»Working Together«
Documentation of GIZ’s first Sustainability Stakeholder Day
Berlin, 2 December 2016
The stakeholder dialogue on sustainability – background and procedure

Dialogue with its stakeholders is a core component of GIZ’s sustainability management system. In its Progress Report on Sustainability 2015 the company declared that it would intensify communication with representatives of politics, business and civil society, commissioning parties, sub-contractors and cooperation partners. Its aim is to encourage participatory, open and transparent dialogue in order to obtain feedback on GIZ’s sustainability performance. Corporate strategy is reviewed in the light of stakeholder expectations; if necessary, objectives are adjusted and extended. GIZ’s sustainability management system provides the basis for continuous improvement of the company’s performance and effectiveness. GIZ aims to achieve high effectiveness across all sustainability dimensions.

The stakeholder dialogue involved a web dialogue from 19 September to 14 October 2016 and a Stakeholder Day held at the Berlin Representation on 2 December. The participating stakeholders were representatives of German government ministries, the federal parliament, state governments and municipalities, business, civil society, trade unions, the scientific community, the media, foundations, international organisations (including the EU, OECD, WHO) and, as a pilot, some of GIZ’s partners in countries in which it operates.
Structure of the Sustainability Stakeholder Day

Drawing on the results of the web dialogue, GIZ identified six key topics: cooperation culture, digitalisation, human rights, sustainable procurement, communication/transparency and environment/climate. These topics were selected because they met one or more of the following criteria: they were issues that had been prioritised by stakeholders in the web dialogue or were the subject of particularly controversial comment, they had been prioritised very differently by GIZ and by stakeholders, and/or they were issues on which GIZ sought a better understanding of stakeholders’ feedback and expectations.

The six topics were discussed in detail with stakeholders in workshops at the Stakeholder Day on 2 December 2016. In the workshops, which used the ‘World Café’ format, participants were asked to record their thoughts, ideas and suggestions on the ‘table cloths’. On the following pages we present a brief overview of the key findings of the web dialogue and the Stakeholder Day. We also outline our commitments and share some impressions of 2 December in Berlin.
What action areas are important for GIZ?

Weighting of GIZ issue areas in the web dialogue (overall, weighted, 157 participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue / action area</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The environment &amp; climate change</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Service quality &amp; innovation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social engagement</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results orientation &amp; sustainability of results</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Diversity &amp; inclusion</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing transparency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sustainable transport, offsetting CO₂ emissions</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner orientation &amp; enabling local partners</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Commissioning party orientation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance &amp; anti-corruption</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gender &amp; diversity</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost-effectiveness &amp; efficiency</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reducing risks</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable procurement</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Digitalisation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning organisation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sustainable event management</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal security &amp; safety at work</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Work-life balance &amp; health</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity to deliver</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Data protection</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sustainable building</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
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Comparative ratings of German-speaking stakeholder groups

Orientation line: overall
Deviations of ZG, W and RLK
What did participants expect of the Stakeholder Day?

The focus was on the desire for open dialogue and information on GIZ’s sustainability management

Some participants’ expectations:

- ‘Information on GIZ’s sustainability management’
- ‘Open constructive dialogue’ / ‘Multi-sectoral dialogue forum’
- ‘Open feedback to GIZ on what needs to be improved’
- ‘Results of the web dialogue and next objectives in the dialogue with stakeholders’
- ‘Encountering different points of view on an issue’
- ‘Gaining a better understanding of the organisation’
- ‘How does GIZ measure the sustainability of its projects? Criteria, indicators, definitions’
- ‘Thinking broadly about sustainability but defining clearly why we are talking’
Cooperation culture workshop

Key points from the dialogue

- The stakeholders regard open and honest cooperation on an equal footing as desirable. In addition, clear and transparent structures in the partner relationship and within the company (definition of contact partners) are an issue.

- There is potential for improving cooperation with civil society actors. It was suggested that ways of involving civil society in GIZ’s service provision should be devised (e.g. through methods of calling for proposals and dedicated forums with civil society).

-'We are looking forward to the strategy paper on “Cooperation with Civil Society” and hoping that it defines specific measures and formats'

-'High [staff] turnover increases knowledge loss, weakens “philosophy”'

-'In the GTZ era there was more cooperation with civil society organisations in Germany’

-'Sometimes enjoys a dominant position’

-'There is a gap between aspiration and reality’

-'Differential between permanent and temporary staff → GIZ’s social responsibility?/ Licence to operate with tax revenues → Consequences for individuals’ life planning, especially for younger members of staff’

-'Structure of GIZ’s contact partners is “over complex” → makes cooperation too complicated’

-'Perception that civil society is being used as an “implementing organisation” but not treated respectfully as a partner’
Digitalisation workshop

Key points from the dialogue

- The comments show that participants are uncertain whether the issue of digitalisation is understood at project level or at corporate level.
- At the same challenges associated with digitalisation are addressed (data protection, inundation with data, inadequate basis of trust).
- It is also suggested that there should be a digital dialogue (cooperation).

‘Identify the benefits of digitalisation: explain the concept, differentiate …’
‘Development of apps, e.g. for conferences’
‘Virtual cooperation platforms instead of sending documents to and fro’
‘Increase the proportion of [information and communication technology] components in programmes and projects’
‘Information (project documents, contracts, etc.) in the e-room (in the pocket)’
‘Influence of digitalisation on the business model? Are we on the brink of disruptive change?’
‘Cooperation/communication between BMZ & GIZ on digital editing system when preparing offers’
‘The human factor (trust basis cannot be created through digitalisation – but it does produce benefits)’
‘GIZ should define what it means by digitalisation’
‘Transparency: - communicate more via social media; - communication within the institutions (BMZ + GIZ), e.g. anti-corruption strategy’
‘Digitalisation could be the new well-drilling’
Human rights workshop

Key points from the dialogue

- The issue of respect for human rights is closely linked to cooperation with governmental partners → conflict of objectives with GIZ’s actual focus on target groups.
- Challenge in this connection: how can GIZ’s role as implementing organisation be combined with compliance with its duty of care? Can achievement of development cooperation objectives always be combined with observance of human rights?

‘What does GIZ do when state partners (usually state authorities) are accused by target groups of infringing human rights?’
‘GIZ should support civil society in partner countries (against “shrinking spaces”)’
‘Challenge: [civil society] not just as a “tick-the-box” stakeholder but as a necessary actor for accountability – even if it is inconvenient’
‘Where does responsibility lie? Not only with BMZ – in practice GIZ has great influence, especially on implementation’
‘In particular: what is the procedure for dealing with conflict?’
‘Problem: human-rights-averse (self-aware) partners?’
‘Procedural requirements as a mechanism of due diligence: transparency (=responsibility)’
‘Basis of all services --> all stakeholders including alliances [Public Private Partnerships]) (incl. GIZ) should explicitly discuss human rights’
Communication/transparency workshop

Key points from the dialogue

• A key concern of stakeholders was the way mistakes are handled (the concept of a culture of learning): this involves communication of both successes and failures.

• GIZ’s external and internal communication should be reviewed in order to identify who it is attempting to reach with which objectives – this has implications for the choice of channels and language.

‘Regard difficulties as an opportunity to learn and communicate them directly’
‘Make project experience – even if negative – more freely available’
‘You only hear from GIZ when they want something from you’
‘Communicate negative things too; “error culture”’
‘Presentation instead of self-presentation’
‘Improve the error culture within GIZ – or introduce it in the first place?’
‘Easily understood language would be nice’
‘Language and project descriptions that are too “fuzzy”’
‘Communicate good practices’
‘Participatory principle → lack of information on changes of course’
Sustainable procurement workshop

Key points from the dialogue

• ‘Credibility’ was a key issue in the sustainable procurement workshop.
• The call for training in the ‘how’ of sustainable procurement and in learning from own projects shows that the issue must be closely linked to a functioning knowledge management system.

‘Align criteria for awarding contracts with sustainability criteria’
‘Sustainability as standard, reversal of the burden of proof for deviation from the norm’
‘Are domestic flights still necessary/permissible for a company involved in sustainable development?’
‘Assessment of suppliers through Ecovadis’
‘Examine the requirements of public-sector clients (government ministries), e.g. the German Environment Ministry’s transport rules’
‘Include in external presentation the conflicts of objectives/limits → credibility’
‘Make good approaches visible --> Global Compact etc.’
‘Definition/specification of criteria/principles is necessary (at present there is a strong focus on rules/processes)’
‘Learn lessons for the procurement process from your own projects (→ knowledge transfer [German Global Compact Network], Textile Alliance etc.)’
Environment/climate workshop

Key points from the dialogue

- The feedback on environmental/climate issues shows that on the whole stakeholders are satisfied with GIZ’s sustainability performance.
- Important suggestions for improvement were made → as with sustainable procurement, learning partnerships with stakeholders may be appropriate here.

‘Shift from a focus on risks and problems to a focus on potentials’
‘Consider sustainability parameters in connection with business trips’
‘Ideas management for staff in the field structure / idea competitions!’
‘Start by conducting potential-identifying workshops with the companies for specific industries/countries’
‘Holistic objectives ← → individual projects’
‘Focus on relevant issues (disposal potentials)’
‘Potentials for improvement are difficult for an outsider to assess’
‘From outside this is regarded as key to sustainability’
‘+ vegetarian/regional food at events’
‘Environment/climate is an “umbrella”’ → globally relevant and real (noticeable)’
‘Things that can be done simply have already been done’
‘Define and follow up internal targets (stages, long-term)’
‘Employee/partner engagement → incentive systems → what you offer should also be lived out’
Core messages: what we take from the process

• There is explicit recognition of the value of a dialogue that is open and in particular direct.
• There is an explicit wish to understand our work better.
• Credibility in our actions and communication are key prerequisites for our ‘licence to operate’.
• We are measured against high standards and should have a pioneering role as a sustainable company.
• Our sustainability performance to date in our operations and products is rated as moderate.
• Our cooperation with commissioning parties, the private sector and civil society stakeholders needs to be improved (e.g. clarity of roles, contact structures).
• The error and learning culture within GIZ needs to be improved and lessons learned should be communicated transparently.
We want dialogue

First stakeholder dialogue on sustainability: other lessons learned

• It was not possible to resolve all the discrepancies: one of the likely reasons for this is that not all the participants in the Stakeholder Day took part in the web dialogue.

Our commitment: what we undertake to do

• We shall work on establishing continuous formats and platforms as part of a communication strategy, in order to enable ongoing dialogue with our stakeholders.

• As part of the follow-up to the 2016 Stakeholder Dialogue we shall inform you about important developments at GIZ in the six issue areas of cooperation culture, digitalisation, human rights, communication/transparency, sustainable procurement and environment/climate.

• We shall also continue to initiate improvement processes and report on progress in connection with our other important sustainability issues.
Impressions of the Stakeholder Day