How sustainable is our company?

We use the Corporate Sustainability Handprint (CSH) to answer this question for the offices in our partner countries. The CSH is GIZ’s own sustainability management tool with which we collect and evaluate relevant data and set ourselves targets for making our business processes more sustainable. The services we provide – the programmes and projects – are not covered by the CSH.

Contents

In this report, we present the findings of the CSH process to the end of 2016 for more than 90 per cent of our offices abroad. We cast light on the progress of the CSH to date and compare it with the preceding year, and we explore the self-assessments, self-commitments and good practices of the offices abroad that form part of the overall process. Finally, we look at the successes and challenges that have been met along the way and put forward some recommendations for future action.

Target group of the report

The report is targeted at GIZ staff who were involved in the CSH process in their country or project offices as well as all colleagues who are interested in the CSH and external stakeholders.

Environmental data

The environmental data collected in the CSH does not form part of this report. It will be published in our integrated company report, which will be available on our website by the end of 2017: www.giz.de/de/downloads/giz2016-en-IUB16.pdf.
Dear readers,

One of the goals of our sustainability programme was to introduce the Corporate Sustainability Handprint® (CSH) in our partner countries by the end of 2016. We have achieved this goal and are thus an important step closer to obtaining insight into our worldwide activities and to laying the foundations for continuous improvement of our sustainability performance.

Seventy-four countries completed the CSH in the first cycle. As a result, the local CSH teams have set out 779 self-commitments for the next two years in our four sustainability dimensions of economic capability, social responsibility, ecological balance and political participation. A third of all self-commitments are taken in the areas of resource efficiency, CO₂ emissions and sustainable event management. This shows that the creation of the CSH has provided our country directors and programme managers with a tool for a structured evaluation of the status quo and for setting themselves targets in the areas that have priority in their specific country context. The CSH is flexible enough to cope with the widely varying situations in which it is used.

Another reason for introducing the CSH was to obtain reliable data on our global consumption of resources and our greenhouse gas emissions. In our sustainability programme, we have set ourselves the target of making our avoidable greenhouse gas emissions climate neutral by 2020 – on a worldwide basis. The CSH provides the figures for this. Although there are still gaps and weaknesses in the data, the results provide a benchmark that we can use to enshrine fixed reduction targets in our corporate strategy.

It has become clear that performing the CSH has meant extra work for colleagues abroad. The methodology and processes have yet to bed in and there is scope for refinement of the tool. At this point, I would therefore like to express my heartfelt thanks to the colleagues who have brought the CSH to life, and I wish the CSH coordinators and teams every success in implementing their self-commitments and in conducting the process again.

Show your handprint!

Tanja Gönner
Corporate sustainability at GIZ

Sustainability as a guiding principle

As a provider of international cooperation services, we implement sustainable development projects and programmes. On behalf of the German Government, we advise our partners on a wide range of issues, including conservation of the environment, climate action, the promotion of democracy, social security and sustainable infrastructure.

Sustainability is also a guiding principle of our corporate activities and is therefore enshrined in our Corporate Values. The Sustainability Board, led by the Chair of GIZ’s Management Board, and the Director of Corporate Sustainability are jointly responsible for the development of the corporate sustainability regime. The Corporate Sustainability Handprint (CSH) is our key instrument for managing corporate sustainability in our local programme and project offices. The CSH enables core corporate processes at our offices in our partner countries to be purposely sustainability-oriented. It is a fixed component of our strategic sustainability management, which is aligned with a variety of global guidelines and standards.
Our actions are guided by the principles of sustainability. We believe that only by combining social responsibility, ecological balance, political participation and economic capability will current and future generations be able to lead secure and dignified lives.

GIZ’s Corporate Values

Dimensions of sustainability and fields of action

We regard sustainability as comprising the dimensions of ecological balance, economic capability and social responsibility, plus a fourth dimension, that of political participation. Thus, we deliberately emphasise our dialogue with stakeholders and opportunities for employee participation. In each of these dimensions, there are fields of action that are particularly important in the light of our strategic priorities for sustainability management.

Because the individual dimensions interact in the process of sustainable development, there may be synergies between them but there may also be conflicting objectives. For example, switching from face-to-face meetings to video conferencing can cut both costs and CO₂ emissions, but procuring the equipment needed may involve higher costs in the medium term. Conflicts of this sort need to be resolved through negotiations between all the parties involved, with due consideration of all the dimensions of sustainability.

Social responsibility

We fulfil our social responsibility obligations by attending to the health and safety of our staff in the workplace and on the way to work, promoting a good work-life balance and taking steps to improve the employability of our staff.

Political participation

For us, political participation involves facilitating the equal treatment of all staff through measures to promote diversity and equality of opportunity and through codetermination within the company. In addition, by involving stakeholders we connect with people and organisations all over the world. We also seek to promote social engagement outside our projects.

Sustainability breakfast in Brazil.
Corporate sustainability at GIZ

Ecological balance

We help to improve the ecological balance by taking steps to protect the environment, for example by using resources efficiently and reducing our use of electricity, water and paper. Mitigating climate change is particularly important to us. Through our sustainable event management policy, we seek to make our many conferences and workshops more environmentally friendly and to reduce their impact on the climate.

Economic capability

To improve our economic capability, we aim to continuously improve the quality and efficiency of our management processes. Cost-effectiveness is a key consideration in GIZ’s procurement processes; our purchasing of goods and services is based both on cost and on ‘local, social and ecological’ considerations. At the same time, our commitment to integrity and the prevention of corruption remains a core aspect of our work.

UN Global Compact

GIZ has signed up to the UN Global Compact, a framework for incorporating sustainability principles into a company’s strategic and operational management processes. This commits us to respect for human rights, fair labour conditions, high environmental standards and adherence to strict anti-corruption guidelines. The principles of the Global Compact are also reflected in the CSH, which gathers information about concrete measures in these areas.

EMAS

EMAS is the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme. We follow the EMAS guidelines at our German offices; this involves collecting annual environmental data that we publish in an externally verified environmental statement. Because EMAS is based on EU directives, it would be difficult to implement it at our locations abroad, but through the CSH we collect environmental data that is relevant to the country and project offices.

Global Reporting Initiative

The Global Reporting Initiative regularly updates its sustainability reporting standards, which forms the basis for our reporting. The principles of the UN Global Compact are linked to the GRI standard.
Sustainability management in our partner countries is the responsibility of the relevant country directors and project managers. It is a core task for these countries and a component of our corporate sustainability programme that we manage centrally and not on a project basis.

The Corporate Sustainability Handprint devised by the Sustainability Office is a management tool for overseas offices that they use to measure and evaluate their own sustainability performance. The CSH enables these offices to select their own priorities in the light of local conditions. Throughout the process of drawing up their ‘handprint’, partner countries receive support from the Sustainability Office in Bonn.

The outcome of the CSH is a fact sheet that details sustainability data, the self-assessment, the self-commitment and good practices.
The CSH: Sustainability management on the ground

The CSH is produced annually in around forty countries, or around half of the partner countries in which we maintain an office.

Every two years the countries collect their sustainability data and conduct a self-assessment of their performance. The self-commitment sets sustainability targets for the next two years. This enables management processes at country level to be adapted in the light of strategic considerations. The countries can highlight existing corporate sustainability measures as good practices, thereby demonstrating their positive contribution to corporate sustainability, their ‘handprint’.

Each country director appoints a CSH team that is responsible for the local implementation. The team consists of national and seconded staff who are familiar with the issues covered in the CSH.

Progress to date

Since the pilot phase in 2013/14, 73 out of 79 offices in our partner countries (92 per cent) have carried out the CSH at least once. This means that the regional departments have met their target of achieving an implementation rate of 90 per cent by the end of 2016. Thirty-two countries performed the CSH for the first time in 2016. Countries in which meaningful implementation of the CSH is not possible – perhaps because of the political situation – are exempt.
Implementation of the CSH by the different regional departments was staggered over a two-year cycle. In 2016, it involved mainly countries in the B2 area. Only three countries have not yet performed the CSH.

![Graph showing CSH implementation by region]

### Self-assessment

The first stage of the CSH involves collecting qualitative and quantitative sustainability data. On the basis of this data, the countries perform a self-assessment of their sustainability performance. In accordance with the principles of the environmental management system, this assessment takes place in four stages: targets, implementation, review and adjustment of measures. Twenty-five points can be awarded in each of these categories, resulting in a maximum score of 100.

The guidelines on awarding these points are considered in the country context; some latitude is therefore possible. This ensures that features peculiar to the location – such as the need to access project locations by car or plane, with corresponding implications for CO₂ emissions – can be taken into account. The offices in our partner countries can also set priorities of their own in this assessment. It is therefore difficult to compare self-assessments in the various fields of action in absolute terms. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw conclusions about the areas in which many countries regard action as necessary. Comparing several CSH processes also reveals trends that can be very interesting to the countries themselves.

### Results for 2016

The participating countries rate their performance in the integrity & anti-corruption and health, safety and security fields of action particularly highly, awarding it around 70 points. In third place is employee participation. Issues that receive a lower rating also yield important insights: participants award themselves only just over 40 points for their performance in social engagement and resource efficiency, CO₂ emissions and sustainable event management received the lowest rating, at around 30 points. In our offices, sustainability thus seems to be closely associated with ideas about protecting the climate and the environment, with the offices setting themselves correspondingly high standards as a result.
Comparing 2014/15 and 2016

The composition of the participating countries varies each year. Comparing the results of different implementation periods can therefore yield information on which fields of action are regarded by all countries as having scope for improvement.

Inspection of the average self-assessment ratings in 2014/15 and 2016 reveals a clear pattern: in both data collection rounds, the countries award themselves around 30 points on the dimension of ecological balance, especially in the CO₂ emissions and sustainable event management fields of action.

The fields of action that receive the highest ratings of nearly 70 points in both implementation phases are health, safety and security in the social responsibility dimension and integrity & anti-corruption in the economic capability dimension.
These are also high-priority areas within our integrity, health and safety management system outside the CSH.

The distributions of ratings in the two data collection periods yield a very similar picture, whereby the ratings of the fields of action were slightly lower in 2014/15 than in 2016.

On average, therefore, the countries rate their sustainability performance in the individual fields of action in very similar ways; this could indicate that they are also alike in their perception of the need for action. Consideration of the self-commitments shows that this is so.

Self-commitments

In the CSH, self-commitments are targets and measures that the offices in our partner countries commit to in order to make their corporate core processes more sustainable. The self-commitments, which range from small-scale immediate actions to the development of new strategies and guidelines, set out what the country hopes to achieve in the next two years.

They are specified only for the dimensions and not for individual fields of action, because the majority involve several fields of action. The targets need to be achievable within a defined period, and progress towards them must be measurable. This progress is verified no more than two years later in the next CSH. Successfully realised self-commitments can be included in the CSH as good practices and provide an example for other countries.

Results for 2016

To provide a detailed picture, we have presented the results of the self-commitments separately for each of our regional departments (see below). Some clear trends emerge. For all countries, the most self-commitments are made in the dimension of ecological balance – the area in which self-assessments were lowest. Two-thirds of the participating partner countries have committed themselves to at least...
three targets or measures in this dimension. Because there are no specific rules, the countries set themselves varying numbers of targets: there are some countries with only three targets and others with 16. The lowest numbers of targets and measures occur in the political participation dimension, probably because the issue is relatively intangible.

Comparing 2014/15 and 2016

In 2014/15, 34 per cent of the commitments made by participants were in the dimension of ecological balance, while in 2016 the figure was 31 per cent. As a result of the low rating awarded to this dimension in the self-assessment, the local offices therefore see the greatest need for improvement as being in the areas of resource efficiency, cutting CO\textsubscript{2} emissions and sustainable event management.

Around 25 per cent of self-commitments are in the social responsibility dimension; the figure is equally high in the two reporting years. Contrasting with the ecological dimension, the self-assessments of social issues were highest in both 2014/15 and 2016. Despite this, our colleagues abroad prioritise these dimensions and set themselves a greater number of targets in these areas. This may be because these targets are easier to meet, being often independent of external factors and of high priority for the staff themselves.

Examples of self-commitments

**Ecological balance**
Convert the printers to double-sided printing, purchase hardware or software for videoconferencing, competition to cut CO\textsubscript{2} emissions, CO\textsubscript{2} reporting in contract with travel agency, green office team, install solar panels, use 100% recycled paper, events in hotels certified as sustainable, CO\textsubscript{2}-neutral office, awareness-raising through events, set up car-sharing scheme, buy renewable energy, proper disposal of electronic waste, plastic recycling.

**Social responsibility**
work-life balance survey, provide child care facilities, guidelines on working from home, first-aid course, free medical checkups, manual and safety training for drivers, standardised recording of sickness days, stress awareness day, family day, intercultural training.

**Political participation**
modified job advertisements with special mention of women/minorities/people with disabilities, quarterly meetings of the representatives of national staff, brown bag lunches on various issues, communication strategy, newsletter for the country office, corporate brochure, sign up to local equality initiatives, formalised cooperation with groups within society, donor organisations, blood donation campaign.
Good practices: Our handprint for sustainability

The good practices in the CSH are strategies, measures and initiatives that local country and project offices have already implemented in order to improve their sustainability performance in certain areas.

They go beyond GIZ’s Orientation and Rules (O+R), which are designed to encourage autonomous and flexible behaviour that is appropriate to the specific situation. Including good practices in the CSH process ensures that the existing commitment to sustainability at company level in our partner countries – our positive handprint – is recognised.

Exchanging good practices between countries – via our CSH portal or through peer consultation between two countries – leads to new forms of cooperation. Peer consultation is an add-on to the CSH that enables two similar countries (similar regional context or portfolio) to discuss their experience of the CSH process. This encourages the spread of innovative ideas that are easy to implement and sparks bilateral dialogue on corporate sustainability.
Overview

The good practices reported by the countries are as diverse as our partner countries and their working priorities. They range across all the dimensions and cover issues as varied as ergonomic workplace design, codes of conduct, guidelines on sustainable procurement and the installation of solar panels.

On average, all the countries report more than three good practices per sustainability dimension. As with the self-commitments, the emphasis was on social responsibility, while the fewest initiatives occurred in the area of political participation. Nevertheless, there are significantly fewer differences between the dimensions and a far more balanced overall picture than is the case with the self-commitments.

This suggests that the countries like to use good practices as a means of showcasing what they are already doing to promote corporate sustainability. We have provided four examples of good practices from different countries on the following pages.
By setting up a Sexual Harassment Redressal Committee (SHRC) and adopting an anti-sexual harassment policy, our offices in India are improving safety in the workplace and helping to create an appropriate working environment for all staff. The establishment of such a committee is required by law in India. However, our local office goes further than this and enables not only women but also men and subcontractors to turn to the committee. To help them in their work, the members of the SHRC receive regular training from external lawyers and experts. The members of the committee are proposed by the Country Director in consultation with the HR department and are appointed for three years. The law specifies that the committee must be chaired by a woman; the other committee members in our local offices are senior female and male members of staff. All staff are formally notified of the composition of the committee and the members also introduce themselves by email. To enhance visibility, the SHRC is introduced to all new staff at the induction event and it is also represented at the annual country conference. A separate email address makes it easy to access the committee as a neutral contact point. All GIZ staff in India are required to attend training on the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace in order to raise awareness of inappropriate behaviour.

If GIZ’s sexual harassment policy is thought to have been infringed, the SHRC investigates the case in confidence, is involved in clarifying it and issues recommendations. An annual report on all incidents is submitted to the local district officials for statistical purposes.
The theme of the annual staff meeting at our office in Ecuador was “sustainability”. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were described in a workshop and the staff discussed how their work could contribute to implementing them. Parallel to the event, a selfie competition encouraged participants to portray their personal commitment to sustainability in a creative manner, such as heroes for sustainable development.

Sustainability criteria also played a crucial part in the choice of the event venue: the selected hotel has its own recycling system, solar panels and a vegetable garden. Local staff are employed on fair terms.

This setting helped to illustrate the concept of sustainability as involving a combination of many small measures. When planning the event, the organisers focused in particular on enabling participation, ensuring that there was scope for informal communication in lounge areas and during communal activities. Those included, for instance, interactive sustainability-themed games in the hotel’s extensive grounds.
Good practice: Economic capability

Indonesia:
Shieldo, anti-corruption representative

Shieldo is GIZ’s anti-corruption mascot in Indonesia. He appears as a life-size figure at events and training courses, in comic strips and videos and – appropriately for the subject – on bottles of hand sanitiser; his job is to explain the principles of ethical behaviour to staff and partners. Shieldo assumes the role of a member of staff who faces the challenge of behaving correctly in a potential conflict situation and needing to contact the relevant person in the country office or at our head office.

He thus works with existing bodies such as the Compliance Committee, which decides on overarching questions of integrity and compliance. If specific concerns arise in everyday work, there are two internal integrity advisors and an external ombudswoman who employees, project partners, clients and the general public can contact in confidence. Their contact details can be found in all Shieldo publications.

"For us the CSH is a strategic tool that we can use to combine a lot of smaller measures and keep track of them in order to mainstream sustainability in our everyday processes."

Lothar Rast, Country Director Guatemala
The garden at our Guatemala country office in Guatemala City was redesigned in 2016 with sustainability in mind.

An underground system was installed to reduce the amount of water needed for irrigation; by comparison with conventional irrigation methods, it enables water savings of up to 70 per cent to be achieved.

The builders used gravel rather than asphalt when constructing the car parks; this enables rainwater to soak away and does not interfere with the natural hydrological cycle.

But ecological aspects were not the only consideration: wifi and a pavilion mean that staff can work peacefully in the garden or take a short break – an important contribution to work-life balance.

The garden is also used for various events such as workshops and parties. In future, an area of the garden will be made available for growing vegetables for staff. This not only encourages informal communication and hence participation but also facilitates the sustainable procurement of healthy food.
CSH Round 2…
Experience of the CSH so far

Since the pilot stage, the CSH has been regularly performed at offices in our partner countries every two years. By the end of 2016, five countries had completed the CSH for the second time. In these countries, there are already noticeable changes in the areas of corporate sustainability and use of the CSH as a management tool.

Inclusion of CSH targets in country planning

The annual country planning process is the most important tool for managing our work in partner countries. Most of the countries that have conducted the CSH for the second time therefore monitor their self-commitments at least partly through the country planning process. This ensures that even short-term measures planned using the CSH are incorporated strategically into local management plans and that no parallel process takes place.

Raising awareness of corporate sustainability

After the second implementation of the CSH, countries are already reporting that their staff are more aware of the sustainable organisation of business processes. Carrying out the assessment and data collection in teams leads to discussion and to new and creative ideas on how sustainability can form part of our business processes. In the first round of the CSH, the focus in some countries tended to be on processes managed centrally by the country office. When the CSH was repeated, there was a greater emphasis on initiatives from the project offices and on linking existing activities, such as a sustainability day, with the CSH. An important aspect of this is the team-building momentum that the CSH acquires as a result of being performed regularly.

Data collection and implementation of the CSH

In the second round, the majority of countries perceived implementation of the CSH, and in particular the data collection involved, as faster and simpler than in the first round. This was partly because of the steps taken by some countries to integrate data collection into their everyday work. In particular, the collection of flight data by travel agencies, which already occurs in some countries, makes things significantly easier for our staff. The concrete formulation of self-commitments and the self-assessment was also noticeably simpler in the second round: implementing the self-commitments was more straightforward and it was easier to measure their success. In some cases, implementation was so successful that the self-commitments could be put forward as good practices.

“The CSH should be viewed as an opportunity to promote a longer-term process for bringing about an active culture of sustainability”

Jochem Lange, Country Director Viet Nam
Inspection of the self-assessments of countries that have now completed the CSH for a second time reveals a trend towards a worse assessment in almost all fields of action. Only in the economic capability dimension is the trend in the opposite direction. It is possible that their increased knowledge of the CSH process has raised countries’ awareness of corporate sustainability, leading them to assess themselves more strictly.

"The CSH is much more exciting and much more time-consuming than is generally thought."

Hans-Peter Debelius, Country Director Honduras

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What next?

Now that more than 90 per cent of our offices in partner countries have successfully implemented the CSH, across-the-board introduction of the instrument is complete.

For the majority of countries the next step is to complete the CSH process for the second time, and in some cases for the third. The CSH has already resulted in initiatives and measures designed to make our business processes more sustainable being launched in some countries.

Particularly noteworthy in this context is the embedding of the CSH in events such as staff days or environment days that take place regularly in the countries. In some countries, the data required for the CSH is already being collected on a continuous basis.

This reduces the work involved in the CSH process itself, improves data quality and makes changes more readily visible.
The CSH is now an established instrument that helps put our guiding principle of sustainability into practice in our international offices. This year it will once again be thoroughly evaluated and revised.

The aim of this revision is to use the feedback from our country and project offices to anchor the CSH even more firmly in the awareness of our staff and stakeholders. It is also conceivable that data collection will be simplified further.

Further information

CSH-portal

The CSH portal on GIZ’s internal Global Campus provides an introduction to the CSH process, all the documents needed to perform the CSH to download, the fact sheets from the countries and an overview of good practices.

CSH-video

Our video on the Corporate Sustainability Handprint has won us a place as one of three finalists for the German CSR prize 2015 in the category “Best video on a company’s CSR engagement.”