and conducted in the responsibility of the Evaluation Unit upon the decision of the Management Board. They address the need for decisions and change processes of the company, which can affect both service provision and corporate strategies. Corporate strategic evaluations serve to support evidence-based decisions, organizational learning and accountability.

The use of the evaluation results is promoted by focusing on the interests, the need for information and the implementation capacities of the actors involved in the conception. Among other things, this is ensured via reference groups in which central stakeholders accompany the evaluation process.

Governance was selected as the subject of this corporate strategic evaluation against the background of the current trends emphasizing its corporate strategic relevance and different challenges GIZ faces in this regard. The topics covered by governance projects and by other projects addressing governance as a key field of activity in their sector are gaining further importance in connection with the 2030 Agenda. Changing contexts such as increasing fragility as well as new partner needs also call for further adjustments to governance approaches. Despite the importance of governance interventions, GIZ has not yet comprehensively examined their success.

Against this backdrop, the corporate strategic evaluation examined GIZ's involvement in the field of governance at three levels:

- the development of the governance portfolio and of the concept of governance
- the design of advisory approaches in the field of governance in various priority areas, paying particular attention to the sectoral and political context
- the relevance, results and sustainability of advisory services on governance.

The object of evaluation comprises governance interventions in which good governance is

anchored as the principal objective. The evaluation focuses on four priority areas of advisory services on governance at GIZ:

- local governance, including democratic participation and civil society
- sector governance (economic governance and environmental governance)
- public sector policy and administrative management and the rule of law
- peacebuilding and stabilisation.

In September 2019, GIZ commissioned an evaluator, Dr Ricardo Gomez, to draw up the main report on the corporate strategic evaluation on governance. The main report presents an enriched synthesis and triangulates the intermediate findings from the sequential data collection phases of the corporate strategic evaluation. As the former director of the Evaluation Unit, the commissioned evaluator managed the corporate strategic evaluation on governance up to July 2019 and played a key role in the design and alignment of the evaluation. As a result of the many years that Dr Gomez spent as a governance expert at GIZ (among other things as the former director of GIZ's Division 42, Governance and Democracy), together with his evaluation experience, the synthesised intermediate findings were able to achieve best possible use for the company. Various independent evaluators were commissioned with the conduction of individual evaluation steps between August 2018 and September 2019: Stefan Oltsch Consultancy (evaluation synthesis), WINS Global Consult (case studies in South Africa and Viet Nam), ARC Analysis Research Consultancy GbR (case study in Afghanistan) and alteri – cross cultural projects (case study in Peru and synthesis of case studies). Staff from the Evaluation Unit supported the implementation of the corporate strategic evaluation. They also analysed the portfolio based on the data contained in GIZ's Project Processing System (PBS) and supported two of the four case studies on the ground in South Africa and Viet Nam.

The evaluators used a combination of qualitative

methods, especially document analysis, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. The corporate strategic evaluation does not analyse the impact of individual governance projects at target group level, but instead examines individual examples that show the influence of governance interventions on political and institutional frameworks. It furthermore examines the relevance, results and sustainability of the interventions in the given sectors, based on four country case studies and a synthesis of 65 evaluation reports and three cross-section analyses. Section 1.2 of the main report provides a detailed description of the methodological approach and its limitations.

Overall, the evaluation's findings are valid and useful for revising GIZ's governance portfolio. The corporate strategic evaluation provides a summative assessment of experience and results achieved to date in the field of governance and identifies recommendations for further action. In so doing, it contributes to the development of forward-looking approaches and the strategic orientation of the governance portfolio in a separate strategy process that will follow the corporate strategic evaluation. Acceptance of the management response by GIZ's management in the Strategy Committee confirmed that this strategy process will be carried out.

To ensure that the evaluation findings are useful, the evaluators sought to engage in close dialogue with all relevant actors at GIZ. In addition to regular coordination sessions with the reference group of the corporate strategic evaluation, the following exchange formats were also used:

- dialogue event at the thematic forum on Decentralisation and Local Governance
- dialogue event with staff from the Governance and Conflict Division
- discussion with staff based in Germany and field staff during the case studies
- presentation and discussion of the provisional findings at the 2019 evaluation day.

The report was produced by the commissioned external expert. From GIZ's point of view, the evaluation was carried out in a user-oriented manner using robust methods.

Management response

The following management response shows the extent to which GIZ’s management agrees with the recommendations and how it rates their relevance and usefulness.

In the next step, GIZ will draw up an action plan for the agreed recommendations and decide on these recommendations in the relevant body. This plan will describe the improvement measures to be carried out and state the responsible organisational unit, the deadline and the resources to be used. Implementation will be monitored by the Evaluation Unit and by the organisational units carrying out the measures.

The main report evaluates the experience to date and the results achieved by GIZ’s advisory services on governance. It further contains recommendations for action referring to the future strategic orientation of the governance portfolio in a separate strategy process that will follow the corporate strategic evaluation. The corporate strategic evaluation on governance therefore makes an important contribution to GIZ’s positioning and market development in the field of governance.

| Management Response | Comment/justification |
|---|--|
| <u>Recommendation 1:</u> | <p>A strategy process should be launched at GIZ in order to elaborate, within an appropriate time frame, proposals for the resolution or clarification of the major design and strategy problems, as well as of the unanswered questions identified during the evaluation. The Sectoral Department should coordinate the process. The following topics should be given particular consideration after checking ongoing processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and implementing governance projects, taking adequate account of their context and complexity • Results at political and institutional level versus results at target group level • Involvement of civil society (and the private sector) in advisory services on governance – as actors in the governance projects and as arenas in which the projects generate results • Planning, monitoring and evaluation must be interconnected throughout the intervention life cycle • How context factors are addressed during planning and implementation (methods, relevance, type of influence and others). |
|  | <p>In view of conceptual developments since 2017, much greater attention needs to be paid to operational aspects of implementation: ‘How can we leverage what we already know?’. The Sectoral Department should therefore start by examining whether instruments and concepts developed since 2017 may help to solve and clarify the challenges outlined in the recommendation. Any gaps identified should subsequently be processed, paying special attention to how instruments and concepts can best be mainstreamed in practical service delivery.</p> |

- Recommendation 2: The Sectoral Department should be tasked with examining the theoretical foundation of GIZ's advisory services on governance and updating it in line with practical requirements (formulation of a policy paper similar to the former technical guidelines). This should be done based on the transformation concepts formulated by the Sectoral Department and on the comments made in Section 2 of this report. Here too, an alignment should first be made with ongoing processes, and the following themes should then be given special consideration: The governance concept (definition, dimensions, good governance criteria, etc.)
- Operationalisation of the political and institutional frameworks as a field of activity and results level of governance projects
- Interplay of conventional governance advice and sector governance advice
- Advisory services on governance (especially policy advice)
- Rollout of the new concepts referring to recommendation 1 and 2 in the sector networks.



The Sectoral Department will be tasked with examining the theoretical and empirical foundation of GIZ's advisory services on governance and of updating it where necessary to reflect practical requirements.

Recommendation 3: In the interest of managing expectations, as discussed above, a communication strategy and guidelines should be drawn up in order to present governance themes and the results, limitations and potential of advisory services on governance to the public and in the political arena.



The recommendation will be subsumed as a point to be addressed under recommendation 1.

Recommendation 4: The Evaluation Unit should be tasked with formulating specific standards and methods for the evaluation of governance projects. These standards and methods should be based on the results of action taken in response to recommendation 1 and on the new evaluation concepts that were introduced following the evaluation reform at GIZ



During implementation, the Evaluation Unit will examine whether specific concepts and methods should be (further) developed that are geared to the complexity and results levels of governance (recommendation 2).

Recommendation 5: When the time is right, GIZ should launch a dialogue with BMZ and other commissioning parties and clients (especially the German Federal Foreign Office and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety) to discuss future standards for advisory services on governance.



The results of recommendations 1 and 2 should be incorporated in a timely manner into the regular dialogue with commissioning parties and clients.



Accepted



Partly accepted / rejected



Rejected

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