



## Knowledge sharing

### Advisory service

#### The challenge

Those responsible for social issues often find a huge amount of information on the challenges they face, such as shortages of expertise, the mobility of people and the future of cities. At the same time, they are often frustrated that the available information is not enough to create the solutions they need. How can these actors tap into the tacit knowledge that exists and work with other actors to decode the information? How can they share their experiences through dialogue without getting caught up in political concerns?

Actors from emerging and developing countries are increasingly keen to generate their own solutions. How can their ministries of finance, for example, profit from experiences of regulation gained in other countries? How can they use that knowledge, avoid mistakes and create better policies in their own particular political circumstances? How can they engage in a trustful and uncompetitive dialogue while respecting each other's political potentials and constraints?

#### Our approach

Knowledge sharing is an open process of innovation in determined settings. GIZ is itself an actor that willingly share and learn with others, but we are also experienced facilitators of knowledge sharing, and seek to inspire other actors and enable them to co-create solutions together. We support sharing processes in which a variety of actors with different backgrounds and experiences explore topics from different perspectives. They meet on an equal footing and exchange experiences in a dialogue. Knowledge sharing is a good way of finding and creating innovative answers to demanding questions, such as those involved in national or regional reform processes. We tailor our knowledge sharing activities to suit the needs and objectives of

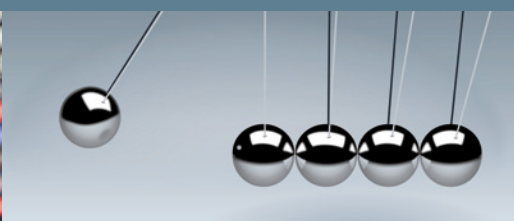
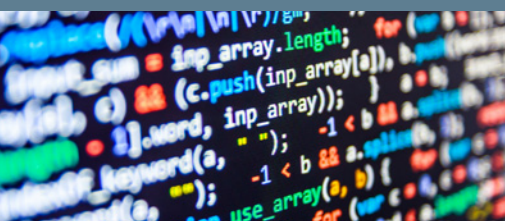
the actors. The approaches range from focused knowledge sharing within a closed and mutually trusting group, to the co-production of open knowledge beyond the boundaries of organisations and known actors. For open and closed groups alike, we offer single events or more institutionalised formats such as networks or online solutions.

Examples of GIZ's main knowledge sharing activities:

- » Sharing conferences are one-off events where a range of stakeholders meet in various KS sessions, exchanging ideas, building networks and finding inspiration.
- » BarCamps are one-off events at which groups of peers organise open learning and innovation processes for themselves. Everyone is entitled to join in and speak.
- » Study trips allow a selected group of actors to meet their peers in other political contexts, in order to generate innovations. They are embedded in a programme and might be conducted in a sequence.
- » Labs involve a range of different actors interested in solving relevant social challenges, to have an impact on local and regional issues, setting the international agenda, or sharing knowledge with social movements.
- » Sharing networks consist of both virtual and face-to-face communities of practitioners to share and cocreate, usually facilitated by GIZ.
- » Open source solution platforms harness the potential of the decentralised, collaborative production of open knowledge. We initiate and nurture such processes to trigger long-term learning beyond organisational boundaries.

The ingredients of effective knowledge sharing:

- » a common question or challenge to which all parties seek an answer
- » appropriate diversity and complementarity among the participants
- » a peer-to-peer or multi-stakeholder approach among participants, free of hierarchy



- » willingness of all parties to pursue a collective, flexible working process
- » readiness to adopt new perspectives on a shared experience
- » creativity and humour, enabling actors to share ideas transparently
- » suitable process architecture adapted to each situation
- » respectful exchanges on an equal footing and trustful collaboration
- » an independent facilitator for the sharing process

### Our services

Experience shows that most actors are willing to share ideas and change their perspectives in an environment of trust and confidence. In part, this can develop at formal meetings, but informal gatherings and collective social (ad)ventures are just as important. At GIZ we are proficient at establishing such favourable sharing environments. Our practical learning processes include the following elements:

- » Knowledge sharing assessment (identifying the relevant topics and the important actors with their common interests; designing process architecture)
- » Trust-building (creating an open, respectful and interactive environment where the actors are the resources)
- » Co-creation and open innovation (reducing complexity; unearthing implicit knowledge and presenting experience in a comparable, understandable and wellstructured manner; co-creating new knowledge)
- » Quality controlling (reflecting and monitoring)
- » Long-term knowledge sharing models (designing virtual communities for self-governance, developing open access modalities and operator models)

In tailoring the knowledge sharing process, we combine various formats including face-to-face communication and virtual interaction (knowledge platforms, blogs, communities of practice and webinars).

### The benefits

Knowledge sharing affords actors a new perspective on their own experiences and those of others. Participants address their experiences as part of the sharing process. They acquire knowledge from the sharing network and contribute creatively to new solutions. Due to the varied perspectives of those involved, the collectively created solutions are much more effective than individual ones. They also help actors avoid repeating others' mistakes. At the same time, knowledge sharing strengthens networks and systems of cooperation, and the co-creation of knowledge encourages a self-sustaining, peer-based system of knowledge production. Communities steer themselves, thereby minimising external inputs and internal maintenance in the long run.

### An example from the field

Supported by GIZ, the *Alliance for Financial Inclusion* is a global knowledge network for central banks, finance ministries and regulatory authorities, whose single purpose is to improve access to formal financial services for population groups that are currently excluded. The AFI secretariat organises face-to-face meetings as well as regional and global conferences, themed working groups and a virtual network. It helps connect its members with strategic partners. Special features include a global networking approach, South-South dialogue, peer learning and the scaling up of its members' more effective policy approaches. Since it began in 2009, AFI's membership has grown rapidly. It currently comprises 111 organisations from 92 countries. It builds on the willingness of developing country representatives to shape the network's activities and to contribute their own experiences. The alliance is financed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Australian Agency for International Development and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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