

FUTURE FORUM

2022

Future Forum 2022 - Thematic Concept

„From Growth to Wellbeing: Rethinking Development for a Digital, Green, and Just Transformation“

Why? - Case for Action

The devastating impacts of climate change, rising inequalities within and across countries, increasing fragility and global health emergencies demand a rethinking of socio-economic practices and systems that follow the economic growth paradigm. The world faces profound economic, environmental, and social challenges, as the international community comes to realize that the basic requirements and consumption needs of an ever-growing population cannot be sustainably met by simply maximizing economic output. The destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity in the world, through the massive conversion of natural areas into agricultural land and the excessive use of fossil fuels, has led to global warming and weather extremes, increasing pollution of soil, air, and water, as well as serious health risks and effects on humans, animals, and plants. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the interdependencies between social progress, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability. It has led to a global economic crisis with reinforced inequalities, jeopardizing the achievements of decades of development, hitting particularly the vulnerable in developing countries and putting at risk social cohesion.

At the same time crises come with opportunities. Arguably, the pandemic has shifted public perception of the relationship between markets, governments, and society, prompting deeper reflection on our economic model and how to “build forward better”. The economic downturn has mobilized unprecedented funds, which governments and the international community can use for a sustainable recovery, e.g., by strengthening the resilience of systems and individuals, by investing in green infrastructure, technologies, and skills and by promoting decent work opportunities. There is a gro-

wing realization in both industrialized as well as developing countries for the need of an economic transformation. More and more countries are moving away from fossil energy sources and are actively striving towards a “just and green transition”, to thrive for a protection of global goods for people in both industrial and developing countries, now and for future generations. For developing countries this comes with the opportunity to leap-frog sustainable solutions for a green recovery. Such a profound transformation requires a concerted effort that involves all members of society. A rethinking of traditional approaches from an early age (e.g. through education systems), innovative private sector approaches and the use of opportunities provided by the digital transformation is key.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has also accelerated the ongoing digital transformation. The emergence of digital technologies has had and continues to have profound implications for sustainable development as it transforms economies and societies worldwide. Digitalization not only challenges the notion of territorial boundaries e.g., through digital markets or platforms, but also brings up disruptive phenomena to cope with. New means of interaction, business models, products, and services, as well as increased access to information provide illustrative examples of their transformative power as well as risks in terms of e.g. data protection. However, it also brings along challenges, such as the protection of workers' rights in platform economies and digital sovereignty in the context of data driven business models.

New perspectives, opportunities, and risks demand to rethink the way we implement development politics to make it both more sustainable and effective.

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How? – Objectives– Goal and Learning Experience

The Future Forum is a unique occasion to bring together GIZ's sectoral communities with selected experts and practitioners once a year to discuss and develop a shared vision of the future we want to contribute to. Designed as a learning journey with a series of debates, there is room to question our work, exchange perspectives with colleagues from different regions of the world, challenge our beliefs and deepen our knowledge – to fill GIZ's vision with life: "We work to shape a future worth living around the world".

The Future Forum 2022 aims at shaping the debate beyond mere economic growth and the central question of how to shift economic thinking towards combining progress across all dimensions of sustainable development and harnessing emerging potentials for development. The Future Forum 2022 will present initiatives from countries experimenting with alternative economic paradigms and highlight project examples pioneering socio-economic and ecological paths of development in the digital age. It will thus explore challenges and opportunities for spurring GIZ's contribution to a sustainable, peaceful, and inclusive recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic by addressing various leverage points for a transformation of economic and social development respecting planetary boundaries and human well-being. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to a common vision for GIZ employees and the community, to identify practical approaches and methods for enriching GIZ's advisory work and project implementation in the future. To achieve this goal, the GIZ Future Forum 2022 engages GIZ's development practitioners, in cooperation with academia, think tanks and civil society, to answer the following guiding questions:

- » How can we support and work with our commissioning parties and partner countries to achieve an inclusive, green and digital transformation that secures wellbeing for all citizens in alignment with environmental and climate goals?
- » How can we combine the economic, environmental and social aspects of development in our daily work in the face of current megatrends?
- » How can we work with our commissioning parties and partner countries to become more resilient in the face of current megatrends and global threats?

The GIZ Future Forum 2022 is methodologically conceived as a learning journey, i.e. a series of digital events that culminate in a two-day conference that will take place in Potsdam, Germany from 13th to 14th September 2022.

A key principle for the learning journey is to go beyond sectoral perspectives and leverage the potential of cross-sectoral and -disciplinary exchanges, to widen the view, to enrich existing concepts and thus, to strive for improved solutions. Therefore, a call for proposals invites all interested colleagues to engage, bring in their perspective, experiences and expertise and to co-create this year's Future Forum.

An offer on agile ways of working and knowledge continuity is especially designed for sectoral communities in order to serve the needs of how to work together more effectively and efficiently.

What? – Thematic Focus Areas

The GIZ Future Forum 2022 is structured along thematic focus areas which have been selected based on their relevance for GIZ's portfolio and the current discourse on a changing economic paradigm in international development cooperation. The thematic focus areas are inherently interrelated. Results from one focus area will thus feed back into the other. Digital transformation is treated as a cross-cutting theme, so that the strategic character for our work as well as opportunities and challenges in making use of digital technologies is reflected across all focus areas. Equally, broader questions of how we work together with our partners to create results, e.g., through different forms of networks or partnerships or by applying innovative methodologies, will be dealt with across different themes.

- » **From Growth to Wellbeing** – The overarching thematic block "From Growth to Wellbeing – Rethinking Development" will be treated along the whole learning journey, across different formats for different target groups. It aims at answering the question "How can GIZ support partner countries to achieve an inclusive, green and digital transformation that

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secures wellbeing for all its citizens in alignment with environmental and climate goals?"

- » **Combining the economic, social, and environmental aspects of development** – Our planet is in a state of peril. A main reason is a discrepancy in humanity's understanding of what constitutes wellbeing and development. Economic policy making is still led by the imperative of creating economic growth, and measures prosperity in purely monetary terms, i.e. the gross domestic product (GDP). Even the efforts to change the paradigm to 'inclusive' or 'green' growth could neither reverse the basic orientation, nor the negative ecological and social trends. Meanwhile more and more people come to realize that monetary gains are not everything. While it is important that everybody should have the financial security and freedom to meet short- and long-term commitments, have the capacity to cope with unexpected events and be confident of her or his finances, now and in the future, the wellbeing of a society depends equally on the access to quality goods to meet their basic needs, on access to quality health services and education, social participation, and self-determination, financial security, an intact environment and freedom from conflict.
- » **Strengthening resilience** – The progress made in sustainable development is fragile. Poor and marginalized groups remain to be the most vulnerable as rapid changes and new risks, induced through digitalization, globalization, and climate change, threaten to erode livelihoods and wellbeing. In this context, resilience describes the ability to better deal with change and risks – 'to bounce back' or recover after an external shock has happened while reducing immediate adverse impacts. The COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating impact of violent conflicts, war or climate change have shockingly revealed how fragile current economic systems and

societies truly are. Despite the drastic negative effects, rebuilding economies after the pandemic presents an opportunity for strengthening resilience in all dimensions of sustainable development – for example through building reliable social protection systems, 'greening' carbon-intensive industries, and protecting natural assets or public goods. In consequence, economies and societies should not return to their initial 'equilibrium' but should 'recover forward' by explicitly focusing on environmental sustainability, economic empowerment, and social inclusion in their efforts. As deep changes and shocks become more frequent in the light of ongoing transformations and megatrends, how can GIZ support partner countries to make societies, systems, economies, enterprises, and individuals more resilient for the future?

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From Growth to Wellbeing

How can GIZ support and work with partner countries to achieve an inclusive, green and digital transformation that secures wellbeing for all citizens in alignment with environmental and climate goals?



- ❖ What are the views of partners countries on the growth debate? Is there a general consensus on what we understand a wellbeing economy and its values to be?
- ❖ Do new paradigms need new approaches to economic modelling and economic performance indicators? What experiences are there for metrics beyond GDP? What are their advantages and shortcomings?
- ❖ What instruments, approaches and strategies support an inclusive, green and digital economic transformation and how do these fit the different paradigms?
- ❖ What should be the role of government? What examples do we find in the Global South to create framework conditions and incentives that promote an economic transformation for wellbeing?
- ❖ What should be the role of the private sector and civil society in supporting this transformation?
- ❖ What are we doing wrong? What are we doing right? What could we do to scale?



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Combining the social, economic and environmental aspects of development

How can we combine the economic, environmental and social aspects of development in our daily work in the face of current megatrends?



- ❖ What are key leverage points to have a high-impact on sustainability in our partner countries? (for example, infrastructure development, health security, fiscal policy, sustainable finance, green jobs & skills, financial inclusion, digitalization and others)?
- ❖ How can sustainability be operationalized, especially in an economic policy and private sector development that takes the varying needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries into account?
- ❖ How can the digital transformation and innovative technologies accelerate sustainable synergies in our approaches and where is a need for caution?



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Strengthening resilience

How can GIZ work with partner countries to become more resilient in the face of current megatrends and global threats?



- ❖ What lessons have been learned from the pandemic in terms of how development approaches have strengthened social and economic resilience at societal, organizational and individual levels?
- ❖ What are the most effective ways for development to strengthen environmental, social and economic resilience at the various levels (micro / meso / macro)?
- ❖ What is needed to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable population groups?
- ❖ How can digitalization and new technologies support resilience and when are they part of the problem?