



## Labour and social standards

### Advisory service

#### The challenge

In many emerging and developing economies, the growth of the productive sector is also accompanied by an increase in the employment rate. Working conditions in these countries, however, are often not in line with the Decent Work Agenda and with the core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Exploitation, child labour, forced labour and precarious work are widespread, especially in the informal sector. Employees in the formal sector also often face poor working conditions. They are exposed to health and accident hazards at work and often have no access to social protection if they lose their jobs or become unable to work. For self-employed workers, there is usually no social security system at all, regardless of whether they work in the formal or the informal sector. Moreover, every fifth employee worldwide belongs to the working poor, i.e. lives in poverty despite being gainfully employed. One reason for this is that legally stipulated minimum standards and minimum wages are often not respected.

#### Our approach

As part of German development cooperation's core theme "Training and Sustainable Growth for Good Jobs" and as a contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (esp. SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth), we are committed to creating not only more but also better employment opportunities, with the overall aim of improving the living conditions of the population. We work to ensure that workers' rights are legally secured and respected and we support social security systems. This also includes social dialogue between employer and worker representatives so that both sides can represent their respective interests in a structured way. The aim is

to bring more people into employment relationships that take into account the ILO decent work standards. Not only workers benefit from improved working conditions, but also employers, because satisfied workers stay longer and are more productive. Companies with good working conditions are therefore more competitive. Only with good jobs and the resulting higher productivity can economic development be advanced and poverty overcome in a sustainable manner.

#### Our services

- » Through our advisory services, we support policymakers to advance labour and social standards. We also promote the development of employment protection legislation and the monitoring of its implementation.
- » We advise on the formalisation of employment relationships.
- » We support both public and private employers to develop a decent working environment that takes the health and social needs of workers into account and is gender-sensitive and inclusive.
- » We cooperate with companies and trade unions on safe working conditions and occupational health and safety.
- » We support the integration of labour standards into training curricula.
- » We develop competencies of labour inspectorates and advise on reducing corruption risks.
- » We support dialogue between businesses, trade unions and governments.
- » We support the development and expansion of social security systems and emphasise the link between labour market and social policy (e.g. through the development of accident insurance).
- » We create international partnerships for labour standards



in the digital economy and the gig economy.

### The benefits

Several factors are crucial for a good and decent standard of work: improved working conditions, higher and fairer wages as well as health and safety at work. Good jobs are a prerequisite for economic development and growth. They improve productivity and lay the foundation for social and economic advancement through regular and adequate income. This benefits individual workers as well as entire communities. Good working conditions also contribute to workers' empowerment and their strengthened autonomy also improves their long-term prospects on the labour market. German development cooperation works to ensure that international labour and social standards are implemented and complied with along global supply chains. GIZ collaborates with a broad network of actors from social and labour market policy and is in close exchange with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), with employers' associations and the ILO. As a GIZ partner, you also benefit from our cooperation with international and local civil society as well as with actors from the private sector and academia. The concern for human rights is an integral part of all GIZ projects.

### An example from the field

Better working conditions through a targeted qualification of specialists and managers was the core objective of the project "German-Bangladeshi University Network for Sustainable Textiles". The project, which was funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ, ran from 2017 to 2020. In order to make the production conditions in Bangladesh's textile industry more compatible with social and environmental standards, the project specifically adapted the technical and business management

courses for training specialists and managers. Together with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the FES, 70 managers in companies and 70 teachers at universities were trained. In addition, a qualification programme for young trade unionists was set up. The largest textile association in Bangladesh expressly welcomed the BMZ initiative "Green Button" as a complementary measure that strengthens consumers' awareness of the problem.

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