



Corporate Social Responsibility and Development Cooperation

The challenge

Every society needs strong companies. On the other hand, companies only function in a stable and productive society. This insight is not new, but it is the reason for an increasing number of companies employing a strategy of corporate social responsibility (CSR). CSR means responsible activity on the part of businesses with the aim of using their available leeway to foster sustainable development.

Sustainability is the common basis upon which development policy and responsible firms act: where poverty fades, markets grow. Where companies can access qualified and healthy employees, productivity and competitiveness increase. Where the environment is protected, resources can be replenished and supply risks are reduced.

Without the contribution of the business sector, sustainable development is not thinkable, since every social investment that aims to reach out to a lot of people — education, health, a clean environment, corruption-free political structures — needs the support of responsible companies.

Particularly for global companies whose value chains extend into emerging and developing countries, this is a growing challenge.

Our approach

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) offers concrete assistance to firms working in developing countries. Our approaches are comprehensive and aim to address the complex, multi-level challenges of different developing countries. This includes:

Setting the ground rules

Laying down ground rules is a political task. Enforcing laws and standards at the national and international levels is of crucial importance for creating reliable frameworks. However,

companies are already playing an important role in initiating and supporting social reforms. GIZ assists them by establishing contacts with political and social institutions and also participates in the political dialogue.

Getting involved on the ground

Development partnerships combine the know-how and resources of development cooperation and the business sector in individual projects. GIZ offers instruments that support private-sector commitment to sustainable development; we get involved in the planning, implementation and financing of development partnerships with tangible benefits for people in partner countries of the German Government. We help with recruitment and training of personnel, assist in designing training materials and awareness-raising campaigns, and open doors to regional authorities, suppliers and customers. GIZ improves structures and processes and supports activities that allow companies to responsibly enter new markets in developing countries.

Harnessing dynamism

The current debate on CSR is very dynamic: the idea of CSR is constantly being refined at national and international forums. Dialogue is key to successful cooperation. It promotes the exchange of ideas and experiences between development policy experts, the private sector, civil society organisations, parliaments, political parties and labour unions — in Germany, in partner countries of the German Government and in the global debate.

Our services

GIZ's services are based on its decades-long experience in the areas of economic development and employment, governance and democracy, health, education and social protection, water, energy and transport, agriculture, fisheries and food, and environment and climate change. Our services fall into four fields of corporate action:



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CSR in internal processes

GIZ assists firms as they aspire to fulfil their responsibilities towards internal stakeholders, in other words, their staff members. Our services in this area range from comprehensive health care programmes for employees to industrial environmental protection.

CSR along the value chain

GIZ services address the social and ecological aspects of business, not only in the company itself, but also in firms along their (global) value chains. GIZ promotes initiatives and instruments that contribute to compliance with national and international standards in order to address social and ecological concerns of stakeholders in production and supply chains.

CSR at the company's location

GIZ works with firms that take seriously their responsibility towards neighbours, local residents, regulatory authorities and local administrations. We also help companies set up vocational training and education systems that respond to market needs.

CSR in the company's institutional environment

GIZ helps firms shape conditions in their working environment and form partnerships with all social actors. In order to disseminate CSR, GIZ promotes the international exchange of ideas and advises governments and private actors who are committed to social improvements that extend beyond their own organisation. For this purpose, GIZ organises conferences and round tables, moderates cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder forums and facilitates dialogue between private and public institutions.

GIZ tailors the services in its portfolio to the needs of each business partner and offers comprehensive support to interested firms.

Your benefits

CSR means active risk management, investment in future markets and promises a good reputation among employees, customers, investors, political decision-makers and the general public. CSR strategies often lead the way to increases in quality and productivity.

Firms benefit from GIZ's country and market experience and from our contacts to national governments, regional institutions and civil society institutions.

An example of our work

A large retail firm is working with GIZ to permanently improve the working conditions in its Asian supplier firms in the non-food sector. The companies are being enabled to independently introduce international social standards in their firms. This training process is based on dialogue between managers and employees in production plants and between retailers and suppliers. 40 supplier firms for textiles, accessories, wood, metal and leather goods are included. GIZ's work includes selecting and coordinating local trainers, monitoring the project's outcomes and building up a local advisory network, to which international retailers and local firms will have access.

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