



GIZ Code of Ethics

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Foreword

'Our values and ethical principles'

Dear colleagues and readers,,

This brochure outlines our key ethical principles and aims to inform our workforce¹ and everyone we work with about our values and principles as a company and provide them with a frame of reference for their actions.

As a public-benefit federal enterprise in the field of sustainable development and international education, GIZ is in the public eye worldwide. We do not make policy ourselves, but support our commissioning parties, most notably the German Government, in implementing their development goals and other international cooperation measures. This means that we have a particular obligation to uphold the values of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany and to respect the human rights guaranteed by international law. This is reflected in our Corporate Principles ([link to Corporate Principles](#)). GIZ's work is only possible thanks to the cooperative, respectful and trust-based relationship we enjoy with the people in our partner countries and organisations. We earn the trust of our partner countries by taking a politically and interculturally sensitive approach and keeping to high ethical standards.

We promote a corporate culture in which we always act in accordance with universal ethical values and principles, in particular integrity, honesty, respect for human dignity, openness and non-discrimination. We reject corruption and bribery.

Social responsibility within the context of our sustainability concept is one of the guiding principles of our work. This applies both to the way we set out our conditions of employment and to the way we work with others.

In our project work, we pay particular attention to groups in need of special protection (such as children and young people).

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities and equal access to professional development for GIZ's entire workforce.

Specific rules governing the actions of our workforce are set out in GIZ employer/staff council agreements, the Processes and Rules (P+R) and corporate policies.

Managers act as role models, with their actions providing a frame of reference for those around them. In this way, they serve as multipliers and have a unique responsibility.

It is our belief that this kind of respectful interaction provides the foundation for a strong and attractive company with a vision of shaping a future worth living for people around the world.

The Management Board
Central Staff Council
Central Disabled Persons' Representation
Corporate Equal Opportunity Commissioner

¹ 'Workforce' is the overarching term used for GIZ staff, development workers, trainees, interns and visiting interns.

Balancing professional and private activity

Due to its legal status as a public-benefit federal enterprise and its area of work (international cooperation for sustainable development and international education work), GIZ operates within a political context.

People working for GIZ, especially those on the ground in our partner countries, are frequently viewed as representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany. As such, even their private activities are the subject of particular attention.

At times, the line between what members of the workforce say and do in their professional work and as private individuals can become blurred. It is not possible to specify clear behavioural criteria here; each individual scenario needs to be looked at on its own.

Generally speaking, the employer is not entitled to comment on private actions. However, as soon as members of the workforce use modern communication technologies or make public statements they can find themselves having to do a balancing act. This requires them to act with caution, sensitivity and a sense of loyalty and also to take account of GIZ's justifiable interest in avoiding any damage to its public reputation.

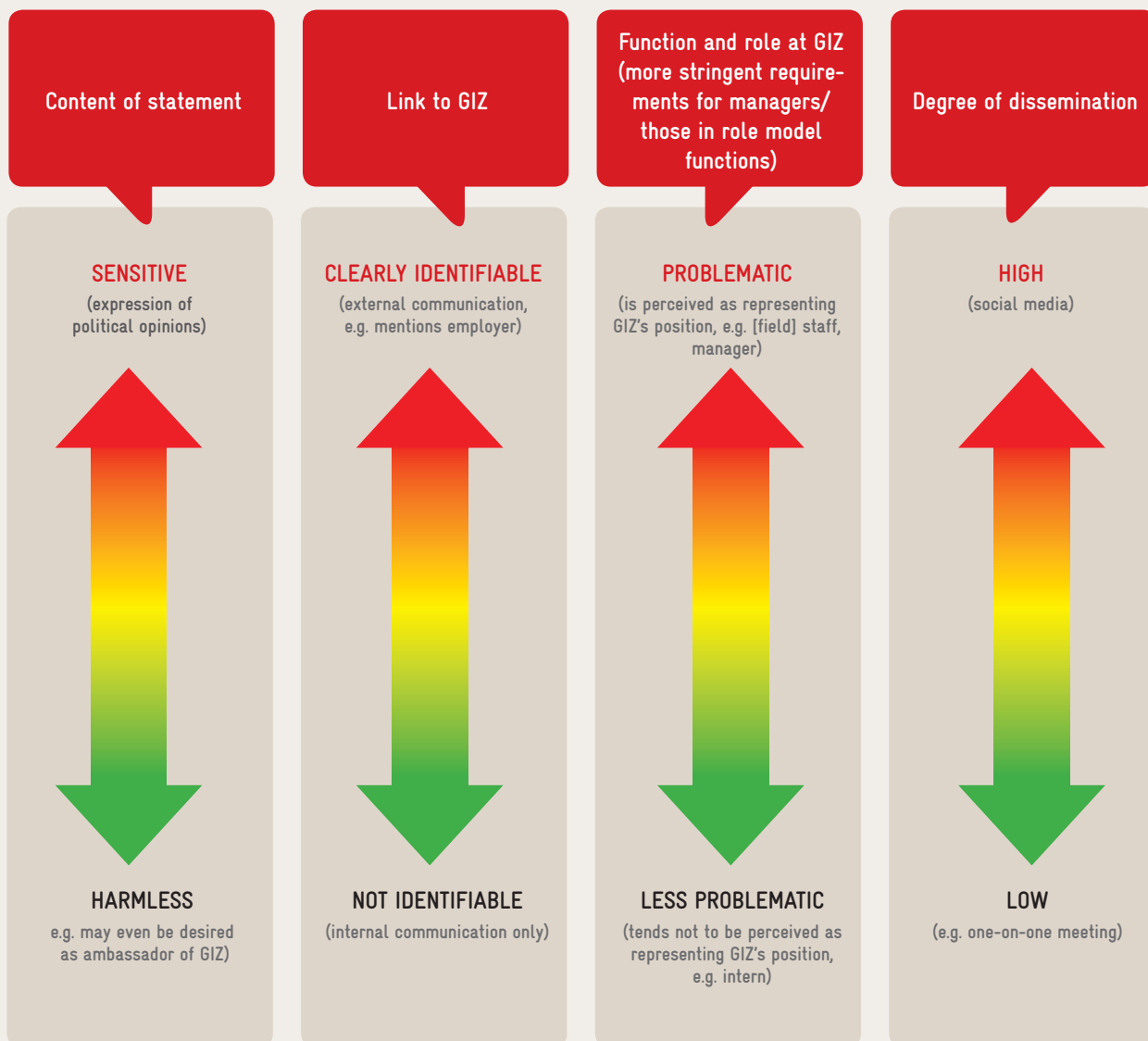
In the interests of everyone working for GIZ, we may and must insist that the loyalty our workforce shows in professional contexts is also expressed in private contexts whenever their conduct could impact GIZ or its relations with its partner countries and commissioning parties.

GIZ promotes freedom of speech and political participation. Freedom of (political) expression is an essential part of this, and also applies in the context of social media, where the degree of dissemination is often difficult to gauge and the accuracy of statements frequently very hard to assess. At the same time, however, it is also necessary to safeguard the interests of the company. This means exercising particularly fine judgement, especially where politically sensitive matters are concerned.



[!\[\]\(0b5e7e25e8775f7e7e80906ada4f0021_img.jpg\) Link to Social Media Guidelines](#)

The following criteria can aid members of the workforce in classifying their comments and evaluating them against this backdrop:



i If anyone is uncertain how their actions could be classified in this context, they can seek advice from their line manager or Corporate Communications.

Contact:

T +49 228 4460-4040

unternehmenskommunikation@giz.de

Compliance with legislation and regulations



GIZ complies with the legislation and regulations of the Federal Republic of Germany and the partner countries in which it operates. It also requires its workforce and everyone it works with to do the same in professional contexts.

But no one knows every law and rule off by heart, even in Germany, and now I'm working in Namibia. How can I be certain about what I am and am not permitted to do?

Don't worry! No one has to know everything off by heart. Working for GIZ, you'll already have a good internal compass. But if you're unsure, you can talk to your manager or look up key rules and regulations on the intranet, for instance in our Processes and Rules (P+R) or employer/ staff council agreements.

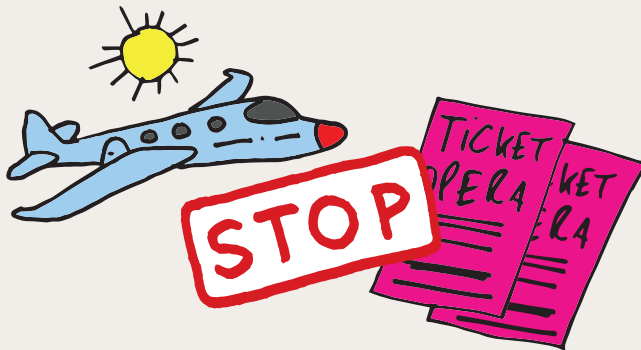
Local rules vary greatly from partner country to partner country, but your country office can give you more information.



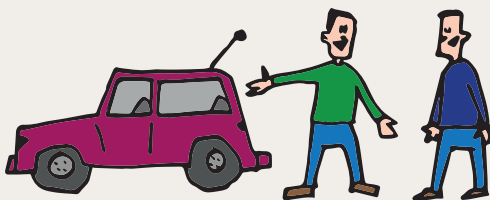
Prohibition of bribery and corruption



We do not tolerate bribery or any other forms of corruption, be it the acceptance or the granting of an unfair advantage.



Advantages are all benefits to which no entitlement exists and which constitute a better economic, legal or personal position for the recipient or someone close to the recipient (for example private travel, provision of vehicles for private use, admission tickets).



The acceptance of small gifts amounting to EUR 35 per annum and giver is generally permitted.



- A bottle of sparkling wine at Christmas (approximately EUR 20) is acceptable.
- Private use of the commissioning party's/partner's holiday cottage on Mallorca is not acceptable.
- The acceptance of cash – regardless of the amount – is not permitted under any circumstances





Facilitation payments are prohibited unless these are required in order to protect an object of legal protection that is of a higher value (in particular people's life and health).

i Further information is provided in the Code of Conduct

Particular care should be taken when granting benefits to public officials. This is often subject to extremely strict regulations which may also vary depending on the partner country. If in doubt, please consult the country office, which will advise you accordingly.



Dealing with conflicts of interest



GIZ avoids situations which may overtly lead to conflicts of interest for members of its workforce. Conflicts of interest may arise if members of our workforce (and, potentially, people related to them) have financial interests in or personal connections with project or business partners, competitors (including their official bodies or employees) or target groups.

If a conflict of interest is apparent, steps are taken to ensure that the people in question do not have any influence on related business decisions (for example involvement in decisions regarding contract award procedures, in negotiating and drawing up contracts and in approving work that has been carried out).

i [Further information is provided in the Code of Conduct](#)

I'm the officer responsible for the commission on a project in my partner country - my husband, who has accompanied me, volunteers for an NGO in the same sector. My project wants to support the NGO with a local subsidy - is that possible?

I'm not sure ... I think you should contact the Integrity Advisor for guidance.



Promoting diversity, combating discrimination

We value the diversity of our workforce. We firmly believe that this diversity, coupled with the different experience, skills and contributions of our colleagues, not only enriches our field of activities but also improves the outcomes of our work. We encourage diversity within the company and promote a corporate culture in which we are respectful and appreciative in the language we use and the action we take.



We do not tolerate any form of discrimination. We expect all members of GIZ's workforce to cooperate in such a way as to not discriminate against others 'on the grounds of race or ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation'.²

In accordance with the General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG, German Law), we have a duty to take necessary – and preventive – measures to ensure protection against discrimination on these grounds.

Discrimination occurs where one person is treated less favourably than another person in a comparable situation on any of the grounds referred to above.

But discrimination is not always immediately recognisable. For instance, placing part-time staff in a less favourable position may represent discrimination against women since part-time work is carried out in most cases by women.

However, unequal treatment is justified if there are legitimate and reasonable grounds for this.

Example: Promoting women in order to reduce inequality.



² Reasons for discrimination in accordance with Section 1 of the General Act on Equal Treatment (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG).



Given that Germany has a particular historical responsibility towards the global community, we consider any form of antisemitic statement or behaviour to be a particularly severe case of discrimination.

Antisemitism is 'a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity.'³



³ German Government resolution of 20 September 2017 on the endorsement of the 'working definition' of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).



We regard bullying as
equally unacceptable.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is persistent, systematic hostility, harassment or discrimination – either by or against managers or colleagues.

It includes any form of unwanted conduct aimed at violating the dignity of the person concerned, resulting in the creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment.



Bullying may be verbal or non-verbal in nature, carried out intentionally or unintentionally, and may manifest itself in one of the following ways:

- violent conduct
- defamatory remarks and acts
- acts of humiliation
- devaluation, without basis, of a person's work or achievements
- isolation of people
- exclusion of individuals from company information and communication

Prohibition of sexual misconduct



We do not tolerate any form of sexual harassment and encourage victims of and witnesses to sexual harassment at work to report such instances and justified suspected cases to a trusted colleague or via the whistleblower portal.



[Link to the whistleblower portal](#)



Sexual harassment is a criminal offence. Sexual harassment occurs when 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the person concerned, in particular where it creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment'. This conduct also includes 'unwanted sexual acts and requests to carry out sexual acts, physical contact of a sexual nature, comments of a sexual nature, as well as the unwanted showing or public exhibition of pornographic images'.



We do not tolerate any form of sexual exploitation of other people by members of our workforce.

Sexual exploitation occurs where conduct of a sexual nature takes place on a consensual basis but deliberately exploits an emergency situation or a position of power. Sexual contact with children under the age of 14 is automatically regarded as sexual harassment.



We regard sexual contact with children as a criminal offence.



[Further information can be found in GIZ's policy on sexual misconduct](#)

Who can I talk to?



Members of the workforce can find help and advice on these issues from the people listed below:

Balancing professional and private conduct/
loyalty towards GIZ:

- Corporate Communications
- Human Resources Department/Human Resources Administration Services
- Line manager

Bribery, corruption and conflicts of interest:

- Integrity Advisor
- Ombudsman
- Human Resources Department/
Human Resources Administration Services
- Line manager


Diversity, bullying:


- Human Resources Department/Human Resources Administration Services
- Line manager
- AGG complaints committee
- COPE
- Staff Council
- Field Staff Representation and representatives of national staff
- Equal Opportunity Commissioner
- Disabled Persons' Representation

Sexual misconduct

- Human Resources Department/Human Resources Administration Services
- Line manager
- AGG complaints committee
- COPE
- Staff Council
- Field Staff Representation and representatives of national staff
- Equal Opportunity Commissioner
- Disabled Persons' Representation

Any breach of this Code of Ethics can cause harm – whether it be to individual members of the workforce, external parties who are affected or GIZ as a company. We therefore encourage everybody to report any indications of illegal or unethical conduct. A whistleblower portal is available for this purpose, which can also be used anonymously.

 [Link to the whistleblower portal](#)

 The contact structures in place can also be found in the respective company policies.

How are code violations dealt with?

GIZ has a duty to maintain effective monitoring systems in order to detect and tackle illegal and unethical conduct.

If a suspicion of illegal or unethical conduct by or against members of GIZ's workforce is reported, the facts are carefully examined insofar as the conduct took place in or concerns our business context. We undertake to carry out a rigorous examination taking into account the concerns of the people involved.

RAISING STAFF AWARENESS

1. Suspected illegal or unethical conduct is reported

→ 2. A rigorous investigation is carried out to establish the facts
(taking into account the concerns of people involved)

→ 3. If such conduct is confirmed: an individual legal assessment is conducted

→ 4. Consequences/measures are implemented (training, transfer, sanctions under employment law, criminal complaint)



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