GIZ orientation on human rights

GIZ stands for human rights. As a federal organisation, we implement German Government policy and base our actions on Germany's Basic Law, in particular the human rights guarantees enshrined in that Law.

As the world's leading provider of international cooperation services for sustainable development, we work around the globe to help people improve their living conditions, making a substantial contribution to developing and fulfilling human rights.

Our frame of reference

Human rights constitute the frame of reference for everything we do, and we see that frame of reference as a particular responsibility for GIZ. This commitment reflects our Corporate Principles. As a federally-owned company, we base our actions on the human rights obligations into which the Federal Republic of Germany has entered.1

We also acknowledge our own corporate responsibility for human rights: GIZ has signed up to the UN Global Compact and follows the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Our contribution and our responsibilities

Throughout their existence, GIZ and its predecessor organisations have made substantial and diverse contributions to strengthening human rights. On behalf of the German Government and other commissioning parties and clients, we implement projects targeted directly at improving the human rights situation in our partner countries. In other areas of international cooperation, we make a substantial indirect contribution towards securing human rights through our advisory and capacity development work.

The way in which we work boosts the ability of states, civil society and the private sector to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and empowers individuals to assert and realise their rights.

Some of the countries in which we work have major shortfalls in their implementation of human rights. As part of our commissions, we support these countries in moving towards compliance with international standards and developing their ability to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. We refer explicitly to this in negotiations while at the same time reflecting the individual country context and advising our cooperation partners accordingly.

We are sensitive to difficult human rights situations, which we examine, monitor and work to counter. In consultation with our commissioning parties, we attach great importance to the way we work and the results we

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1 This includes primarily the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Human Rights Conventions and the European Convention on Human Rights.
achieve. In the commissions we undertake, we operate in accordance with our commissioning parties’ policies on promoting human rights, such as the BMZ strategy paper Human Rights in German Development Policy.

Child rights and child protection

Children’s rights are an integral part of GIZ’s human rights-based approach. Children are particularly vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse, and require special attention. GIZ addresses children’s rights and child protection at various levels. For one thing, a large number of the international cooperation projects we are commissioned with aim to directly or indirectly improve children’s living conditions. Furthermore, GIZ ensures that children are not exposed to any form of violence, abuse or exploitation in the course of its activities. Child protection is part of its management system, which GIZ is continuously developing and is based on processes and rules. GIZ implements appropriate measures to ensure this protection. In addition, child protection-related risks are taken into account and evaluated in various business processes – such as procurement and travel management – and risk-reduction are included in these processes. All employees are called upon to conduct themselves so that children are not subject to any form of violence, exploitation or abuse.

Goal-setting and addressees

This orientation strengthens GIZ’s stance on human rights and on child protection and serves as a guideline for all our employees. It applies to all organisational units and informs our actions, both within the company and outside it. It is integral to our understanding of sustainable development and underpins our rules, procedures and activities.

This orientation also emphasises the importance of human rights for GIZ in relation to our clients, our business partners, our partner institutions, and the public at large.

Implementation

We ensure that our employees have the expertise, awareness and authority to put this orientation into practice.

Our rules and procedures are reviewed regularly, in particular to ensure that we act appropriately and professionally in situations that raise human rights issues.

We will respond immediately and appropriately to concerns that any of our actions may be having a negative impact on human rights. Please address any such concerns to humanrights@giz.de.