

# Synthesis



# Smart Implementation in Transformation: Findings and Outlook

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The guiding framework for development cooperation in the coming years is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which promotes a conceptual shift from “aid” to “global goods,” and from development work to international cooperation. Achieving this vision as well as the set goals and targets requires new forms of cooperation and implementation of our programs with our partners. In this final chapter, we take stock of how the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) governance programs are implemented, discuss identified strengths and weaknesses, and review if we are prepared for the upcoming challenges. In the second part of this chapter, these findings are then related to the discussion on Doing Development Differently (DDD) and the Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) initiative. We do so from the perspective of an implementing agency owned by the Federal Republic of Germany and established with the purpose to promote international sustainable development by implementing measures in the field of capacity development for German ministries and international donors.

## *IMPLEMENTATION IN GIZ GOVERNANCE PROGRAMS: EXPERIENCES AND FINDINGS FROM NINE CASE STUDIES*

Based on nine case studies, we present key findings for smart implementation in GIZ programs. We further examine if elements for sound implementation identified by other practitioners and scholars are supported by these findings or not and if additional lessons can be drawn. Teams were asked to explain *how* they implemented programs rather than describe what they did. The focus is on explaining the unpredictable and unexpected parts that caused deviations from the original design and planning.

The case studies reveal a very rich and diverse picture of implementation experiences. At first glance, the chosen instruments and approaches vary considerably, and comparisons between cases are not readily apparent. The governance programs also have little thematic overlap and vary in

topics, from extractive industries, decentralization, public-sector reform, and rule of law to gender. However, regarding the five questions posed in the introductory chapter to smart implementation, the cases can be compared and commonalities identified. The following analysis is structured along these five questions, which we asked program teams to address and which are listed here again.

- What kinds of challenges occurred during program implementation? What did working in uncertain, unpredictable, complex, and political environments mean in your case?
- How did program teams and partners orient themselves in complex and unpredictable environments?
  - Which principles, instruments, or approaches were referred to or adopted?
  - What kind of analysis was used? How was insufficient information handled?
  - How did teams and partners learn?
- Were there tensions between achieving predefined results and adapting to changing circumstances? How were they handled?
- Which frame conditions (at the level of the development organization and in country) were conducive or hindered implementation in complex environments?
- What aspects of implementation were transferrable between contexts and countries, and what was context-specific and needed to be newly created?

### *Tackling implementation challenges*

The first question posed to program teams asked what working in uncertain, unpredictable, complex, and political environments meant to them and what implementation challenges they faced.

The array of implementation challenges portrayed in the case studies is broad. They range from unexpected political developments; resistance to changes from staff within organizations who are needed to implement reforms; mistrust among actors avoiding cooperation; visions for change that were still so vague that they lacked common understanding and agreement on central elements among actors to operationalize them; capacity and resource constraints; and the institutional environment not providing

sufficient flexibility for programs to adapt to changing local circumstances. Working in uncertain, unpredictable, complex, and political environments was often referred to as “challenging.” The following pages describe how teams addressed these challenges in more detail.

### Most implementation challenges are political by nature

Political challenges were mentioned most often as the reason why programs deviated from their plans. All of the case studies mention how vested interests, power struggles, and exercised influence affected the implementation of the programs. They led to irritations, for which the programs had to find answers (Melia, 2016; see also Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015). The following description illustrates what kinds of political issues arose and how they were addressed.

In **Liberia**, vested interests of decision-makers were affected when the introduction of a new mine licensing system was proposed. The new system (called the Mining Cadastre and Revenue Administration approach) addressed the highly unregulated mining economy by putting a set of rules in place that prevent the individual allocation of mining licenses and enables the government to monitor fiscal and social license compliance. The program team invested in the regional exchange of experiences demonstrating the benefits of the new regulation and how individual concerns can be answered.

Overcoming vested interests of influential and powerful middle-class voters regarding potential cuts to fuel subsidies was one of the challenges the team in **Indonesia** faced. Government partners from the Ministry of Finance and GIZ team decided to tackle the issue by convening broad

public consultations. This issue was only partly related to the program’s objective to develop new approaches for financing climate change mitigation. Cutting fuel price subsidies would have a notable positive impact on greenhouse gas emission reductions, but it was only one aspect in the wider set of options. The public concern over potentially raising fuel prices dominated the discussion so strongly that it needed to be addressed first in order to advance the broader agenda on climate change mitigation. In this instance, the Ministry of Finance deliberately decided not to be the convening party in the consultations but left it to universities to convene the deliberations while the ministry itself just participated as one of several institutions defending its point of view. This effort contributed toward creating sufficient political space for a new incoming government to reduce the fuel subsidies.

In the case of the **Philippines**, resistance to change came from one of the conflict parties: Armed groups prevented the local population from taking part in information events organized by the program and its partners to start a communication with city officials on socio-economic development in an area they controlled. The program team rescheduled the event to avoid further confrontation and made sure that interested communities had multiple ways to express their points of view.

In contrast to the above, in some cases political dynamics could be used to excel the implementation process and leapfrog ahead. In the case of **Tunisia**, GIZ had tried to convince authorities of the benefits of municipal networking and regional integration prior to the revolution, without much success. The Arab Spring led to

a change in the government's priorities on these ideas, and the government asked for assistance in reviewing options for decentralization in Tunisia.

Yet another perspective is provided in the case of **South Caucasus**. The program team decided to deliberately take a neutral standpoint on local politics and focused on legal issues when the dynamics were such that legal boundaries were pushed. This helped to maintain a good relationship with the partner and to increase the influence of the program as a trustworthy facilitator over time. Still, the team needed insights into the political dynamics to be able to assess the situation correctly and to decide upon this move. Staying out of local politics does not mean that the program can take up an apolitical position.

## Solutions need to be crafted to fit the local context

Most of the case studies present problems to which solutions were not readily available but had to be found. These local problems often led to junctures, thereby changing the course of the envisaged implementation path. In responding to these problems, teams often started the search for options or solutions. This was done either by experimenting or by retreating to experiences and available knowledge in the form of best practice examples, international standards, or previous program applications. However, previous knowledge only provided a first entry point. Each of these ideas had to be crafted to fit the local context and needed modulation to achieve the required accuracy necessary to fit the local situation (Andrews, 2015; Levy, 2014). The case studies stress that trust among partners and advisors is essential to work in this manner. Trust was even considered a precondition for identifying partner needs and problems – let alone solutions. It was argued that, without trust, partners hardly allow an

inside perspective to the real issues that the support structure is suppose to help address.

The case studies explain how they came to context-specific solutions, which were then tested incrementally.

The **Indonesia** case study outlines in detail how the program used international and regional experiences of climate financing and combined them with local knowledge on instruments for fiscal decentralization to come up with a proposal that would fit the purposes and interests of the government. They used this information also to address political sensitivities.

The team in **Costa Rica** recalls internal discussions on how to best strike the balance between maintaining international evaluation standards when developing capacities in ministries while also addressing the interests, culture, and needs of the collaborating ministries involved in order to build their commitment for more transparent, accountable, and evidence-based information at the institutional level. The team realized that this balance had to be constantly reassessed and re-established. Frequent reflection sessions allowed for reviewing when it was adequate to accept context-appropriate evaluation designs and when there was an opportunity to demand higher standards and more progress in institutionalizing them.

The **Peru** program aims at reducing and preventing violence against women. It advocates and promotes a policy agenda that leads to a different program design. For example, they were able to independently select their partners and choose their focus area. This case is thus an example that portrays what it means to uphold

a policy objective while still having to find local solutions to see changes in attitudes and behaviors in a specific context. The program identified the private sector as a societal entity that could assist in changing attitudes and prevent violence against women. The program started out wooing the private sector to become a partner in advocating for the cause and taking action to prevent abuse and violence in the workplace and at home. Knowledge of the local context and contacts of the national program staff helped identify options for cooperation. Yet, it took several “experiments” to find the right hook that caught the attention of businesses to get them involved: It was a research program that calculated the monetary effects of partner violence for businesses, which caught the most attention. Thereafter, local businesses started to engage in awareness-raising and training.

The most illustrating description on how local solutions are being crafted is given by the quote of a counterpart in the **South Africa** case study, who stated:

“GIZ’s approach was not as such selling one model or one approach. It was much more trying to work through the “mess” in the most supportive and thoughtful ways, which were context-sensitive and trying to traverse the space between the politics that were there and the international relationships and the expert issues. Requests were accommodated

in the concepts always, and initial nets spun wider to bring something in which did not fit in initially.” The team says that identifying the right time to use opportunities and to set the right incentives is not rocket

science when the partner’s context is properly understood and the cooperation is grounded on a trustful relationship (see the South Africa case study from Godje Bialluch et al. in this publication).

### *Instruments and principles that facilitate implementation*

The second question asked which principles, instruments, approaches, and analysis provided orientation to teams when faced with insufficient information in complex and unpredictable environments.

Multi-stakeholder approaches are a craftsman’s hammer for smart implementation

The instrument most often mentioned in the case studies for facilitating implementation was stakeholder consultations and adopting a multi-stakeholder approach, with particular attention to bringing stakeholders together that had not interacted with each other before. It was the instrument of choice for addressing conflicts, overcoming bottlenecks, and finding locally relevant and legitimate solutions that make sustainable change more likely. The case studies mention that the instrument helped to tackle several implementation challenges:

- first and foremost, a multi-stakeholder approach allows for the participation of stakeholders, making it a core cooperation principle that can build trust and ownership as well as support learning. Stakeholders provided valuable information, whereby actors saw the process at present and how things would develop;
- the focus on working jointly with as many parties as possible supports the coordination of interest groups, even donor agencies, around a local problem;
- activities that are performed simultaneously by different actors could be connected, and then new lines of communication, options for cooperation, and alliances for change could be created;



- stagnancy could be tackled by portraying opposing views, conflicts of interest, and vested interests, and subsequently by identifying space for agreement and compromise among actors;
- consultations provided space for reflection and learning and influenced opinions that addressed social patterns and behavior;
- it was also mentioned that decisions remained with local actors and that ideas for solutions that evolved from consultations took local aspirations, traditions, dynamics, and know-how into account;
- multi-stakeholder approaches support inclusion and participation, which in turn builds confidence and trust among actors and strengthens cooperation. This is often the basis for developing or trying out new options and solutions within a complex change process. The initiated cooperation can facilitate joint action that drives the process forward.

The following three case study examples show how stakeholder consultations shaped the implementation process.

The inclusion of multiple national stakeholders through a round of consultations was crucial in **Liberia** to obtain support for the establishment of a data exchange system. The consultations helped in clarifying and setting priorities for the system. The data exchange system itself improved data availability – a quick-win approach the team chose in order to foster confidence among actors and broader support for the reform on mine licensing.

The GIZ team in the **Philippines** opted to handle the volatile conflict situation through an inclusive and participatory approach (“leaving no one behind”). Engaging all relevant and affected stakeholders through dialogues, workshops, and overall transparency enabled the team and its partners to deal with powerful economic background interests. At one point, the program was pushed by influential stakeholders exercising their power to a critical juncture they did

not foresee: The peace-building efforts between Butuan City and the precluded communities in the forest areas had shown first encouraging results. This occurred when investors and brokers exercised pressure on the mayor to enter into a concessional agreement for the area, which would allow for economic investments in the forest areas. Responding to these demands would have violated the principle of inclusion and common agreements and put the peace-building efforts at risk. Yet, these powerful actors could not be ignored either. Referring to the commonly agreed principle of consultation and joint decision-making, the mayor asked the investors to become responsible for developing criteria for concessions and economic operations in the restricted area. The negotiation process was tedious, and it took several years before an agreement among all parties involved could be made. This bought time to strengthen the

peace-building process between the City and the forest communities. On the other hand, the GIZ team in <b>Azerbaijan</b> encountered challenges due to the fact that they were confined to working with only one partner institution, which set the pace on	implementing activities and did not support broader consultations. Later on in the process, it was not possible to gain support from a broader group of stakeholders to broaden perspectives and options.
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### Working incrementally allows for gradual adaptations during implementation

All programs implemented their activities incrementally instead of rolling out predefined activities on a large scale; it seems to be the principle of choice in uncertain and hard-to-predict environments with insufficient information. Experimenting with new rules, approaches, or activities in an incremental manner allows teams to closely evaluate their fit to the specific context at every step. Short feedback loops help to detect failures and inadequate fits early on and provide for readjustments and changes that are gradual and not abrupt. The iterations between planning and implementation as well as between activity and adjustment are short, which provides flexibility to stay tuned to a changing environment. The quick adjustments improve the accuracy of an intervention's fit to the specificities of the local context. The approach is even more useful when several experiments run in parallel and effects can be observed in comparison. Incremental implementation also helps teams to achieve quick wins, which boosts stakeholders' confidence that results and successes can be reached and presented. Confidence and trust in the process and the cooperation form the basis on which more difficult aims can be tackled. Furthermore, working incrementally also helps to manage and reduce risks (DDD Manifesto Community, 2014; Wild, Andrews, Pett, & Dempster, 2016). Cooperation is an effective tool to work in this manner. However, bringing incremental results to scale is a challenge for GIZ programs.

The case studies present various examples how ideas, approaches, or solutions were implemented incrementally.

The program in **Costa Rica** assisted the government in utilizing evaluations better to enhance evidence-based policy-making. The first evaluations were selected via a competition. However, time pressure and competition among different ministries proved to be counterproductive for creating a collaborative environment among stakeholders. Trust, rather than competition, was the incentive for more cooperation among ministries. Collaboration among these actors was required to achieve the overall objective to conduct evaluations in public agencies consistently. Once the team realized that the chosen instrument did not serve the purpose well, they changed to a joint selection procedure for evaluations.

The program in the **Philippines** carefully planned how to re-engage with communities in the land management zone. They had to act cautiously,

focusing on being trustworthy to people who perceived city representatives as enemies. Working incrementally in this case meant relying on a non-governmental organization (NGO) that entered the region offering assistance with socio-economic needs but eventually facilitated the contact between the two conflicting parties.

The team in **Peru** conducted several experiments on a small scale to identify the best avenues for engaging the private sector in a joint agenda to combat violence against women. These included a series of business breakfasts, training programs in selected companies, and introducing a government seal to praise active companies. The activity that spurred the most reactions and engagement was a research program with the university that showed the costs of domestic violence for businesses.

A multi-level program design assists in addressing implementation hurdles and risks

A multi-level program design provides flexibility when operating in complex systems. Systems theory acknowledges non-linearity in social change processes, with ruptures, blockages, reversals, and accelerations happening simultaneously in different parts of the system. A multi-level program design is a way to deal with these overlaps during implementation. It enables teams to support issues where the energy or opportunity for progress exists, while only preparing or nudging subjects along that need to be addressed but where there is little dynamic for change. Different routes and speeds of progress can be accompanied with different measures and levels of intensity. A multi-level program design provides sufficient flexibility to shift attention among topics if a target has been met or new opportunities arise. The interdependence of different levels is used to drive

the reform process forward as a whole. How GIZ designs programs at different level has been briefly explained in the introductory chapter. The case studies illustrate how multi-level program designs were used to maneuver implementation in complex environments.

In **Liberia** the GIZ governance program supported the introduction of a new licensing system in the mining sector. Strong vested interests caused resistance and delays at the policy and institutional levels. Developing the capacity of technicians in the new administration system was a low-risk entry point to which general support from all stakeholders was ensured. This set of activities enabled the team to show movement in one area of the reform process. Simultaneously, the setup of an inter-agency task force for better data-sharing on mining revenues was facilitated, which improved transparency and cooperation among ministries. Members of this task force identified issues that needed response from the policy level. This signaled a need for change at the level where resistance was strong. Here, the multi-level program design made it possible to use the interdependence between the institutional and policy levels in the mining sector to induce catalysts for change at the levels where progress was slow. The program supported the signaling by providing additional impetuses (e.g., via the exchange of experiences

with the mining program in Sierra Leone, where a similar reform was successful, and expert study tours to forge alliances for change among leaders) to create momentum for opening a debate on new rules for awarding mining licenses in Liberia. The challenge to enhance understanding and communication between the media, citizens, and the government in the case study from **South Africa** was an issue that arose mainly at the municipality level. However, the program facilitated awareness-raising and discussions between the government communicators and community media for factual and just media reporting simultaneously at the provincial and national levels. It worked with these government institutions and non-state agencies because all of these actors influenced how the media would be perceived in the Eastern Cape province. This approach was easy to convene due to a multi-level program design that provided the opportunity to engage national-, provincial-, and local-level stakeholders in a process with only moderate political attention at the upper levels.

Short, quick, ad-hoc information collection and analysis is needed to still the constant demand for information

Context and political economy analysis are crucial for program teams to determine their position within the system and for identifying which contributions fit best when, where, and how. The need to conduct sound con-

text analysis at the outset to inform program appraisal and design has been stressed in development cooperation for several years now; many development organizations, including GIZ, have raised the bar on formalizing and consistently integrating this type of analysis into their program cycles (Fritz, Levy, & Ort, 2014; Booth, Harris, & Wild, 2016; GIZ [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit], 2015). Yet, problem-driven political economy analysis (called “context analysis” in GIZ terminology), which is a standard tool in the Capacity WORKS repertoire, has only been mentioned in four of the nine case studies as an instrument that provides orientation for implementation. Some programs mentioned using available analysis published by universities, research institutes, and other development agencies to detect options and inform decision-making. Some programs also mentioned their performance-monitoring system as an important source of information to steer the program. Upon inquiry, it became apparent that the analysis of day-to-day implementation issues is considered inevitable in order to maneuver a program, and thus it is an integral part of project management. However, formal, systematic analysis with long preparation time does not seem to be the right fit for program implementers. Instead, quick, short, light-handed, problem-specific, and ad-hoc analysis on technical and political economy issues that have a very specific purpose and an immediate application provides the information that can be absorbed and utilized. This seems to be even more the case if a program has been running for several phases and the team’s knowledge on technical, sector, and political issues has been built over time. In this case, new research is incorporated in due course during regular adaptations. Wild, Booth, and Valters describe a similar use of analytical work during program implementation at the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID). More attention is given to what they call, with reference to Hudson et al., “everyday political analysis,” which involves the ongoing questioning of incentives, space, and capacity for change (Hudson, Marquette, & Waldock, 2016; Wild, Booth, & Valters, 2017, p. 20).

The case studies also reveal that analysis is used as an instrument for providing advisory services. Teams invest in generating new analysis to underpin the relevance of an argument with local evidence, to inject new information into a debate, or to start a discussion with a new constellation of actors. Here, analysis is used to direct the cause of implementation.

The team in the **Philippines** continuously analyzed the interests, concerns, and stakeholder dynamics with rapid appraisal methods. This information was used to assess security risks, monitor conflict dynamics, and identify the scope for cooperation and peace-building. Sharing all available data and analysis without exception among all stakeholders was used as an instrument to enhance transparency and generated trust and peace-building during implementation.

In **Tunisia**, the team conducted short capacity analyses to develop a strat-

egy for how to transform a ministry with an unclear mandate and centralistic habits into an active proponent of local and regional autonomy. The analyses hinted at structural problems that required the training of individuals combined with organizational change in the public administration.

The team in **Indonesia** used the rich amount of available information on benefits and costs of fuel price subsidies to start a public debate raising awareness that these subsidies impede reaching targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The aim of learning is to create a ground for joint action

Capacity WORKS identifies learning and innovation as one of the five success factors for managing programs in complex environments successfully. Learning is thus an integral element of GIZ program design. It is generally approached by offering learning opportunities at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. The formal learning instruments most often mentioned in the case studies were workshops, formal or informal monitoring and evaluation exercises, field visits, study tours, and action learning events. However, more informal reflection and feedback sessions and learning events – internally and with partners – were also mentioned several times. Implementers refer to the basic logic of program cycle management, in which a cycle of short planning, action, and review phases is established. This “learning by doing” approach provides scope to alter activities and the course of implementation based on what is learned. The main purpose of learning was described as creating a ground for innovation and joint action (Valters, Cummings, & Nixon, 2016; Valters, 2016; Green, 2016a; Wild, Booth, & Valters, 2017, p. 20).

The iteration between identifying an option and planning, trying, and reviewing it, which leads to a change of course and the identification of alternative ideas, is most prominently described in the **Peru** case study. Here, the team tried several avenues to get the attention of businesses to act on violence against women.

The **Costa Rica** team sees their contribution for creating collective spaces for learning as one of their greatest successes:

“[T]he project was able to attract and include an increasingly large number of diverse voices over time and build a platform for collective learning and impact. This did not happen by

chance.... The project identified and approached cooperation partners deliberately and opened options for their participation and involvement. ... Spaces and processes for reflection, learning, and cooperation were created.” (See the Costa Rica case study from Sabrina Storm in this publication)

The program in **Tunisia** adopted an action-learning approach for the International Academy for Good Governance, because this approach makes real change more likely compared to theoretical learning, in which problems with the transfer of knowledge to local contexts may occur.

A mutual focus on results and process provides sound orientation for implementers

The third question asked how program teams integrate the two differing logics of result and process in program implementation.

The results logic defines measurable objectives and outcomes to be achieved by implementing the program. Results are defined during the program design phase and evaluated when the program has come to a close. A program’s success or failure is assessed by comparing the planned results against what has been achieved. The process logic emphasizes how these results have come about: “Results are not simply delivered to the partner but co-produced in a flexible process of search, negotiation, and implementation” (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2008, pp. 3, 9; author’s translation). A process orientation emphasizes staying tuned with the course of a transformation and adopting strategies and activities when the process requires it. Success is measured here in the degree of ownership, the acceptance, and the legitimacy of the proposed changes and solutions offered for problems.

As can be seen in the case studies, “planning for results” and “implementation as a process” are not mutually exclusive concepts in these pro-

grams. They are different perspectives on the same program,<sup>1</sup> co-existing in GIZ programs. One of the essential ingredients in the craft of implementation is how to achieve results, not as stand-alone elements but as integral parts of an ongoing process.

Both perspectives serve as milestones along the way and mark the corridor in which implementation takes place in a non-linear change process. As the case studies deal with specific challenges, with critical junctures and tipping points, discussions revolve around staying tuned to the local processes and finding ways to bring the program back on track or find alternative avenues. In this regard, results and process orientation are complementary concepts. However, the established form to present success and progress to commissioners is in the logic of results. Narratives that show legitimacy and acceptance are less well-known but helpful for assessing progress in multi-stakeholder constellations. Flexibility to adjust the elements of the results matrix or log frame in due course, if the process requires it, is pivotal for integrating the two logics in program management. Otherwise, there is a risk that external rather than local demands will determine the implementation path, which can lead to unsustainable results and isomorphic mimicry (see Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2012, pp. 1, 3, 5; Andrews, 2009; Pritchett & Woolcock, 2002). Considering that a conflict of interest between these two dimensions surfaced only in the one case study points to sufficient flexibility in the institutional arrangement between commissioner and implementer in German development cooperation to operate with both perspectives.

The program in **Azerbaijan** offered capacity development for government staff to prepare for an EU rapprochement process. At the beginning of the program's implementation, the government of Azerbaijan suspended this intention and thus altered an important precondition for achieving the program objective. The program

adjusted the initial plan by altering the time frame, quality, and format of the program, but it kept the originally agreed upon objectives. However, this was not the team's preferred option, and concerns regarding the sustainability of results were raised. In the case of **Indonesia**, two programs received a request from the

1 The *World Development Report 2017: Governance and the Law* refers to this duality by introducing two domains that have to be considered: the rules game and the outcome game. The World Bank proposes to start paying more attention to the rules game again, which, in our case, is referred to as process orientation that works with and shapes the rules of the game (World Bank, 2017, p. 18).



Ministry of Finance for support in a line of work that was not captured in their design during the planning stage. The program had sufficient flexibility to accommodate the partner's demand mid-course, informed the commissioner accordingly, and incorporated the new line of engagement in the designs during the following phase.

The team from the **Philippines** explains how the results logic facilitated communication and agreement among parties. The team decided to develop indicators jointly with the stakeholders. Deciding on a measurement for success together was an important trust-building element among conflicting parties. Here, the results framework was used to enhance accountability and transparency in decision-making and to forge common agreement among con-

flicting parties. Interestingly, it is also this team that states explicitly: "The fact that today both the City and the local population of the project area are benefiting from inclusive socio-economic development is first and foremost a result of the process that was applied" (see the Philippines case study from Yvonne Müller and Stephanie Schell-Faucon in this publication).

The governance program in **Tunisia** was a response to a political demand in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. The political environment had changed considerably since the program started and is still in flux. Thus, the program gave preference to a process orientation focusing on staying tuned to the partner's demands and adapted the program outputs several time during implementation.

### *Supportive and impeding conditions for implementation*

Supportive and impeding frame conditions for implementation in complex environments was the topic of the fourth question posed to case study writers.

The case study authors mention several aspects that influence the success of program implementation: Long-term engagement in a transformation process, strong ownership for reform and change in partner institutions, and flexibility to respond to local demands were mentioned as conducive frame conditions. Political changes that led to ruptures, imposed interests, policies that have no grounding in local issues, and lack of ownership on the partner's side were mentioned as impeding factors to successful implementation.

## Long-term engagement shapes implementation

Supporting transformation in partner countries requires engagement in a sector for a longer period of time – even spanning more than two or three decades.<sup>2</sup> GIZ often has the opportunity to provide long-term support to partner countries by offering a sequence of consecutive programs. The content, partners, institutions, and program designs change over time as the transformation progresses, but there is continuous engagement and support offered for the theme of the transformation and its stakeholders. A great advantage of this approach is the knowledge and understanding of the context, as well as the relationships and levels of trust that are built over time, all of which provide an indispensable source of information for implementers. Thus, short- or long-term engagement shapes the opportunities for implementation and the quality of results a program can achieve.

Four of the nine cases (South Africa, Philippines, South Caucasus, and Indonesia) describe their contribution as a step or phase of a longer engagement and explain their challenges in relation to the transition the program tries to support. In three cases, the long-lasting support was not confined to a country but benefited the development of a region.

The program in **South Africa** has been supporting the government in transforming the public administration into a transparent and development-oriented service provider since 1994. The authors state that the way they implemented the program would not have been doable without the mutual understanding and trust among parties, which had been established in the sector via a succession of different governance programs over a 20-year period. The way the program phase was designed and implemented was partially determined by the history and long-term

perspective of the program as a whole.

In the case of **Indonesia**, the government's request for assistance in developing financing mechanisms for climate mitigation would have hardly occurred without the close and long working relationship between the Ministry of Finance and the two GIZ programs.

The case studies from **Liberia, South Caucasus, and Peru** outline how a regional program design assisted in fostering change in countries where the issue still had low priority. An exchange of experiences as well as competition among neighboring

2 As an example, see the evaluation on “German Development Support to Rwanda’s Health Sector” over a span of 30 years before it was finalized in 2014 (Schweder-sky, Noltze, & Gaisbauer, 2014).

countries was deliberately used to inject incentives for change or to overcome national blockages. The **Liberia** team used the positive experience in Sierra Leone to demonstrate that a single and independent approval system for mine licensing was key for keeping the vested interests of actors at bay. The **South Caucasus** team used the successful implementation of the new adminis-

trative law in Georgia to challenge Azerbaijan and Armenia not to stay behind.

On the contrary, the short implementation period of 28 months in **Azerbaijan** was perceived as a hindrance to achieving sustainable results. Only through the integration of this component into a broader governance program was it possible to make results last.

Ownership defines, and at times constrains, what is implemented and how implementation occurs

As explained in the introductory chapter, GIZ adopts the principle of joint responsibility for implementation between the partner institution and the advisory team. In this logic, ownership is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable results. Yet, ownership is not static but alters with changing actor constellations and their priorities in a transformation over time (e.g., after a change of government and different parties heading partner institutions). Such situations lead to pain or inflection points during implementation, requiring the program to change course and adapt. Frequent changes in political or leadership constellations and fluctuating ownership can cause severe disruptions or delays for program implementation. In this setup, ownership influences the pace, scope, and direction of the implementation process and determines what is done when and how. A lack of ownership restricts the options for implementation and can cause unsustainable results if ignored. Smart implementation is based on partner ownership; it probes and ensures ownership of each aspect of the program throughout implementation and adjusts respective parameters if a lack of ownership becomes apparent.

In the beginning, the **South Caucasus** team invited a selected group of leaders and legal experts for study trips to Europe as an instrument to assist in creating ownership across states and systems for a common reform process. This ownership was

later tested when the legal text of the administrative law was submitted to parliament for debate, which meant political exposure and defending the draft against opposing interests. The program in **Costa Rica** noticed that partner ownership began to

decline after a new procedure was introduced, and the reasons were subsequently investigated. The program initiated a contest in which ministries could win resources to conduct results-oriented evaluations. This process generated competition and resentment between ministries and led to a disengagement of actors. Once the mismatch became apparent during a workshop, the program proposed a different selection procedure

with a focus on enhancing cooperation.

The advocacy program in **Peru** faced very different conditions. Here, obtaining ownership from the private sector to address violence against women was an objective and not a precondition. It took a considerable amount of time and effort before Peruvian companies introduced measures to protect women against violence.

### Program implementation is a local affair, which requires discretion for local decision-making

Development programs are support structures for complex change processes in partner countries. In this understanding, implementation is predominantly a local affair that requires frequent and quick decisions at the local level. From a managerial point of view, this implies that program staff require discretion to take decisions jointly with their partners. These decisions need to strike a balance between local interests, national policies, the program's mandate, and the commissioner's guidelines. The institutional arrangement in German development cooperation supports adaptive management in program implementation and requires program personnel to use their discretion in managing the program in keeping with local needs and conditions. The intention here is to enable the implementing agency to react to constraints and opportunities as they arise, in a timely manner. There are, of course, instances where objectives, outcomes, and indicators need to be renegotiated and accordingly adjusted during a program phase. The commissioning framework between the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and GIZ allows for such cases, in which GIZ submits an adjusted program document to the commissioner for approval.

This managerial space is perceived as an essential instrument to be able to work in a problem-focused, locally-led, and incremental way. How this discretion is applied in practice is illustrated in the following case study examples.

The situation in the aftermath of the Arab Spring meant that political decision-makers needed time to decide how they wanted to use and govern decentralization in their country. The program in **Tunisia** started several initiatives in parallel, experimenting in order to discover the best fit for the Tunisian partners in this situation. For example, the team responded to specific training needs and expanded the scope of its support. Flexible funding and decentralized decision-making structures made these adaptations possible. The team further stressed that building trust among actors and confidence in their own capacities to master the challenges were preconditions before partners really committed to an action

plan and felt that they possessed ownership for a common program.

In **Peru**, the implementation process was shaped by various experiments. The decisions – to hold business breakfasts to create a space where actors from the private sector could exchange their experiences regarding the impacts of violence against women, to collaborate with research in order to build a solid argument to act on violence against women, and the collaboration with the GIZ water program to reach utilities for PR campaigns – were all taken by the program team and enabled them to conduct experiments on a small scale and to quickly respond to emerging opportunities.

## Implementation is a craft with some transferrable skills

The final question asked what aspects of implementation were transferrable between contexts and countries, and what was context-specific and needed to be newly designed.

Practitioners mention transferring their knowledge and experiences from previous posts to different contexts. Such knowledge can include acquired theories, techniques, conceptual bits and pieces, rules of thumb, or elements of best practices that can be tried out in different contexts and which serve as entry points for implementation. These elements are comparable to crafting tools that one learns to use skillfully over time. However, it still requires talent and experience to customize each element so that it fits the context and the parts can be assembled into a functional product. In this picture, implementation is a craft rather than a science. In more complicated or even complex settings, the experiences of one person are not sufficient, but the experiences of several people with different areas of expertise are required to reach the objective. A program advisor team resembles this picture: The expertise of people with different professional backgrounds is combined in interdisciplinary teams working hand

in hand to provide assistance to a complex change process. This team works in close collaboration with a broad range of organizations (NGOs, think tanks, universities, agencies, the private sector), and thus expands the network for support.

Facilitating implementation in transformative settings requires inside and outside; practical; technical and theoretical; as well as national and international expertise and skills. The composition of a GIZ advisory team in country ideally tries to capture these dimensions: GIZ advisors work permanently in the field, often for several years in one country and in one sector. There is one set of advisors who provide services to partner organizations, operating at arm's length with the partner institution (Booth, 2013). They support domestic actors in their capacity to lead and drive the change process forward. A second set of advisors are fully embedded in partner organizations and work as either development workers or integrated experts and report to the partner organization. The vast majority of staff (presently two-thirds) are national advisors, and thus non-expatriate staff. They provide indispensable insights into the dynamics and politics of the transformation and ensure close proximity to the demands and interests of stakeholders. Different advisory teams who work in different sectors in a country form a network or platform that combines different capabilities, yet all of them actively implement a (joint) reform program. In these networks, professional and political knowledge and savvy are combined to assist in driving national reforms.

### The composition and roles of advisory teams change throughout implementation

Advisors take up different roles throughout the process that are, to a certain extent, transferrable between contexts. The advisor's role and that of the team change throughout the implementation process. Likewise, several roles can be needed at the same time. The roles include that of a broker, facilitator, and convener; an organizational development advisor; an analyst and experimenter; or that of a technical or political expert with international know-how and expertise. Facilitating, accompanying, and assisting roles are valued most by partners, for example as conveners of hitherto opposing groups or institutions, and as brokers of ideas or standpoints to generate new options (Ernsthofer & Stockmayer, 2009; Frenken & Müller, 2010; Richter, 2017). The partner's request for support alters according to

the shifts and turns of the change process, and the team's composition adapts to it accordingly from program phase to phase.

These two functions of advisory teams – the advisory networks and the multiple roles they offer – are resources to support driving the change process. Offering and utilizing these skills purposefully and strategically during program implementation is the art in the craft of smart implementation.

The role of broker and convener is emphasized in the **South Africa** case study in particular, where the program supported interdepartmental coordination. It did so by moderating and facilitating a series of meetings and workshops, which led to joint decision-making and monitoring of activities across departments.

Actors in **Liberia** perceived GIZ staff as independent facilitators, honest brokers, and well-trusted partners. The fact that Germany does not have a large mining industry, and thus very few national interests in the sector, was noticed by partners and helped the team to fulfill these roles.

In **Tunisia** the team had an important role in facilitating a common understanding among government entities on the purpose and type of decentralization the country wants to pursue.

An example for utilizing an advisory network or platform is best illustrated in the case of the **Philippines**, where a local NGO partnered with the advisory team. The NGO started to work with communities in the conflict area, which was inaccessible to all other stakeholders. The NGO managed to become a trusted party for these communities and was eventually able to establish communication between them and the city authorities. In this case, expanding the advisory network led to new options for peace-building. Working with inside and outside expertise is illustrated in the **South Caucasus** case. The technical expertise of a deployed German professor helped push the agenda forward in one instance.

#### LINKING SMART IMPLEMENTATION TO DOING DEVELOPMENT DIFFERENTLY

In this final section, we relate the findings of the case study analysis back to the discussion on DDD and explore whether the praxis of an implementing agency operating between donors, national policies, and partners can follow these principles, and to which extent. We do so by reviewing our institutional and conceptual frameworks and by presenting the implementation experiences of our governance programs – and not by presenting examples in which programs deliberately tried to do something differently or tried to put the DDD principles into operation. In this regard, we present the experiences and learnings from our present position, relate

them to what DDD envisaged, and thus give a siting of an international development organization.

The DDD initiative aims at enhancing the impact of development assistance. A manifesto issued in 2014 outlines that many development initiatives fail because they do not address the complexities of the development process adequately. The initiators identified six principles for DDD in development cooperation (DDD Manifesto Community, 2014; Wild & Booth 2016; Wild, Andrews, Pett, & Dempster, 2016).

*Box 1: The Doing Development Differently Manifesto*

Six Principles for more effective development cooperation in complex setting:

- Focus on solving local problems that are debated, defined and refined by local people in an ongoing process
- Legitimise reform at all levels (political, managerial, social), building ownership and momentum throughout the process
- Work through local convenors who mobilise all those with a stake in progress
- Blend design and implementation through rapid cycles of planning, action, reflection and revision
- Manage risks by making “small bets,” pursuing activities with promise and dropping others
- Foster real results – real solutions to real problems that have real impact

Source: DDD Manifesto Community (2014)

Subsequently, we discuss factors that support or hinder GIZ in following the envisaged principles and how doing so might affect our work in the future.

To briefly recap, we explained in the introductory chapter how GIZ perceives complex social change and what our role as advisors can be within it. Adapting a systems approach and the concept of transformation to program management are responses to the outlined challenges and influence how we plan, implement, and evaluate programs. A systemic view on social change is more and more shared by other development organizations (Green, 2016a, 2016b). Guidance on how to translate this thinking into program management is, in GIZ, provided by the management model Capacity WORKS.



The case studies reveal how the conceptual understanding of complexity and transformation not only informs but shapes the implementation of GIZ governance programs.<sup>3</sup> The following list summarizes a few prominent points, which also constitute core elements of what GIZ terms “smart implementation.”<sup>4</sup>

- Implementation is perceived as a predominantly local and time-intensive affair that requires active engagement and patience. Thus, advisory teams work on site and have a high level of discretion to take decisions locally and jointly with their partners. This is in response to the understanding that certain aspects in implementation are not predictable; they cannot be foreseen or planned. Teams focus on solving problems that local partners identify. They operate in messy situations that require flexibility and autonomy to develop a process that can generate solutions and achieve sustainable results.
- The principle of joint responsibility for implementation between GIZ teams and partner organizations supports a focus on solving local problems. Joint responsibility also requires ownership by partner organizations. Ownership shapes how implementation occurs. A lack of – or fluctuating – ownership by partners impedes the scope and pace that implementation can take. Most program teams invested a lot of effort in forging ownership with partner institutions and adapted approaches if it was weakening.
- Long-term engagement is pivotal for achieving sustainable results in a transformation that aims at changing behaviors and attitudes. Behavioral change is difficult to accomplish and easy to reverse until it is rooted in social norms, which takes time. Lasting support that helps to ingrain these behavioral changes increases the chances for sustainable change (Wild, Booth, & Valters, 2017). The case studies covered the period of one or two program phases, but most programs placed this contribution in perspective of the long-term engagement in the sector, which in some instances had a history of 20 years.

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3 For a more elaborate discussion see Whaites, Gonzalez, Fyson, and Teskey (2015).

4 Graham Teskey discusses in a blog contribution that a lot of work which is labeled DDD is actually only DDP – doing development properly. He describes this work as “based on data, designed and managed with extensive citizen participation, real-time monitoring” (Teskey, 2017, p. 3). Some of the smart implementation points relate to this. According to Teskey, the risk to this practice is that it possibly dilutes the core features of DDD.

- Most programs adopted a multi-level program design, acknowledging that change occurs on different levels simultaneously. This enabled teams to respond to dynamics wherever and whenever they occurred in the system. Teams could stay engaged overall, even when specific areas stagnated temporarily. A multi-level program design helps in aligning the pace of implementation to the partner's demands. Joint responsibility requires the advisory program to adjust to the pace of reform in the partner country and to accept when decision-making takes more time than the proposed program design. A multi-level approach provides flexibility to divert resources to a different layer, if the process takes more time at one level.
- The case studies confirm that most implementation is political by nature. Program teams addressed this by working in a politically informed and astute manner. Some answers that program teams found to overcome challenges during implementation were, for example, attending to conflicting interests, investing in negotiating compromises, and forging coalitions for change and collaboration among parties. In one instance, it was even the conscious decision to stay out of local politics when legal borders started to be stretched. "Crawling" the program space to address political issues required longer and more deliberate strategic approaches in some cases than in others (Pritchett, Samji, & Hammer, 2012).
- All teams adopted an experimental, iterative, and incremental approach to implementation in complex environments because it allows for gradual and flexible adaptations rather than abrupt shifts. This incremental and adaptive management style operates with short intervals between planning and implementation with short but frequent reflections. These feedback loops provide the information needed to assess the situation and the position of the program in relation to it, based on which frequent, small course corrections are made. Experiments and adaptations are done in the understanding that the knowledge for solving even severe problems exists predominantly locally, where the system's intelligence resides.
- The advisory teams' knowledge, experience, and skills provide the starting point for engagement. However, each element of the implementation strategy is then tested and tailored to fit the specificity of the local context. In this regard, smart implementation is staff- and skill-intensive. Knowledge and learning is the single most important input for implementation, helping to develop skills that can contribute to

overcoming new and unknown challenges. In this understanding, implementation is a craft rather than a science, in which practitioners adopt several roles throughout the process. The predominant role is that of facilitators and conveners of new cooperation, where support is mainly provided in kind.

- Last but not least, cooperation is a central principle to facilitate progress in complex environments. This is why GIZ's management model Capacity WORKS adopts cooperation management as the leading concept for design and implementation.<sup>5</sup> It promotes in-depth analysis of the context in which programs operate as well as the development of a strategy for implementation. Thus, it does this only along selected parameters, reiterating the need for constant, short, and ad-hoc analysis to assess the context dynamics as well as flexibility to continuously adapt to a moving process.

These findings – derived from the analysis of nine case studies of GIZ governance programs – offer insights into how, and to which extent, the six identified DDD principles are used in daily management. Furthermore, the institutional setup of development organizations has tremendous implications for how they implement programs (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2017). The terms of engagement between GIZ and its main commissioning party (BMZ) have been explained in the introductory chapter. A few points in the authority structure of German development cooperation seem formative for the way we work and encourage further discussion.

The conditions of engagement between GIZ and its main commissioner (BMZ) provide space and flexibility for the implementing agency to respond to local problems and to move with the local process. Two arrangements facilitate this orientation: The first is the freedom to adapt elements of the original program design, the implementation strategy, and the results framework at any point if the dynamics of the local context require it. This includes changes to budget allocations and time frame. Changes at the outcome level during a program phase require agreement by the commissioners but are generally supported in practice. Commissioner and implementer come to a decision for adaptation through a common understanding of the change process and transparent communication.

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5 The *World Development Report 2017: Governance and the Law* stresses this point as well when identifying commitment, coordination, and cooperation as drivers of effectiveness in development cooperation (World Bank, 2017, p. 5).

A second mechanism supporting problem-driven and locally-led implementation is the margin of discretion for decision-making at the program level, with periodic involvement, supervision, and control from headquarters to ensure transparency and accountability. This space permits new solutions that were not considered at the outset to emerge as the action unfolds. These solutions can respond to local specificities – a condition for more effective and sustainable results.

Trust is needed on multiple levels in this authority structure to institutionalize these mechanisms. It requires constant, open communication and deliberation between the BMZ and GIZ to generate a common understanding of the situation and responsible and transparent management on the implementer's side to earn this trust. All of this creates additional complexity in the setup, but these mechanisms strongly determine the way GIZ implements its programs and the kinds of results they achieve. A recent study shows that development organizations that gave staff autonomy in decision-making and space for judgment performed better in fragile states than those that focused on upward reporting, control, and narrow measurements (Honig, 2015, in Wild, Booth, & Valters, 2017). The commissioning framework between GIZ and its main commissioner, BMZ, is not merely a “conducive environment” but a fundamental and formative condition for technical assistance to play the role it has in development cooperation as a qualifier of people, a supporter of the long-term establishment of organizations, and a facilitator of societal processes.<sup>6</sup>

A last point regarding the authority structure relates to the development discourse on results. In GIZ's experience (and supported by the DDD principles), a results orientation has to be combined with a process orientation to ensure locally-led and problem-driven development. The case studies show that they are guided by objectives and indicators that are clearly spelled out and do not lose their validity in the face of complexity. However, the case descriptions also show that the assumed implementation path is changing all the time and that a focus on process is equally important. Hence, the art is to find the right balance between the two perspec-

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6 Cornelia Richter, Managing Director of GIZ, stated in a blog contribution on the future of technical assistance in development cooperation: “To ensure that German technical assistance is able to continue to fulfill its role, it is dependent on flexibility, scope for design within the commissioning framework, including budget allocation, innovative modalities, and alliances as well as excellent cooperation with local partners” (Richter, 2017; author's translation).

tives. The case studies demonstrate that combining adaptive management with a results logic is doable. However, it is a shaky balance that requires attention by commissioning parties and implementers alike.<sup>7</sup> The established form to demonstrate evidence is results. Narratives that show legitimacy and acceptance, as evidence for a successful process, are less well-known but of importance in constellations with multiple actors, contributors, and owners of a program. Ideally, success should be portrayed as a combination of impacts *and* legitimacy. Program teams air their concerns over this existing duality by saying that they find it difficult to measure and present results they think the program has achieved. They complain about an inadequate fit between actually achieved and predefined results. A second, yet related observation is that it has proven difficult to apply rigorous evaluation designs to GIZ programs. The reason for this might be the team's focus on process, which leads to frequent small adaptations. Rigorous evaluation techniques, such as randomized controlled trials, establish a causal relation between a set of activities and the result (here understood as outcomes or impacts). Adaptations cause interruptions to this cause–effect relationship, making it harder to portray which effects can be attributed to the program's intervention and which cannot – whereas results that occur as the process unfolds and which were not considered at the outset can be overlooked. Measuring and portraying results produced by a non-linear and adaptive implementation approach requires measurements and evaluation designs that also detect and assess process results. This is worth considering because the case studies show that sustainability is also influenced by the way people and institutions interact, the values they bring to the table, and how they negotiate outcomes. Sustainability is hence not only determined by impacts but also by process characteristics.

Neil Hatton summarizes this disaccord nicely in his contribution in this book when saying that, at present, implementing organizations such as GIZ are already letting practitioners out in the field improvise and develop jazz music (with a high degree of improvisation and context-specificity) together with their partners, “but when they come back to their organizational bases, they often struggle to capture what they have done in classical notation.” He advocates for taking the skills and knowledge acquired

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7 For a more elaborate discussion on results orientation and DDD, see Valters (2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b).

in the field out of the realm of personal gut feeling and individual intuition and giving these skills a hearing in the decision-making of development organizations and networks. The challenge he sees is to change the authority structure of development organizations in such a manner that an implicit individual intuitive skill can be turned into an explicit organizational core competence. In his assessment, GIZ managed to do this, in part, with the introduction of Capacity WORKS (see Neil Hatton's contribution in this publication).

Wild, Booth, and Valters also refer to this tension in their review on DDD at DFID. There, the emphasis on results "conveys a strong bias against the notion that a process ... could be considered a legitimate output" (Wild, Booth, & Valters, 2017, p. 24). The DDD community calls for a shift from a "log-frame" to a "search-frame" logic to better balance results and process logic. This can be done by introducing scheduled short context assessments that lead to subsequent, formally noted adaptations in the implementation strategy and program design (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2017). Other development organizations are experimenting with making their planning frameworks more flexible to support program learning and adaptation. DFID, for example, is testing an adaptive logframe. "It sets out a set of clear objectives at the outcome level, and focuses monitoring of outputs on the quality of the agreed rapid-cycle learning process" (Wild, Booth, & Valters, 2017, p. 24; also Bain, Booth, & Wild, 2016, for DDD at the World Bank). Accompanying this kind of experimentation at the institutional level and acquiring lessons from it in a wider community is a great opportunity that needs to be set in value.

Next to the abovementioned favorable aspects of GIZ's institutional setup, there are also some challenges that need further observation and deliberation.

- The budgets of GIZ programs have increased consistently over the years. There is also greater diversification in commissioning partners that jointly fund GIZ programs (i.e., co-financing of programs), each of whom introduces a new set of rules and regulations. This trend has been recognized in other development organizations as well and is likely to persist. Both developments increase the levels of complexity

in managing programs and might not be favorable for an approach that emphasizes staff-intensive cooperation and deep skills.<sup>8</sup>

- Scaling-up incremental results is a challenge for GIZ's mode of operation but important for achieving effectiveness. Bringing results to scale occurs mostly when concepts for scaling-up are included in the design of the program and planned for with specific activities. The case studies hardly mentioned strategies or instruments to achieve scale or to bring incrementally achieved changes to scale.<sup>9</sup>
- A related issue is the kind of innovation generated by a focus on local problems. Can a focus on local problems and finding local solutions tackle regional or global development challenges? The example from the two regional programs presented in this book (South Caucasus, Latin America) shows that peer learning and pressure can be an instrument to advance the process. However, more observation and learning is required to better understand if and how local solutions can influence addressing regional and global challenges.
- Like most development organizations, GIZ's program portfolio is also increasing in fragile states. Conditions for implementation differ in fragile and conflict situations. A recent analysis on the evaluative work of German development cooperation in Afghanistan highlights the political economy in donor countries, which emphasizes a short-term perspective on aid in such contexts and a focus on tangible outputs rather than long-term impacts (Kirsch, 2014). Such a perspective can impede the addressing of local problems and the facilitation of local or regional reform processes.
- David Booth calls for bringing political economy work out of the governance ghetto and engaging more strongly with sector specialists (Booth, 2015, p. 21) – a challenge that GIZ has to tackle as well. The notion that transformation is political by nature is most advanced in GIZ's governance and conflict division. Other sector divisions acknowledge the fact but remain more implicit in addressing it. Booth calls for treating governance as a skill-set rather than as sector work,

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8 Green acknowledges this constraint by saying “DDD requires skills like facilitation to identify problems and convene lots of different players to solve them, and lots of time, but big money is often neither necessary nor particularly helpful” (Green, 2016c).

9 DDD and PDIA do not address scaling-up but propose replication and diffusion (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2017).

and for deploying governance advisory resources into multidisciplinary teams to solve specific problems (Booth, 2015). This is a suggestion that could work for GIZ as a long-term goal. For the time being, a combination of governance as sector work and skill-set still seems inevitable (GIZ, 2012).

- Digitalization makes knowledge universally available, particularly technical knowledge, and provides tremendous opportunities for innovation and new solutions to development issues. It adds a layer of complexity, as it injects new information into the system without direct intention or orientation toward results. In this regard, digitalization has characteristics of transformation, but it does not offer a process for how to use the available information. Furthermore, the effects of digitalization are only partly predictable and manageable. Digitalization will change the role of advisors, diminish the relevance of technical expertise and expand the role of knowledge brokers.

Finally, we see three challenges that address the DDD agenda itself.

- The initiative has been very quiet about discussing the implications of DDD on partners and local actors. It is stated that “donors don’t actually ‘do’ development” but rather governments and people in partner countries do (Wild, Andrews, Pett, & Dempster, 2016, p. 3). Yet, DDD primarily discusses the role of outsiders. There are important aspects to the interface of this relationship (e.g., whose knowledge is it that is used to find local solutions?) as well as issues affecting the relationship between outsiders (donors, implementers, advocators) and insiders (partner governments and local actors) that should be debated. Including the partner’s perspective more rigorously in what is done differently as well as discussing potential consequences for the relationships is a pivotal aspect of success that should be brought center stage.
- Furthermore, the relevance and influence of official development assistance in partner countries is diminishing; consequently, the form and function of development cooperation is changing rapidly. New financing mechanisms, partnerships, and coalitions are springing up with their own rules and experiences. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development stresses the importance of new global partnerships and programs that represent joint responsibility for the global goods and a different notion of partnership – one that overcomes a donor and recipient relationship. These new partnerships are realized with the help of multi-actor approaches, in which new alliances for learning,



knowledge-exchange, standard-setting, and political agenda-setting are forged. In this context, the DDD agenda seems too focused on the traditional role of donors in partner countries and does not yet capture the options that the approaching changes can offer for doing developing differently. It would be worthwhile exploring how the DDD learnings can be actively used to shape new alliances and international cooperation in the spirit of the new global partnerships.

- A final concern relates to showing that working in the spirit of doing development differently makes a difference and actually leads to more effective and sustainable development. Evidence that this assumption is reliable needs to be developed.<sup>10</sup> Reporting, monitoring, and evaluation designs need to be adjusted, and methods need to be expanded beyond case studies that pay attention to progress on DDD dimensions.

Finding new ways to support locally-led problem-solving by taking a more strategic approach to delivery and results and to better integrate flexibility for adaptation into the design stage are recommendations that point to the way forward (Wild, Booth, & Valters, 2017, pp. 31–32). Creating multi-actor partnerships, as promoted by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is likely to address identified constraints in the relationship between reformers and outside supporters that should be tried out and learned from bravely.

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10 For a discussion about German development cooperation on this issue, see Faust, Leiderer, Masaki, and Parks (2016).

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