

# GIZ Human Rights Policy

GIZ stands for human rights. In line with our Corporate Principles, we recognise human rights as a particular area of responsibility for GIZ.

As a leading provider of international cooperation services for sustainable development, we work around the globe to help people improve their living conditions, making a substantial contribution to promoting and fulfilling human rights in the political, civil, economic, social and cultural spheres. At the same time, we take our human rights due diligence responsibilities very seriously. We are aware of human rights risks and review and monitor them on an ongoing basis. We work to counteract risks in order to prevent or minimise any unintended adverse impacts on human rights as a result of our activities.

## Frame of reference

Human rights constitute the frame of reference for everything we do.

As a federal enterprise owned by the German Government, we base our actions on Germany's Basic Law and all the human rights commitments made by the Federal Republic of Germany, which primarily comprise the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the core UN human rights treaties, the ILO core labour standards and the European Convention on Human Rights. We also acknowledge our own corporate

responsibility for human rights. As a company, we are committed to the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact and observe the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. We are also guided in the implementation of measures by the German Government's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, integrating its five core elements of human rights due diligence into our corporate processes.

## Goal-setting and addressees

This policy formulates GIZ's stance on human rights<sup>1</sup> and constitutes a binding document for the organisation. Fleshed out by our Code of Ethics and our own Processes and Rules, the policy is legally binding on all GIZ employees. It applies to all of our organisational units equally and informs our actions, both within the company and outside it. It is integral to our understanding of sustainable development and serves as the yardstick for interpreting and refining existing rules. At the same time, this policy underscores our corporate identity in a human rights context in relation to our clients, commissioning parties and the general public. It formulates our expectation that our business partners, partner institutions and suppliers will comply with human rights requirements.

<sup>1</sup> Children's rights are an integral part of GIZ's human rights-based approach and of this Human Rights Policy. Further details can be found in GIZ's Child Protection Policy and the Catalogue of measures for the GIZ Child Protection Policy.

## Implementation and management

In implementing this policy, we distinguish between project business and corporate processes. Each unit within GIZ is responsible for implementing and complying with this policy in its business processes. Key strategies, programmes and policies<sup>2</sup> flesh out our aspirations regarding human rights due diligence for our project work and corporate processes and assign them goals and clear responsibilities. We regularly review our rules and procedures in order to respond appropriately and professionally, particularly in situations with high risks for human rights.

### Implementation in project business

Through our working practices, we develop the capacity of governmental and civil society organisations and the private sector to respect, protect and guarantee human rights within the international frame of reference. We assist state partner institutions with meeting their human rights obligations as duty bearers. We empower our target groups to assert and realise their rights more effectively as rights holders. We also support companies with meeting their corporate responsibility for human rights. (Human rights-based approach).

On behalf of the German Government and other commissioning parties and clients, we implement projects targeted directly at improving the human rights situation in our partner countries (specific human rights projects). At the same time, we make a significant contribution through our advisory and training measures to realising human rights in all sectors of international cooperation (mainstreaming the human rights-based approach as a cross-cutting issue).

We work in fragile contexts and in countries that sometimes face serious challenges in the fulfilment of human rights. As part of our commissions, we assist these countries in moving towards compliance with international standards and boost their ability to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, especially those of marginalised groups. We make this aspiration clear in negotiation processes and

advise our partners accordingly.

We pay careful attention to the way that we work and the results that we achieve. Our Safeguards+Gender Management System is applicable to all clients, commissioning parties and business areas. It uses a standardised procedure to review any unintended adverse impacts of our projects on human rights.

### Implementation in corporate processes

The majority of our employees work in our partner countries. GIZ has a particular responsibility in this context to guarantee the fundamental human rights of its employees around the world, whether through relevant security strategies or by upholding international labour and social standards.

GIZ spends around 50 per cent of its business volume on the procurement of materials and equipment, services, financing arrangements and construction activities.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, we have great potential for making our supply chain sustainable through our procurement activities and, in this way, promoting respect for human rights.

### Management

The Sustainability Office within the Corporate Development Unit is responsible for coordinating the company's human rights due diligence duties at overall level, particularly the implementation of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights. The Sustainability Board, presided over by the Chair of GIZ's Management Board, takes decisions on these matters.

### Awareness-raising

We also ensure that our staff have the knowledge, awareness and capacity they need to implement this policy.

### Grievance mechanism

We will respond immediately and appropriately to concerns that any of our actions may have an adverse impact on human rights in our project business and in corporate processes. Reports about human rights violations can be submitted online to the [Whistleblower Portal](#). The received reports will be processed by the Compliance and Integrity

<sup>2</sup> Sustainability Programme 2021-2025, Code of Ethics, Policy on Sustainable Procurement.

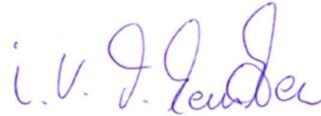
<sup>3</sup> As at December 2020.

Unit in the strictest confidence and in accordance with the basic principle of protecting whistleblowers. Reports can be submitted anonymously. This is to ensure that whistleblowers are not disadvantaged in any way. The Corporate Development Unit and the Sectoral Department bear the main responsibility for reviewing this policy every three years to determine if there is any need for change and to coordinating the revision work.

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(Tanja Gönner, Management Board)



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