



GIZ Gender Strategy 2025–2029



Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



Contents

Foreword	3
The Gender Strategy at a glance	
Vision, the strategic areas, delivering our strategy.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Strategic areas	
Positioning the strategy, key measures, key results.....	7
Delivering our strategy	14

Foreword

Gender equality is a human rights issue that significantly impacts the whole of society. We know that countries with a high degree of gender equality are more peaceful, more democratic and more prosperous, which benefits everyone in equal measure.

Nonetheless, we still have a long way to go. In spite of significant achievements in women's empowerment and rights, such progress remains fragile, and crises and conflicts threaten to negate what has been achieved. More than 600 million women currently live in conflict-affected countries. This is particularly critical because sexual violence continues to be used as a weapon and a way of subjugating people.

Anti-gender movements are also gaining traction around the world, as anti-LGBTIQ+ rhetoric rises. Gender has become a political issue across geopolitical boundaries. Populist movements and authoritarian regimes in particular are endeavouring to restrict the opportunities of men, women and people with diverse gender identities to develop outside traditional role models.

On a positive note, however, the foundations have been laid for more gender-equal societies. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development expressly recognises the relevance of gender equality for the achievement of all development goals. At the national level, Germany is one of a large number of countries that have recalibrated their policy framework to drive further progress in this area.

We have reappraised our activities to explore ways of improving our work against this backdrop and have recognised that we need to combine our efforts more closely with moves to support societal transformation. This means challenging traditional gender stereotypes, acknowledging sexual and gender diversity, and understanding how different forms of discrimination may overlap and thus reinforce inequality.

Additionally, we must consider aspects of imbalance across history in the context of global power relations and reflect critically on these in terms of gender equality and our own role. We stand by our partners in international cooperation as they find their own paths, engaging with them in constructive dialogue and developing measures together.

At GIZ, we believe that change towards gender-equitable societies is possible. This strategy will refocus our efforts to push even more effectively for equal rights and opportunities for all genders. In doing so, we build on our profound expertise in international cooperation and our strong, long-standing partnerships. United in promoting gender equality and equal opportunities at GIZ and around the world – that is our vision and the key to shaping a future worth living.



Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven

Vice Chair of the Management Board
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The Gender Strategy at a glance

VISION → United in promoting gender equality and equal opportunities at GIZ and around the world.

THE STRATEGIC AREAS

Strategic area 1:

We address gender-based discrimination by focusing on the structural and underlying root causes.

- Link gender equality to changes within society
- Ensure representation of women and marginalised groups, especially on issues that will transform society, such as climate change, energy and digitalisation
- Understand the impacts of crises and fragility on women, men and people with diverse gender identities, and adapt approaches
- Expand the database and evidence on forms of structural discrimination

Strategic area 2:

We work with change agents from the state sector and civil society and strengthen them in their roles.

- Ensure coordination with the political strategies and measures of national and international partners
- Actively involve men and boys as change agents
- Expand partnerships with civil society to change the gender power gap
- Respond specifically to gender backlash

Strategic area 3:

We enhance the ability of our organisation to achieve greater gender equality.

- Promote gender equality as an issue for management
- Deepen gender expertise to mainstream the issue across our portfolio
- Ensure equal opportunities within the company by rigorously implementing existing policies and plans and harnessing mechanisms already in place to eradicate discrimination

Our point of reference is the policy framework of the German Government, agreements with partner governments, and regional and international agendas.

DELIVERING OUR STRATEGY

- The Gender Strategy is a binding framework for the entire organisation, all its managers and staff members worldwide.
- In line with their respective mandates, roles and responsibilities, all organisational units identify and pursue the measures that can generate the greatest impact in the strategic areas on the basis of this strategy.
- Progress on implementing the strategy will be measured and evaluated through the key results.
- An internal implementation framework lays out responsibilities and milestones for achieving the key results.



Introduction

As a service provider in international cooperation, GIZ's vision is to work to shape a future worth living around the world. To this end, we implement **programmes of the German Federal Government and other commissioning parties and clients as well as cooperation partners**. Promoting gender equality is a key element of our mandate.

With our Gender Strategy, we are **setting the stage** to promote equal opportunities and gender equality within our organisation and in service delivery. Our **point of reference** is the policy framework of the German Government, agreements with partner governments, and regional and international agendas.

This strategy builds on our long-standing sectoral and regional expertise, evidence, and proven instruments as well as strong partnerships. It is part of GIZ's broader aim of becoming an implementer of integrated solutions for global challenges. The Gender Strategy provides an **orientation** for both us and our partners. We have set ourselves ambitious goals, identified strategic areas and pinpointed measures for implementation. Key results will be used to gauge and evaluate the success of the strategy.

In our holistic understanding, **gender equality** means that men, women and people with diverse gender identities ought to be able to enjoy equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. With our partners, our aim is to ensure that women and people with diverse gender identities can live in dignity and fully exercise their human rights. It is equally important to recruit men and boys as allies, and to involve them in activities.

The term **equal opportunities** refers here to the chances available to GIZ staff. This includes protecting staff from discrimination and ensuring that opportunities are genuinely the same for everyone, irrespective of their biological sex or gender. To this end, we launched a new updated Equal Opportunities Plan in 2024, in line with the relevant general works council agreement.

The Gender Strategy also helps to **promote diversity**. GIZ is a signatory party to the [German Diversity Charter](#), and as such is

committed to building an inclusive organisational culture and a work environment marked by mutual respect. GIZ endeavours to ensure that every staff member is respected and appreciated irrespective of their gender, gender identity, citizenship, ethnic background, religion or worldview, disability, age, social background and sexual orientation. How we do this is set out in our Understanding of Diversity and our [Code of Ethics](#). Gender is also a dimension of our understanding of sustainability, which can be found in our [Sustainability Guidelines](#).

This Gender Strategy is being published at a crucial time. **Over the past decade, we have seen slow yet encouraging progress on gender equality worldwide**. The SDG report 2024, which contains data from 120 countries, indicates that over 50 legal reforms were introduced between 2019 and 2023, with the main aim of repealing discriminatory legislation and putting in place a legal framework to promote gender equality.

Currently, however, **much of this progress is at stake**. The COVID-19 pandemic alone wiped out the hard-won progress of decades. It is estimated that women account for almost two fifths of workers worldwide, but almost half of the jobs lost as a result of the COVID-19 crisis were held by women. **The economic potential alone is huge**. According to data from the World Bank, long-term per capita gross domestic product (GDP) would be almost 20 per cent higher if there were greater equality in the working world.

Opportunities for development also arise when women are involved in efforts to resolve the problems posed by climate change. This is because they are particularly affected by its impacts. Future scenarios set out in a UN Women report indicate that climate change could leave



236 million more women hungry by 2030. In this scenario, more than twice as many women would go hungry than men. We know that women and men have already devised quite different coping mechanisms. If we combine this knowledge, we can drive forward solutions that benefit all people in equal measure.

Following the setbacks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, we now find ourselves facing an additional phenomenon: **anti-gender movements and narratives targeting people identifying as LGBTIQ+ are being instrumentalised for political purposes.** International human rights prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression or sex characteristics. Nevertheless, legislation is still being passed even today that legalises the marginalisation and discrimination of individuals on this basis.

Given these developments our commissioning parties, clients and partners expect us to guarantee high quality in the implementation of activities aimed at promoting gender equality. That means we need more systemic and well-coordinated approaches **to address the root causes of inequalities.** It is not enough just to tackle the symptoms of gender inequality. We must begin to work with our partners to change discriminatory social norms and political, legal and economic structures.

It is also important to bear in mind how **different forms of discrimination** can overlap, reinforcing the adverse impacts on women and marginalised groups. Equally, **we need to take a critical look at power hierarchies** based on patriarchal norms and colonial structures that disadvantage women, marginalised groups as well as men.

Lasting change takes time and needs a stable environment. We are, however, increasingly operating in **fragile contexts.** We therefore need approaches to effectively address the root causes of inequalities, even in uncertain and rapidly changing situations.

This was the backdrop against which we updated our Gender Strategy. We take a critical look at power structures and roles, and **recognise the value of a wide spectrum of perspectives and knowledge.** In this context, we address the following questions: How do we understand different experiences of power, privilege and discrimination? How do we deal with these so as to be able to credibly represent the gender equality agenda without any finger wagging?

We focus on **strengthening state and civil society actors** working to promote gender equality in their own area of influence. Within the scope of our programmes, we work in dialogue with our state partners to implement or modify their own gender equality agendas. We also enable our teams and their partner organisations **to respond to political movements that question fundamental human rights.**

Three strategic areas are at the heart of our Gender Strategy. They indicate how we intend to achieve the qualitative shift we are aiming for, how we cooperate with our partners and how we will strengthen GIZ as an institution that delivers on gender equality and champions equal opportunities within the company.



Strategic areas





STRATEGIC AREA 1

We address gender-based discrimination by focusing on the structural and underlying root causes.

Why is this a strategic priority?

- GIZ has a solid **gender equality portfolio**. 92 per cent of projects financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) already address gender equality and women's rights as a principal or significant objective in line with OECD/DAC criteria. This is a good basis. We aim to develop this portfolio somewhat and extend it consistently to cover all public contracting authorities.
- To make our projects more effective and bring about lasting change, we focus on the **structural and underlying root causes of gender-based discrimination**. This includes discriminatory social norms, political, legal and economic structures and power dynamics. It also includes the question of unpaid care work and the impact this has on gender equality. To this end, we will use an interdisciplinary gender analysis at sectoral or regional level to bring projects together and coordinate them in the longer term. Local perspectives and expertise and the concerns of local actors within civil society will be factored in.
- In some sectors, such as **climate, energy and digitalisation**, societies are undergoing transformations that will radically change people's lives. Within the scope of our work, we ensure that these transformations are more gender equitable.
- Two thirds of GIZ's partner countries are currently affected by fragility. We know that **crises and fragile contexts** are not gender neutral. They impact differently on different people and pose a threat to security, especially of women and the LGBTIQ+ community. We align our actions with this knowledge.
- If we are to become more effective, we need evidence. We are closing existing gaps in our knowledge and data by consistently investing in **gender analyses and data**, and fostering the ongoing generation and utilisation of data. We also need the data to establish how different types of discrimination overlap. This is known as an intersectional approach. Moreover, we will reflect critically on how data is generated and assessed to ensure that we do not reproduce existing power relations, including with regard to colonial continuities.

Key measures

→ As part of our work, we identify the root causes of inequality, thereby allowing us to pursue **gender-transformative approaches** with our partners wherever possible. This means that the approaches should challenge discriminatory gender norms and relations, to foster gender equality and bring about a structural and lasting change in the way different genders (including minorities) are appreciated and respected. If this proves impossible, measures should at least be **gender-responsive**, meaning that they serve the needs and address the vulnerabilities of different genders. A key role is played by portfolio-wide gender analyses that are conducted at country or regional level. The outcomes are channelled into project design.

→ **We are devising a technical and methodological implementation concept** on how to help reduce gender power gaps in different contexts. It should reflect how multiple discrimination and different forms of marginalisation can overlap and become mutually reinforcing, and how patriarchal and colonial continuities can cement existing inequalities. The analyses mentioned above will be aligned with this concept.

→ We explore how **unpaid care work** impacts gender equality and we contribute to the discussion on the potential for redistributing this work and reassessing its value for society.

→ We attach particular importance to understanding the impacts on gender equality of major societal transformations, such as those driven by **climate change, the energy transition and digitalisation**. The aim is to ensure that women and marginalised groups are actively involved in shaping transformation. We will achieve this mainly by equipping them with the skills required to advocate for their own interests and to use networks.

→ We implement approaches that aim to better protect women and members of LGBTIQ+ communities during **conflicts and crises**. We focus particularly on protecting them from gender-based violence and exploitation, and on ensuring that they are not excluded from available services or forced out of the labour market.

→ **We make systematic use of evidence** garnered from project and cross-sectional evaluations, as well as from strategic evaluations. We also use external evidence for appraisal missions, when drawing up offers and in project implementation. In this context, we are producing guidelines on how to generate and use intersectional gender data.

→ **We help our partners generate gender data**, and manage and apply this to achieve better results in the field of gender equality. To make the use of gender data even more effective, data is broken down in line with selected criteria wherever possible, such that it reflects local conditions.

Key results

→ **Key result 1:** By the end of 2028, the number of portfolio-wide gender analyses conducted at country or regional level will have increased from 20 (baseline) to 70. The analyses indicate how GIZ can support in reducing gender power gaps in a given sector or across sectors. They also look at how all genders can be involved in major societal transformations.

→ **Key result 2:** By the end of 2028, digitally processed gender data will be available for the planning and implementation of measures on the basis of the portfolio-wide gender analyses. Digital tools will ensure easier access to available gender expertise.

→ **Key result 3:** By the end of 2028, gender equality will be a principal or significant objective of 95 per cent of all new projects commissioned annually by public contracting authorities (measured by the share of commission volume). This percentage is to be taken as a guide for International Services.

→ **Key result 4:** By the end of 2028, an evaluation will demonstrate how gender-transformative approaches are implemented in different contexts, even in fragile or conflict-affected contexts, and reveal whether they are achieving the intended results.



STRATEGIC AREA 2

We work with change agents from the state sector and civil society and strengthen them in their roles.

Why is this a strategic priority?

- We have built communities of practice worldwide and are active members of gender equality networks. We share knowledge and in turn benefit from our partners' expertise. Together we produce exceptional results. In a rapidly changing world marked by polarisation and radical transformations, we see the need to engage more strongly and systematically with a network of like-minded partners.
- In line with the policy framework of the German Government, agreements with partner governments, and regional and international agendas, we help promote human rights. In this context, we support the rights, representation and resources of local change agents and rights holders.
- With like-minded partners and allies, we devise responses to movements that question fundamental human rights, reject gender equality and condone gender-based violence. Our response is specifically tailored to each individual context and harnesses experience on all sides.

Key measures

- To co-create approaches that reflect a wide range of perspectives, **we engage in new partnerships that aim to change gender power gaps**. These partnerships range from international development partners to regional organisations, national institutions and local organisations.
- **In dialogue with our governmental partners**, we work to implement their policies to promote gender equality at national or sectoral level, and to further develop their legal framework and approaches.
- **We actively involve men and boys as change agents** so that they contribute to changing restrictive gender norms and benefit from greater gender equality in their societies.
- We help civil society actors to counter anti-gender movements, for instance by deploying **their own messages and narratives** for gender equality and inclusion.
- We improve (technical and financial) mechanisms and instruments to boost the participation of **a wide spectrum of civil society groups**, including indigenous communities, women's rights organizations and representatives of the LGBTIQ+ community.

We aim to step up cooperation in order to give them a greater say at local, regional and global level, and enhance their ability to take action on gender equality.

- We support stakeholders and influencers working for gender equality **to become visible as role models** so that they can inspire and motivate others to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and norms, and take action against these.
- We are producing a **source book** that will enable advisors to bring language into line with difficult contexts. The aim is to provide arguments and narratives to foster gender equality and diversity, and the inclusion of marginalised groups, especially LGBTIQ+ communities, in a way that goes beyond stereotypes and misconceptions.

Key results

- **Key result 5:** All gender analyses conducted at country level will ensure that the relevant parts of civil society are represented by those who are already working within civil society to change gender power gaps. In places where this is not possible, civil society will be consulted.
- **Key result 6:** In a survey, 80 per cent of all project managers and project advisors dealing with gender equality issues, as well as of all gender focal persons, confirm that the source book provided is helpful for discussions in their working context (as part of the evaluation mentioned under key result 4).





STRATEGIC AREA 3

We enhance the ability of our organisation to achieve greater gender equality.

Why is this a strategic priority?

- Our institutional structure facilitates the decentralised implementation of the Gender Strategy across all organisational units and at every level of the hierarchy. To meet the new requirements, we will ensure a high level of gender-specific expertise and consistent attentiveness on the part of managers by further standardising the provision of resources.
- To integrate and implement gender-transformative approaches, for portfolio-wide gender analyses and in our dealings with anti-gender movements, we need specific expertise, analytical capabilities, and skills in the field of data and communication. We will offer relevant training and foster institutional learning to enable the members of our established gender architecture – consisting of the Gender Coordination Group at departmental and corporate unit level, and gender focal persons at portfolio, cluster and project level – to meet these requirements.
- We guarantee equal opportunities as set out in the General Works Council Agreement on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, the Equal Opportunities Plan and national gender action plans. Good outcomes have been achieved with numerous measures, for example in terms of achieving gender parity in management positions. Today, women hold 46 per cent of managerial posts at GIZ. The next step will be to mainstream equality in the HR strategies and policies for all staff groups, including measures in the country offices and the field structure.
- We foster an organisational culture where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersexual and queer (LGBTIQ+) staff feel welcome and appreciated. We aim to systematically eradicate barriers and proactively offer support so that staff are able to live and work well even in difficult contexts.
- We do not tolerate discriminatory behaviour, sexual misconduct or harassment (bullying) at work, whether covert or overt, non-verbal, verbal or physical. A whistleblower system has been put in place that can be used to report relevant incidents in connection with employment at GIZ. We must ensure that affected staff members can trust this system.

Key measures

- We will continue to develop **gender-transformative leadership skills** within the company. The knowledge base required to implement gender equality in our work and to take account of intersectional dimensions is systematically expanded through organised events.
- Managers ensure that **gender equality is mainstreamed in their area of responsibility**. They provide support for annual planning and for dealing with this issue in difficult contexts (e.g. gender backlash).
- **Gender focal persons at departmental and corporate unit level** manage the implementation of the measures set out in this strategy within their own units. They will also advise and support gender focal persons at divisional, sectional, country, portfolio and project levels.
- **Gender focal persons at country/portfolio level** guarantee the quality of gender analyses conducted at country or regional level. They attend relevant commission management meetings, ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the country portfolio, monitor implementation and report on it.

- We ensure that gender equality is part of GIZ's **key strategic processes and products**, for instance by integrating it into fields of excellence, change and innovation management and corporate security.
- Country directors and the HR units within the **country offices foster equal opportunities**, for instance by identifying entry points in HR processes and mainstreaming relevant measures in gender action plans. They also ensure that the country offices are a safe space for members of the LGBTIQ+ community.
- We are expanding structures that **facilitate access to our whistleblower system** to report incidences of discriminatory behaviour, sexual misconduct and harassment at work.

Key results

- **Key result 7:** By the end of 2026, 70 per cent of the designated contact persons in country offices for low-threshold access to our whistleblower system will have completed the relevant training.
- **Key result 8:** By the end of 2027, the country offices/portfolios will pool their resources and designate at least one gender focal person addressing this issue with at least 50 per cent of the capacity of a full-time position.
- **Key result 9:** In 2028, the gender architecture will be subject to an independent evaluation that will assess its functionality and efficiency regarding the new requirements (as part of the evaluation mentioned under key result 4).
- **Key result 10:** By the end of 2028, all gender focal persons at country office/portfolio level and a pool of 100 advisors in GG1 projects will have the professional prerequisites to deliver advice on gender-transformative approaches and to implement these approaches.
- **Key result 11:** By the end of 2028, gender equality and equal opportunities will be part of GIZ's main leadership development programmes.
- **Key result 12:** By the end of 2028, 80 per cent of country offices will have gender action plans containing measures to foster equal opportunities.



Delivering our strategy

The Gender Strategy links our commitment to promoting gender equality and equal opportunities to GIZ's strategic framework. It is binding on the entire organisation, and on all managers and staff members inside and outside Germany. Every level within the company and every job category has a role to play in translating this strategy into specific actions and tangible results.

All employees and GIZ staff members are encouraged to actively engage in promoting gender equality and equal opportunities and to help create an environment both inside and outside GIZ in which everyone can thrive. They must comply with GIZ's provisions on gender equality, equal opportunities, gender diversity, inclusion and non-discrimination.

Directors general of departments and directors of corporate units are responsible for implementing the Gender Strategy within their organisational units. They ensure that gender equality is incorporated into the unit's strategic processes and products, that it contributes to the specific and company-wide results of the unit, and that it is reflected in the online presence, publications and events of the unit. The directors appoint gender focal persons at departmental and corporate unit level and ensure that they have the resources, mandate and day-to-day support they need.

Country directors ensure that the Gender Strategy is known and well-integrated into country strategies and action plans. They promote country-wide/portfolio-wide gender analyses, integrated approaches, partnerships and joint actions to ensure that gender-transformative results are achieved in their areas of responsibility, reach and influence. They appoint dedicated gender focal persons and ensure that their country teams have

gender competence. They prevent fragmentation and duplication of activities in this area.

All managers are role models and ensure that the GIZ Gender Strategy is known and implemented within their respective units and teams. They also work proactively to foster gender equality, gender diversity and inclusion within the company and advise their teams in terms of professional development opportunities. Managers ensure gender competence within their teams and are responsible for compliance with the commission management system and for reporting on the results of gender equality measures at the level of their organisational unit, at project level and, as far as possible, at portfolio level. If necessary, managers can appoint gender focal persons and help them develop the capacities they need to discharge their responsibilities professionally.

Transparent and agile implementation

We pursue a decentralised approach for a well-coordinated, yet agile implementation of the strategy. All departments and corporate units are required to contribute to those strategic areas that fall within their respective mandates. They identify the measures that are relevant for them and that can be used to maximise impact. This gives us the flexibility to respond to internal changes and to the dynamic environment we work in. An internal implementation framework is being drawn up that will identify milestones and allocate responsibility for achieving the objectives set out in this strategy.

Results orientation

In 2025, we will establish the baseline values for the key results. We will use these results to monitor annual progress on the implementation of the Gender Strategy at corporate level. Progress will be summarised in a report that will be produced on the basis of the consolidated reports of the departments, corporate units and commissioners setting out their own contributions and the progress and results achieved. The company-wide report will be submitted to the GIZ Management Board and all directors general of departments. An evaluation of progress to date is scheduled for 2027.



As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

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