



Scientific partnerships and knowledge networks

Advisory service

The challenge

Knowledge is a key resource for shaping the future. However, in many of our partner countries, access to knowledge and information is only limited. This creates a knowledge gap which in turn hampers socio-economic development. Many partner countries in the Global South cannot afford to invest in research. They lack not only research structures, but also materials and equipment as well as knowhow. As a result, these countries are reliant on scientific partnerships and networks. Industrialised countries benefit from international scientific networks too, particularly when it comes to achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The growing complexity of development issues and global challenges increasingly requires specialised, up-to-date interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge. Methodological and transformational know-how is also in demand. Research findings are incorporated into global, regional, and local problem-solving approaches. They form the basis for well-informed, sound policy advice. Practical knowledge and lessons learned from development cooperation are fed back into universities and research institutions in industrialised countries. This creates an ‘ecology of knowledge’ where actors work together to generate, share, disseminate, update, and archive knowledge, before applying it in practice in a target-oriented manner.

Our approach

GIZ is stepping up its cooperation with scientific institutions and supports the establishment, realisation and further development of scientific partnerships and knowledge networks. These partnerships and networks are integrated into technical cooperation projects in a targeted manner, in order to boost their impact. This applies not

only to projects in support of universities. Scientific partnerships are frequently an integral component of projects that work on reforming and modernising key sectors and on key issues such as climate protection and digitalisation. The partnerships are fine-tuned to suit the particular context. They include research projects, accompanying research, scientific advice, training for experts and managers and for young academics, scientist exchange programmes, university-business partnerships and platforms for dialogue and knowledge-sharing, to name just a few examples. Our networks bring together state, civil society and industry stakeholders, universities, and research institutions from many different countries. Knowledge networks and platforms that operate at the interface between academia, the private sector, society and the political arena are specifically used to provide a basis for informed policy-related decision-making. All approaches are geared towards building bridges and addressing global challenges.

Our services

We provide broad knowledge and background information on development-related scientific partnerships and knowledge networks as well as on global trends in the area of science and research. We advise on the following issues:

- » Use of these partnerships to support regional integration
- » The establishment and implementation of platforms to promote dialogue between policymakers, the academic community and practitioners in development-related areas
- » The establishment of global and regional contact and coordination structures (‘secretariats’) for knowledge networks



- » Coordination of knowledge networks (administration, logistics, acquisition, public relations)
- » Strengthening of the needs-based approach and sustainability of scientific partnerships and networks (establishment of links to the regional and international context, stakeholder involvement, multi-stakeholder partnerships)
- » Design and implementation of research studies within projects

We facilitate and support:

- » Contacts with experts from the academic community
- » Access to knowledge networks
- » The establishment of sustainable, cross-sectoral partnerships with universities

The benefits

Scientific partnerships and knowledge networks are effective approaches in development cooperation, from a number of different perspectives. They support dialogue, at the interface between policymakers, the private sector, civil society and specific sectors on the one hand, and the academic community on the other. They also provide critical analysis that supports the work of implementing organisations in the field of development cooperation. They facilitate evidence-based policy advice. As a result, they play a significant role in capacity development in our partner countries. Scientific partnerships and knowledge networks channel a variety of different competencies: Research excellence can be combined with practical “hand-on” experience and with experience stemming from cooperation and consultancy, thereby safeguarding the transfer of research findings to practical applications. Scientific partnerships facilitate transnational, cross-sectoral dialogue on relevant development issues for experts at all stages of their career. In partner countries in particular, they pro-

vide young academics with attractive opportunities to advance their career. Partnerships can improve competencies and foster innovation. Cross-border scientific partnerships and networks can also help foster internationalisation and regional integration. They also provide a solid basis for multi-stakeholder cooperation and can boost the sustainability of development measures. Furthermore, they can help support joint acquisition and positioning with German public sector clients, the European Union (EU) and other international donors and partner countries.

An example from the field

“Research Networks for Health Innovations in Sub-Saharan Africa” is a EUR 48 million regional initiative of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) that strengthens the capacities of North-South and South-South research partnerships. Five research networks with African and German partners aim to incorporate local research results for neglected and poverty-associated diseases into policy advice, thereby helping to strengthen health systems. Twenty-six African research institutes in 14 African partner countries cooperate in the networks. GIZ is the implementation partner and works closely with BMBF and the Project Management Agency at the German Aerospace Center (DLR-PT).

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