



## Applied research and innovation

### Advisory service

#### The challenge

The importance of knowledge as a factor for production is steadily increasing. Innovative solutions are needed to address global challenges such as climate change, digitization and food security while at the same time fostering sustainable economic growth and social progress. Against this backdrop, universities play a key role as they are catalysts for innovation. In addition to provide training for specialists and managers, universities are partners for applied research. However, universities in developing countries often cannot fulfill their mission in teaching and research since the conditions are not given. For example, scientists do not have enough access to funding or to current research results. There is a lack of infrastructure and equipment. Researchers are often not part of international networks and do not have regular exchange with industry partners.

#### Our approach

GIZ supports selected higher education institutions all over the world in fostering the conditions for research and innovation. The focus is on applied research with the objective to be practice-oriented and contribute to sustainable development. Scientists in our partner countries are involved in the regional and international exchange of knowledge and research results. In addition, we support them with acquiring key competencies in the fields of research management and third-party funding. However, we do not only focus on higher education institutions. The complex challenges of our time, such as climate change, a carbon-free economy, water supply, food security, sustainable urban development and digitization, call for alliances between higher education institutions, the business community, the civil society and the public sector. Therefore,

we foster cooperation among these players on a local, regional and the international level. In addition, we support so-called Science-to-Policy formats at regional, national and international level. These formats are strengthening the role of universities and research institutions in providing evidence-based policy advice.

#### Our services

We support higher education institutions in strengthening their research and innovation structures. In terms of content, we focus on research topics that are particularly relevant to the future of our partner countries, for example food security, agriculture, energy, climate and water. The involvement of local companies is key for the support of projects ideas in applied research. Independent experts can support the selection of these ideas. Overall, we build on alliances to foster research and innovation: We promote (inter)national cooperation among higher education institutions and knowledge transfer. We support the joint development of project proposals and research ideas and help to establish cross-border partnerships between researchers and the beneficiaries of the research findings. We provide advice on how to develop ecosystems for innovations where universities cooperate with partners from of the private sector and civil society. We also support the establishment of transfer offices as focal points for cooperation. Numerous services are targeted directly to students and graduates. We support them in developing entrepreneurial skills and support them in promoting their business ideas. We jointly work with our partners in the development of research-oriented master's and postgraduate courses. We ensure that young researchers have access to international research literature, support the development of research agendas and proposals, and promote the dissemination of knowledge through conferences. Through scholarships, we support the further academic qualification and academic career of teachers and



(young) researchers. In addition, we accompany projects in the field of research for development.

### The benefits

Efficient universities drive innovation and accelerate sustainable social and economic development. They provide inputs to politics, communities and the private sector. Cooperation with higher education institutions can contribute to the competitiveness of companies. Companies are able to react to trends much faster and develop products and innovations aligned to local conditions. This can lead to the creation of jobs and can create an attractive environment for investors. To ensure that the knowledge generated in universities is disseminated in adequate channels, GIZ leverages the network among relevant players. The established local presence, the methodological expertise and the wide network with numerous players in key sectors help to achieve this. The cross-border mobility of students and scientists can contribute to social development. It promotes intercultural understanding and can support regional integration. Through knowledge exchange, higher education institutions act as platforms for professional and social discourse. Especially in fragile states or countries in transition, higher education institutions are often among the few persisting institutions and can make a significant contribution to the modernization and transformation of societies.

### An example from the field

The textile industry in Bangladesh needs to foster social and ecological sustainability in the production. Higher education and research should contribute to tackle this need. Against this backdrop, GIZ is supporting the cooperation between universities from Bangladesh and Germany since 2016. Four research cooperation projects involving 14 higher education institutions in Bangladesh and Germa-

ny have been established. Projects receive support if they collaborate with companies, address a specific need and if they aim to improve environmental protection and working conditions. In addition to the individual cooperation projects, GIZ supports the organization of events with the aim to bring together higher education institutions and companies. The universities in Bangladesh take up experiences into their study programs and research projects and thus promote change. In the medium perspective, social and ecological responsibility shall be taken up by textile factories. Thus, this GIZ project is contributing to the “Alliance for Sustainable Textiles” by improving the conditions in global textile production.

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