

KNOWING WHAT WORKS

GIZ's evaluation system

Basic aspects

Publication details

As a worldwide service provider in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education work, GIZ works with partner organisations to devise effective solutions that offer people prospects and make a lasting improvement to their living conditions. GIZ is a public-benefit federal enterprise and supports the German Government and a host of public and private sector clients in a wide variety of areas, including economic development and employment promotion, energy and the environment, and peace and security.

The Corporate Unit Evaluation reports directly to the Management Board. This organisational structure safeguards its independence vis à vis the company's operational business. The Corporate Unit Evaluation generates evidence-based findings and recommendations. It ensures that evaluation findings are transparent and encourages the company to make active use of these findings.

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Preface

KNOWING WHAT WORKS

The ultimate purpose of GIZ's evaluations is to find out what works. We want to know what impact our activities have. What works? What doesn't work? And why? We need this information to enhance our work and our projects, perhaps to change our profile and of course to meet our accountability obligations for what we do. The world of international cooperation is complex. We need evidence-based information that helps us improve the decisions we make and allows us to develop as a learning institution. We understand evaluations to be the systematic, empirical investigation of the value, quality and benefit of an intervention, such as a project, based on transparent criteria.

GIZ evaluations are an important element in our efforts to maximise the effectiveness of our work. Evaluations promote effective solutions for sustainable development that offer value for money. They systematically analyse and assess quality and benefits, thus supporting the targeted and needs-based implementation of development measures of the German Federal Government and other commissioning parties, and helping to continuously improve our service delivery processes. We approach evaluations in a results- and user-oriented manner. We measure the success of our work in terms of the changes it brings about.

Our clients and commissioning parties generally determine the specific framework of reference for GIZ evaluations. The new guidelines issued by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) on '**Evaluierung der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit**' (Evaluating German Development Cooperation. BMZ Evaluation Policy, in German) are mandatory for evaluations of projects implemented by GIZ on behalf of BMZ. As a federal enterprise, we align our work with the criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) set out in **Evaluation of development programmes** and the cross-cutting **Standards für Evaluation** (Evaluation standards, in German) of DeGEval – Evaluation Society, of which GIZ is an institutional member. Another framework of reference is the **2030 Agenda** and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

This paper explains the basic aspects of GIZ's evaluation system. It sets out the common features of GIZ evaluations and presents the different instruments we use. It addresses clients and commissioning parties, partner organisations, the national and international evaluation community, the science and research community, our sub-contractors, interested members of the general public in Germany and in partner countries, and of course GIZ staff. This paper is supplemented by three papers that look in more depth at the individual instruments used within GIZ's evaluation system: central project evaluations, corporate strategic evaluations and cross-sectional analyses. They are managed centrally by the Corporate Unit Evaluation.

Evaluations are part of our corporate culture and are indispensable for successful development. They use evidence to demonstrate the contribution GIZ is making to a future worth living around the globe. And they indicate where there is still room for improvement.

Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven
(GIZ Management Board)

Albert Engel
(Director of GIZ's Corporate Unit Evaluation)

1 Quality features that typify GIZ evaluations

As set out in the BMZ guidelines *Evaluierung der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit* (Evaluating German Development Cooperation. BMZ Evaluation Policy, in German), the key features of GIZ evaluations are usefulness, credibility and independence.

1.1 Usefulness of findings

Evaluation findings and recommendations must be useful and – through their transparency and adequate dissemination – must generate added value for our partner organisations, our clients and commissioning parties, and of course GIZ as a company.

Essentially, GIZ evaluations must:

- support evidence-based decision-making
- ensure transparency and accountability
- contribute to knowledge management and organisational learning.

We design the planning, implementation and practical application of evaluations to optimise performance in these three areas.

Support for evidence-based decision-making

Evaluations can make an important contribution to evidence-based decision-making in four contexts in particular:

- **Policy and strategy of commissioning parties and clients:** The findings of GIZ's evaluations provide the clients and commissioning parties of the evaluated projects with information that they can use to make policy and strategic decisions.
- **Transformation processes in partner countries:** As part of capacity development, evaluations strengthen the decision-making capacities of partner organisations involved in political, economic and social reform processes and help improve administrative action that benefits the population.
- **Steering GIZ projects:** Within GIZ, evaluations support steering decisions taken by projects or organisational units.
- **Decisions at corporate level:** The institutionalised management response process on quality development is used to incorporate the findings of evaluations conducted by GIZ and external parties into GIZ's strategic decision-making.

To optimise the practical application of evaluations for evidence-based decision-making, evaluation management at GIZ ensures that:

- relevant decision-makers and other actors involved in the change process are the primary users of evaluation findings;
- relevant decision-makers voice their specific information interests and are able to play an active part at every stage of the evaluation;

- there is close interaction between evaluators, decision-makers and sector experts during evaluations;
- the knowledge generated by evaluations and the recommendations drafted on this basis are relevant to decision-making and encourage strategic reflection among all stakeholders.

Evaluations at GIZ are organised in a **participatory manner** to take account of diverse information requirements and to optimise the use of evaluation processes and findings. Within the framework of its evaluations, GIZ offers scope for dialogue and endeavours to involve all relevant stakeholders.

The evaluation officers in departments and corporate units share their in-depth understanding of GIZ's operational business at regular discussions with the Corporate Unit Evaluation and support the practical application of evaluation findings.

Transparency and accountability

The targeted dissemination of evaluation findings in a form suitable for the recipient is a key feature of GIZ evaluations. A number of different publication formats are used (main report, brief report and one-pager). Irrespective of the language in which the evaluation report is written, a summary at least is made available in English and German (the brief report). Evaluations are not only sent to the intended users. The evaluation reports are available within GIZ on the intranet and on IDA, and the Project Processing System (SAP/PBS) can be used to combine project evaluations with all other project data.

To optimise the use of evaluations for transparency and accountability purposes, GIZ's evaluation management process ensures that evaluation reports are sent to commissioning parties and clients and – provided that the relevant commissioning party or client agrees – the findings are communicated to the cooperation partners and the general public. Interested members of the general public can also access the GIZ's evaluation database with a number of different filter options on our website at www.giz.de/knowning-what-works.

Exceptions are made to this process if publication would infringe the rights of third parties, if personal data cannot be reliably anonymised, if the report contains business secrets, if publication would prejudice ongoing national or international negotiations or if it would be critical in terms of foreign policy or security policy. Evaluative studies are published on an ad hoc basis.

If there are valid grounds not to publish evaluation reports in full, the BMZ guidelines **Evaluierung der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit** (Evaluating German Development Cooperation. BMZ Evaluation Policy, in German) require at least an informative summary (brief report) to be published in German. This is produced or authorised independently by the evaluation team. The full reports are provided on request.

Every two years, GIZ also publishes an **evaluation report**, which it presents to policymakers and the press. This report documents the findings of evaluations and contains data on the aggregated results of GIZ's work, as well as presenting the conclusions GIZ has drawn from the findings of evaluation reports. GIZ also outlines the design, methodology and findings of evaluations in journal articles and at evaluation conferences.

Contribution to knowledge management and organisational learning

GIZ's knowledge management aims to enhance the quality and impacts of the services we offer. Some of the knowledge is available in a documented form, but much of it is held in people's heads, making them the main focus of knowledge management at GIZ. This is why GIZ's knowledge management system is

community-based, with collaborative work and dialogue within communities. The approach consists of three interlinked areas:

- user-centred information provision (collect);
- networking and exchange (connect);
- collaborative, results-oriented working and learning processes (co-create).

Topics constitute one of the pillars of knowledge management. They summarise the key issues and methods at GIZ. The topics help position GIZ in specific sectors and are the basis for project design and implementation, external communications, cooperation and acquisition. For this reason, all evaluation reports are fed into the relevant topics. The topics are designed to ensure the co-creative development of technical and methodological issues with all knowledge holders within in-person and online communities: staff of all GIZ organisational units relevant to the topic, sector networks, conventions, forums on particular themes and innovations, cooperation partners, external experts, etc. Evidence generated by evaluations represents an important source of information for them.

GIZ aims to use evaluation findings to support **learning and quality development processes** throughout the company. In this context, evaluation findings are processed and used to facilitate learning within the project, with the partner organisations and within the company. Dialogue across different levels is crucially important: horizontal dialogue between organisational units, vertical dialogue across different levels of hierarchy and also within the framework of overarching **sector networks**. To ensure that evaluation findings can be harnessed, GIZ has developed reflection and dialogue formats that are geared to its individual evaluation instruments; these formats encourage strategic reflection among all stakeholders and institutionalise learning from evaluations. These include reference groups to support evaluations, reflection forums with partner organisations, commissioning parties and clients, discussion and assessment at specialist events, and dialogue and information events.

Alongside the targeted dissemination of findings in a recipient-appropriate format, tracking the implementation of recommendations is also an integral part of GIZ's evaluations. Within the framework of the **management response system**, GIZ responds to the recommendations made in corporate strategic evaluations by entering into concrete agreements to implement these recommendations. This ensures that findings relevant at an overarching level are specifically used in **quality management** to improve standard processes and the way the company delivers services. The Corporate Unit Evaluation reviews progress made in implementing recommendations and informs management and steering bodies accordingly. The IT-assisted **audit management module** is to be used in future to evaluate and follow up on the recommendations of all evaluations.

1.2 Credibility of the findings

Methodological precision and clarity are essential if the findings of evaluations are to be credible. As a federal enterprise, we comply with the BMZ guidelines **Evaluierung der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit** (Evaluating German Development Cooperation. BMZ Evaluation Policy) as part of our understanding of quality to ensure effective and transparent development policy. These guidelines build on the **OECD/DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation** and on the cross-cutting **Standards für Evaluation** (Evaluation standards) of DeGEval – Evaluation Society, of which GIZ is an institutional member.

Alongside the basic quality requirements expected of the processes and the product, which the DeGEval standards specify in terms of practical application, implementability, fairness and precision, the OECD/DAC quality standards set out further-reaching requirements for development cooperation, in particular

partnership and capacity development in partner countries. Other important standards include incorporating the comments of affected stakeholders into the evaluation report and the systematic response and tracking of action taken on recommendations.

Methodological quality

Methodological quality is an essential factor that determines the credibility of evaluation findings. This is why GIZ is careful to use an appropriate combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of empirical social research. The mix of methods depends on the object being evaluated, the issues to be addressed by the evaluation and the time and human resources available. If evidence relevant to steering purposes is to be provided swiftly as processes are ongoing, the **development evaluation** approach can also be used. The evaluation per se can then be conducted parallel to this. This is particularly appropriate for the evaluation of open-ended, innovative, complex processes. We aim to **triangulate**, i.e. to put together evaluation teams that are as diverse as possible (in terms of gender, technical background and country-specific expertise, for example), so that the team can explore the findings from different vantage points. **Method and data triangulation** also balances out the strengths and weaknesses of individual data collection methods and increases the validity of the findings.

All central evaluations are steered by the Corporate Unit Evaluation, which ensures compliance with quality standards. To this end, it uses standardised **quality assurance instruments**, which are specially tailored to the relevant evaluation instruments, including clarification of the commission, inception reports (interim reports on design and methodology), methodological requirements and annotated structures for standardised reporting, as well as quality checks based on quality grids.

As the quality of an evaluation or an evaluative study is determined to a large degree by its design, the Corporate Unit Evaluation recommends carrying out an **evaluability assessment** to explore the evaluability of particularly relevant projects. In line with the OECD-DAC definition, an evaluability assessment explores the 'extent to which an activity or a program can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion'. It examines the preconditions for a credible and reliable evaluation. It also identifies the specific information interests of the stakeholder groups involved so that the subsequent evaluation is designed in line with needs. This can be used to enhance the quality and usefulness of a planned evaluation. It can, however, also be used to optimise project design and steering with a view to a subsequent project evaluation. To ensure that the project objectives have been adequately defined and to ascertain that the results are verifiable, an evaluability assessment should be conducted as early as possible in the project cycle. This applies to short-term measures, but even more so to projects with long-term planning.

For decentralised evaluation activities that are steered by other organisational units, the Corporate Unit Evaluation's **Evaluation Support** offers global advisory and support services on quality assurance for all GIZ organisational units. The contact structure via Evaluation Support ensures that GIZ can benefit from the evaluation expertise of the Corporate Unit Evaluation in line with its needs. The range of Evaluation Support services offered include the following:

Advisory services for the evaluability assessment

- Review of project design (results logic and theory of change)
- Investigation of data availability and data quality (project documentation and existing results-based monitoring)
- Investigation of institutional framework for conducting an evaluation
- Identification of specific information interests of the stakeholder groups involved

One-on-one methodological and technical advisory services

- Advice on methodological approach and data collection
- Comments on terms of reference
- Support in the search for technically and methodologically well qualified evaluators

Quality assurance support for decentralised evaluations

- Drafting the evaluation strategy, including advice on establishing the object of the evaluation, the questions to be addressed and the criteria to be used, as well as on the methodological approach and data collection
- Drafting the terms of reference
- Providing support in the search for evaluators
- Drafting the process, including the time schedule
- Methodological quality assurance of the draft report

Process quality

In addition to the methodological quality, the **process quality** is important. One key quality element in GIZ's evaluation system is thus the management of evaluations. **Evaluation management** at GIZ includes the design and steering of three phases of the evaluation process: concept and design, conducting the evaluation and writing the report, and communicating the report and encouraging the practical application of findings. These phases are designed in a largely instrument-specific manner and are described in detail in the papers on each instrument. Essentially, however, evaluation managers design this process in dialogue with the intended users of the evaluation in question (in particular with decision-makers and other stakeholders in the change process). Alongside a **fair and transparent approach**, the following key elements are taken into account in evaluation management:

- the complexity of political, institutional and cultural contexts;
- the evaluation and decision-making culture in the organisation responsible for the object of the evaluation;
- the systemic role that evaluations play in supporting change;
- the potential of an evaluation to contribute to decision-making both through the evaluation process and its findings;
- the involvement of stakeholder groups (decision-makers, other actors in the change process and potential implementers of recommendations and of management responses and implementation plans).

1.3 Independence of assessments

Credibility can only be achieved if evaluation findings and assessments are generated independently.

Central project evaluations are conducted solely by external evaluators selected using a procedure that meets the requirements of procurement law. To avoid any conflicts of interest, ensure **impartiality** in the procedure adopted and guarantee an unbiased assessment in reporting and the presentation of findings, it is vital that the evaluators were not involved in planning or implementing the project.

It is also customary for external evaluators to undertake the other central evaluations, although these may be performed by the Corporate Unit Evaluation itself.

When discussing the draft report, the evaluators are free to decide whether or not they will include in the evaluation report the feedback they receive from the commissioning party, members of the reference group

and the evaluation managers in the Corporate Unit Evaluation, unless the comments relate to services that have been contractually agreed, where the evaluation is conducted by external evaluators. The reports always only reflect the opinion and assessment of the evaluators. It is the sole responsibility of the internal or external evaluators to assess the object of the evaluation. The clarity of the analysis, conclusions drawn and assessment must be guaranteed and is reviewed by the Corporate Unit Evaluation for all central evaluations.

Mandate

Appropriate **structural provisions** are also in place to ensure impartiality and unbiased reporting and presentation of findings, and to prevent any inappropriate influence being exerted.

The Corporate Unit Evaluation reports directly to the Management Board. This organisational structure safeguards its independence vis à vis the company's operational business. On the basis of agreed evaluation questions, the unit is independent in the steering of central evaluations and in delivering advisory services on decentralised evaluation activities. The Corporate Unit Evaluation is mandated to generate evidence-based findings and recommendations, to provide credible evidence and to deliver critical evaluation findings to the company. It ensures that evaluation findings are transparent and encourages the practical application of these findings.

The Corporate Unit Evaluation is the key contact at GIZ for all evaluation-related issues and has the required methodological and managerial expertise to deal with such matters. It makes available reliable, evidence-based information and ensures that GIZ's evaluation system complies with current national and international standards at all times and is recognised at a professional level both nationally and internationally. It has the following responsibilities:

- designing the conceptual basis of the evaluation system;
- determining an evaluation portfolio;
- devising and steering central evaluations;
- advising on decentralised evaluation activities;
- coordinating support for external evaluations and delivering advice;
- coordinating management responses, implementation agreements and implementation monitoring;
- promoting the use of evaluations and the evaluation culture;
- supporting transparency and accountability;
- producing and publishing GIZ's evaluation report;
- positioning and representing GIZ externally on all issues related to evaluation.

2 GIZ's evaluation instruments

Central project evaluations	Corporate strategic evaluations	Cross-sectional analyses
<p>In BMZ business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of a representative random sample • Rating based on mandatory criteria for evaluating development cooperation <p>Steered by the Corporate Unit Evaluation Reports published</p>	<p>On behalf of the Management Board on issues relating to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service delivery • Corporate development <p>Steered by the Corporate Unit Evaluation Reports published</p>	<p>Of evaluation products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation syntheses for company-wide learning • Meta-evaluations for information on the quality of evaluations <p>Steered by the Corporate Unit Evaluation Reports published</p>
Commissioned evaluations	Evaluation of co-financing arrangements	Rigorous impact evaluations and other evaluative studies
<p>For external and internal parties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Object of the evaluation • Evaluation criteria <p>In consultation with the commissioning party</p> <p>Steered by the Corporate Unit Evaluation or the operational units Reports published with the approval of the commissioning party</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of co-financed parts of a project or of the project • In line with DC evaluation criteria <p>In consultation with the commissioning party</p> <p>Steered by the Corporate Unit Evaluation or the operational units Reports published with the approval of the commissioning party</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For specific information requirements in the course of implementation • Flexibility regarding the object of the evaluation and evaluation criteria, process and methods • No rating <p>Steered by operational units Results communicated on an ad hoc basis</p>

The evaluation instruments used by GIZ are shown in the table above. A distinction is made between central evaluations steered by the Corporate Unit Evaluation and decentralised evaluations steered by other organisational units.

The central project evaluations, corporate strategic evaluations and cross-sectional analyses are central evaluations steered by the Corporate Unit Evaluation, which is responsible for these evaluations. In contrast, commissioned evaluations and evaluations of co-financing arrangements can be realised either at central level by the Corporate Unit Evaluation or at decentralised level by other units.

Rigorous impact evaluations and other evaluative studies are steered at decentralised level by the relevant operational unit, which is then also responsible. The Corporate Unit Evaluation can provide advice to support evaluative studies that are methodologically particularly demanding and innovative in order to make the experience available and replicable throughout GIZ and to set company-wide standards.

The Corporate Unit Evaluation should be notified of decentralised evaluations and the report submitted to the Unit so that findings from these evaluations are also available for company-wide knowledge management and can be used in cross-sectional analyses. The IT-assisted **registry for evaluation activities** should be used for this purpose.

GIZ not only conducts its own evaluations. It is also subject to external evaluations. The Corporate Unit Evaluation acts as the entry point and interface for these **external evaluations**, which are conducted by other organisations and concern the work of GIZ or its project portfolio. The Corporate Unit Evaluation coordinates support for evaluations conducted by the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval), for instance, to ensure that they reflect the contribution of GIZ as accurately as possible and that they generate findings that are useful for GIZ's service delivery processes. Within the scope of a multi-year evaluation programme, DEval conducts evaluations, performance reviews and impact analyses of measures carried out on behalf of BMZ. The object of the evaluation is usually an overarching issue (strategies, instruments and programmes) relating to the direction of German development cooperation. Where evaluations are commissioned by other bodies, such as the German Federal Foreign Office and the European Union, the Corporate Unit Evaluation provides advisory services and makes the findings available to the company-wide knowledge and risk management systems. In line with GIZ's mandatory in-house Processes and Rules (P+R), the organisational units must inform the Corporate Unit Evaluation about external evaluations registered within their units as well as submitting the reports to the Corporate Unit Evaluation.

2.1 Central project evaluations in BMZ business

Central project evaluations account for the large majority of GIZ evaluations. GIZ uses central project evaluations to evaluate the results, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of projects that it implements together with partner organisations on behalf of BMZ.

Since 2017, an **informative random sample** has been taken for evaluation from all BMZ projects with a volume of over 3 million euros that are scheduled for completion within the same year. This procedure is conducted separately for each region, from Asia to Africa, and for global programmes. Since 2020, the sample has been taken by BMZ budget item, and in the case of bilateral projects also by region. This produces thematic 'pots' from which about 40 per cent of projects are randomly chosen.

Based on proposals made by BMZ or GIZ organisational units, central project evaluations can also be conducted independently of this random sample process, using **specific criteria** for individual projects. The criteria used to select projects for these central project evaluations in BMZ business include the strategic importance of the project, political interest, relevance of the practical application of evaluation findings, the potential offered by the project for widescale replication, and the potential risks or innovation involved in the project.

Central project evaluations encompass a critical, analytical review of a project's results and implementation. They are based on the six **criteria for the evaluation of bilateral development cooperation** set out in the BMZ guidelines: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability. They provide the conceptual foundation for assessing the success of German bilateral development cooperation measures.

Evaluations of projects implemented under the bilateral technical cooperation budget item that are selected for evaluation by means of random sampling are financed using a procedure under which all projects under this budget item share the costs. Evaluations of measures financed under other budget items and of projects selected on the basis of specific criteria are financed directly by the projects evaluated.

Central project evaluations are steered **centrally** by the Corporate Unit Evaluation. The recommendations of all central project evaluations are recorded in a database and evaluated along thematic lines. The Corporate Unit Evaluation monitors action taken on the recommendations.

The reports are published on our website. You can find a more detailed presentation of this evaluation instrument, covering functions, determination of the evaluation portfolio, design and implementation of evaluations, practical application of evaluation findings, the process and responsibilities, in the separate paper entitled **GIZ's Evaluation System – Central Project Evaluations in BMZ Business**.

2.2 Corporate strategic evaluations

Corporate strategic evaluations are selected by GIZ on its own responsibility and conducted by the Corporate Unit Evaluation on behalf of the Management Board. They address strategic aspects of **corporate development** or **GIZ's service delivery**. These evaluations prioritise the benefits for the company.

Issues to be included in the portfolio for corporate strategic evaluations are collected on an ongoing basis, and commissions are placed accordingly, to enable the Unit to respond flexibly to the evaluation requirements of the Management Board. To this end, the Corporate Unit Evaluation keeps a list of issues that can be extended at any time to incorporate new proposals on the initiative of the Management Board, the Strategy Committee, the Management Committee and Managing Directors, Directors General of Departments and Directors of Corporate Units. The Corporate Unit Evaluation reviews these proposals to determine their significance for corporate policy and assesses the specific requirements for evidence and decision-making as well as their evaluability and assessability. The Management Board decides on the corporate strategic evaluation portfolio following discussions within the Strategy Committee. Corporate strategic evaluations are financed from the Corporate Unit Evaluation's budget.

Corporate strategic evaluations are not only centrally steered but are in some cases conducted by the Corporate Unit Evaluation itself. Based on the discussion at the last reference group meeting, it drafts the management response, discusses and agrees this with the **Management Board** and reference group members, and coordinates preparation of the specific implementation agreements. The implementation agreements are then adopted by the **Management Committee**. The Corporate Unit Evaluation monitors progress in carrying out the measures commissioned in the implementation agreements and informs the **Strategy Committee** on a six-monthly basis.

The reports are published on our website. You can find a more detailed presentation of this evaluation instrument, covering functions, determination of the evaluation portfolio, design and implementation of evaluations, practical application of evaluation findings, the process and responsibilities, in the separate paper entitled **GIZ's Evaluation System – Corporate Strategic Evaluations**.

2.3 Cross-sectional analyses

In cross-sectional analyses, GIZ analyses evaluation reports. A distinction is made between meta-evaluations and evaluation syntheses.

Meta-evaluations evaluate evaluations. They review the usefulness, process quality and methodological quality of evaluations and evaluative studies in line with national and international evaluation standards and generate findings that can be used to improve their quality. Up until 2019, GIZ regularly commissioned and published meta-evaluations. Since 2020, the quality of GIZ's central project evaluations has been assessed externally on the basis of random samples in meta-evaluations conducted by the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). The reports are published in **DEval's database**. Depending on the design and coverage of DEval's meta-evaluations, GIZ reserves the right to have additional meta-evaluations conducted, for instance to explore the suitability of methods used in decentralised evaluations or evaluative studies for evaluation syntheses or to obtain findings regarding the usefulness of evaluations.

Evaluation syntheses produce a synthesis of the content of several reports. To this end, project evaluations and possibly also methodologically appropriate evaluative studies from a given year, sector, region or subject area are analysed and factors influencing success or failure are identified, along with good practices. The experience and expertise available are thus pooled to support the planning and implementation of projects and the fine-tuning of service offerings and sector or country strategies. The Corporate Unit Evaluation accepts ideas from the company and proposes topics itself. It decides which topic areas are to be addressed and informs the relevant people, including the Managing Director responsible for evaluation and the Management Committee.

Cross-sectional analyses are steered **centrally** by the Corporate Unit Evaluation. They are financed from the budget of the Corporate Unit Evaluation, which determines whether a management response is to be drawn up. This is then coordinated by the Corporate Unit Evaluation. Stakeholders are given the opportunity to submit their comments in writing. If cross-sectional analyses contain recommendations, they are recorded in a database and evaluated along thematic lines. The Corporate Unit Evaluation monitors action taken on the recommendations. The Managing Director responsible for evaluation and the Management Committee are informed about the planned cross-sectional analyses and about the findings of these analyses.

The reports are published on our website. You can find a more detailed presentation of this evaluation instrument, covering functions, determination of the evaluation portfolio, design and implementation of evaluations, practical application of evaluation findings, the process and responsibilities, in the separate paper entitled **GIZ's Evaluation System – Cross-sectional Analyses**.

2.4 Commissioned evaluations

If there is a need for specific information that cannot be obtained using the standard GIZ evaluation methodology, or within the standard time-scale, the Corporate Unit Evaluation also offers the option of commissioned evaluations to **units within the company**. The Corporate Unit Evaluation reviews requests to ascertain the importance for corporate policy, the specific evidence and decision-making requirements, evaluability and assessability and decides on the basis of this whether or not to accept the request. The evaluation is then commissioned by the Director of a Corporate Unit or the Director General of a Department. The evaluations are financed jointly by the Corporate Unit Evaluation and the commissioning unit.

In the German Public Sector Clients and International Services business sectors, GIZ also accepts commissions to conduct an evaluation for **external bodies**. GIZ and the German Federal Foreign Office have, for instance, agreed on the basic structure of a common evaluation system for evaluations of projects commissioned by the Federal Foreign Office and implemented by GIZ. The party commissioning the evaluation pays the costs.

Commissioned evaluations can be steered **centrally** by the Corporate Unit Evaluation or at **decentralised level**. The party commissioning the evaluation decides which option should be followed. The Corporate Unit Evaluation offers advice through Evaluation Support on designing and conducting commissioned evaluations carried out at decentralised level.

The object and goals of the evaluation, the evaluation design and the criteria to be used in a commissioned evaluation are agreed with the party commissioning the evaluation. This does not affect the quality standards for evaluations in any way, however.

The reports are published on our website; evaluations commissioned by external bodies are only published with their consent.

2.5 Rigorous impact evaluations and other evaluative studies

Within GIZ there is a rising interest in and need for measuring results by way of (quasi) experimental evaluative studies such as rigorous impact evaluations. These studies may be commissioned, for instance, to examine the impact of innovative interventions or politically particularly relevant issues within the framework of projects. Decisions can then be made on this basis as to whether scaling up would be effective, and if so in what form.

Evaluative studies generate findings in ongoing projects that can be used for steering and learning purposes. In contrast to commissioned evaluations conducted at decentralised level, they are an integral part of the commission received for the project. Evaluative studies are a flexible instrument under which the evaluation objectives, the object of the evaluation, the evaluation design and methods, the criteria to be used and the evaluation process are agreed on a case by case basis in line with the specific information needs. Quality standards for evaluations must be met. Evaluative studies do not generally include any sort of rating. They are financed at decentralised level and communicated on an ad hoc basis.

The **flexibility** of evaluative studies and their proximity to the intended users of findings mean that they are particularly important for learning purposes and for evidence-based decision-making. Evaluative studies can also strengthen other instruments that are part of the GIZ's evaluation system and overall results-based management.

The Corporate Unit Evaluation is available to offer advice on general questions relating to (quasi) experimental and other evaluative studies. Where the methodology used in evaluative studies is particularly complex, as is the case with rigorous impact evaluations, and for evaluations of innovative or strategically important projects, the Corporate Unit Evaluation can offer more intensive advisory services and support to make the lessons learned available across the company.

2.6 Evaluation of co-financing arrangements

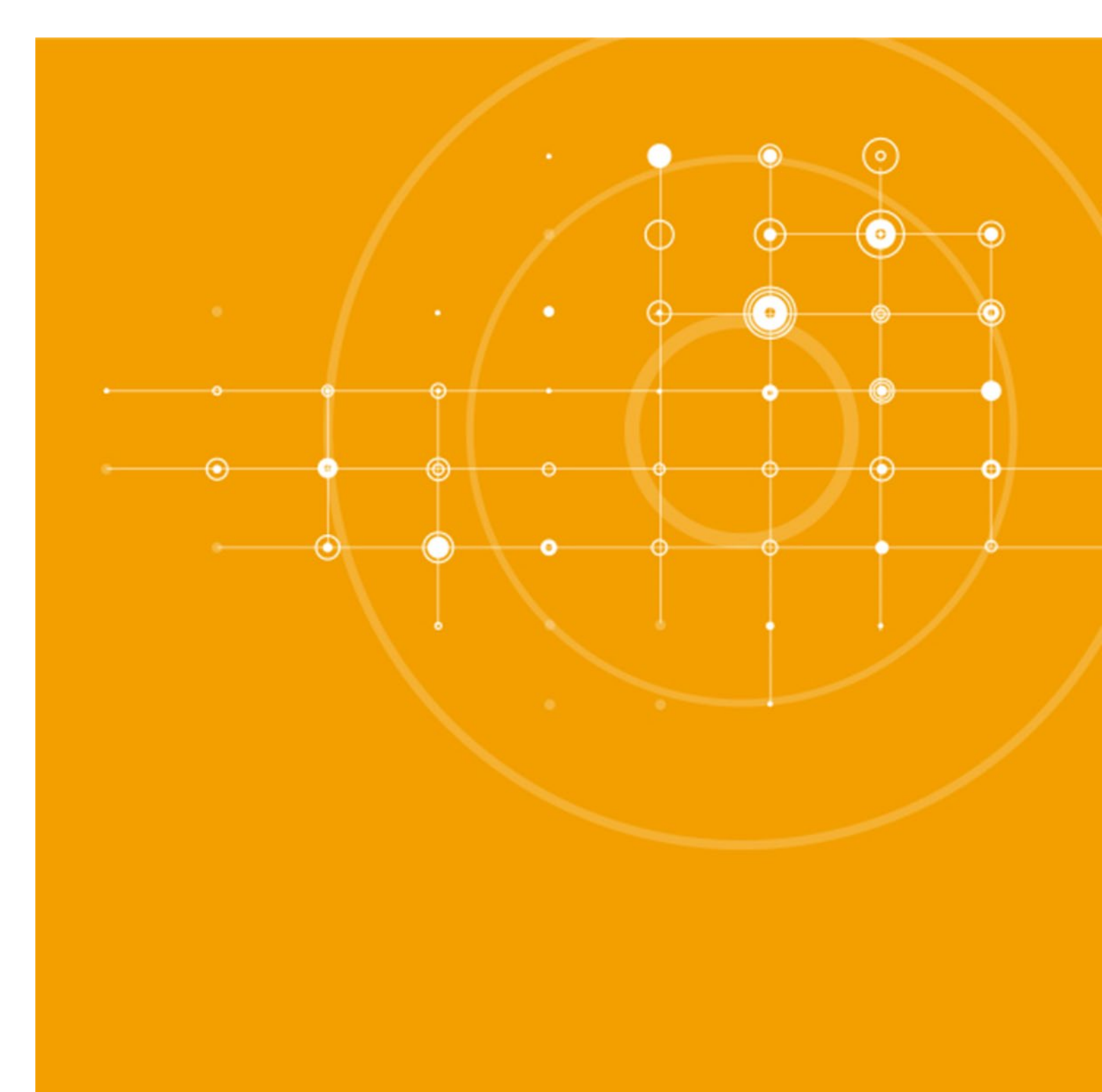
Evaluations of co-financing arrangements assess the co-financed project or only that part of the project that is co-financed. They can be **centrally** steered by the Corporate Unit Evaluation in the form of commissioned evaluations or in the form of central project evaluations. They can, however, also be steered at **decentralised level** by operational units in the form of commissioned evaluations or evaluative studies.

Reports on evaluations of co-financing arrangements within the framework of central project evaluations are published on our website. Evaluations of co-financing arrangements within the framework of commissioned evaluations for external clients are published once approved by the client. Evaluative studies are only published on an ad hoc basis.

Sources

URL references:

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