

## Evaluations at GTZ

### Concept

Evaluations are comprehensive and systematic reviews of projects and programmes from the technical and development policy points of view. They have a range of **objectives**. They look at the results in the specific and broader context of a project/programme, the goal achievement, relevance, cost-effectiveness and its sustainability. Evaluations serve the **purpose** of meeting our accountability obligations to the client and the public, and are also part of quality management since they provide information for project or programme management and assist individual and institutional learning.

The GTZ **evaluation system** is based on the elements of self-evaluation as well as independent and external evaluation. Each includes a number of instruments, which can be used to cover a range of objectives in different ways and at different levels of cost.

GTZ follows the **OECD/DAC principles** for evaluating development projects and programmes. In accordance with the principle of independence, the **GTZ Evaluation Unit** is clearly separated from the operative departments, and reports directly to the Office of the Managing Directors. The Evaluation Unit has a high-level focus involving the entire portfolio and corporate strategies. It develops evaluation concepts, processes and instruments and advises the company's operative departments and projects/programmes on self-evaluation. Furthermore, it is responsible for and manages independent evaluations. It assists the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), among other things with its efforts to harmonise evaluation procedures.

**Self-evaluation** is a systematic review of a project/programme by the unit operating the project. Self-evaluations make a particular contribution to learning, both by the company as a whole and by individuals, because experience has shown that the willingness to learn of those involved is greater than with independent evaluations. Comparison with the results of independent evaluations has shown that the results of self-evaluations are very reliable. Generally, self-evaluations are also cheaper than independent evaluations.

**Independent and external evaluations** are reviews of projects/programmes by third parties. Responsibility and management are either external (external evaluations) or handled by GTZ's independent Evaluation Unit (independent evaluations). Independent and external evaluations primarily serve the purpose of accountability.

The use of **external appraisers** is a key feature of all types of evaluation. External appraisers are used in self-evaluations as well. There are also good reasons for assigning GTZ staff members to evaluations, such as their expertise, the great willingness to learn on the part of those involved in the project and the lower financial cost.

**Partners and local appraisers** are regularly included in self-evaluations, external and independent evaluations. This is not only a means of enhancing the quality and acceptance of the evaluations (the keyword here is ownership), but also an important contribution to developing or improving national evaluation capacity and promoting a culture of evaluation in the partner institutions in the partner countries.

## **Self-evaluation**

An important self-evaluation instrument at GTZ is the project progress review. e-VAL, a new computerised evaluation instrument, is used both for independent and self-evaluation.

The **project progress review** (PPR) is a critical review with independent assistance of the status and results of a project/programme. It assists project management and learning both within the project and in the company as a whole. A PPR must be completed towards the end of each phase of a project/programme. This is the responsibility of the unit operating the project. The PPR analyses the results of the project/programme and assesses the achievement of objectives and the relevance of the desired objectives for overarching development policy results. It reviews the concept and strategy of the project/programme in order to stimulate learning and change processes among all those involved. The evaluation of project success is based on the internationally recognised criteria of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (as of end 2007). Results-oriented monitoring and e-VAL interviews provide a basis for internal consideration and moving forward. Independent appraisers supplement this with an external point of view. Using these means, it is possible to manage the continuation of a project/programme and make the results available for GTZ knowledge management.

**e-VAL** is a computerised procedure for evaluation which GTZ developed in cooperation with a management consulting firm and has been applied in 650 projects/programmes up to July 2007. e-VAL abandons any claim of objectivity and explores the subjective view of individuals who are well informed about a project/programme (representatives of the target groups, counterpart experts, intermediaries, GTZ staff and other participants). The software aggregates the subjective views of the individuals interviewed to yield very reliable quantitative summaries of the various groups' opinions regarding success, goal achievement, quality of contributions, strengths and weaknesses. These findings are expressed as statistics which can be compared with other projects/programmes in a sector or country. e-VAL is used in conjunction with project progress reviews, final reports and independent evaluations. e-VAL is particularly suitable for results and process analysis, also on a sector, multi-donor and programme level.

## **Independent and external evaluation**

One form of external evaluation is the strategic evaluations within the framework of the Central Evaluation Programme (CEP) of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Another is the random sample of some 70 projects/programmes made every year by an audit firm. The GTZ evaluation system has

been supplemented by independent evaluations since 2005.

The **BMZ's strategic evaluations** concentrate on supra-project questions designed to further develop the conceptual, organisational and institutional dimensions of the German development cooperation system. To this end, BMZ employs the following instruments:

- evaluations of sectors: these analyse a specific sector in a country or various countries (e.g. Health sector Tansania – joint evaluation)
- evaluations of topics: these consider projects or programmes in various countries or regions from a single thematic perspective (e.g. child and youth poverty, development cooperation in crisis regions)
- evaluations of instruments: these study specific development policy instruments (e.g. collaboration between technical and financial cooperation, programme-oriented joint financing)
- evaluations of programmes: these consider the German Government's entire development cooperation portfolio (GTZ, CIM, KfW, German Development Service (DED), Capacity Building International, Germany (InWEnt)) or priority areas in a partner country, or other types of programmes (e.g. reintegration programme).

The GTZ Evaluation Unit assists BMZ in planning, carrying out and analysing its strategic evaluations.

Every year, on behalf of BMZ, an **audit firm** carries out an audit on a representative random sample of some 70 ongoing projects/programmes. The selected projects/programmes are examined on the basis of existing project documentation. For ten of the projects, a local audit is also carried out. The audits focus on the quality of project planning and implementation. Important audit criteria include:

- goal achievement or plausibility of goal achievement
- compliance with BMZ development policy requirements for planning and implementation
- possible improvements in approach and use of funds

Since 2005, **GTZ** has also had annual **independent evaluations** carried out by independent research institutions as well as, more recently, consulting firms on a random sample of projects/programmes. These institutions in turn use international and local appraisers. **Final evaluations** are completed a few months before or after the end of projects/programmes, **ex-post evaluations** two to five years later. In 2006, independent **evaluations of ongoing projects/programmes** were also added. Every year, 30 projects and programmes to be evaluated are selected on the basis of thematic or regional priorities. The GTZ Evaluation Unit is responsible for planning and managing these evaluations.

In line with the **evaluation criteria** of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the independent evaluations measure the success of a project or programme in terms of relevance (are

we doing the right thing?), effectiveness (are we achieving the project objectives?), impact (are we contributing to the achievement of overarching development objectives?), efficiency (is our action cost-effective?) and sustainability (are the results durable?). Ex-post evaluation concentrates on assessing the sustainability actually achieved for project results. To permit comparison of findings, a uniform evaluation grid is used.

The introduction of independent evaluations completed the GTZ evaluation system and modified it to meet conceptual and political requirements. The modification process is not, however, concluded, but will be continuously pursued.

Joint evaluations conducted with German and international cooperation partners will be a challenge for the future.

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## The GTZ Evaluation System

