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for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

SPECIAL 168

# Promoting Resilient States and Constructive State-Society Relations – Legitimacy, Transparency and Accountability



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## Summary

State players can only govern and manage the state in a sustainable way if they engage in a constructive dialogue with civil society and the private sector. Shaping the space in which state, society and business interact and make decisions is therefore vital for effective development cooperation. It is against this backdrop that promoting political involvement is a major aspect of development cooperation.

This publication presents the German concept that lies behind the German approach to promoting political involvement as well as the strategies pursued by German development cooperation. It aims at promoting resilient states and constructive state-society relations by putting legitimacy, transparency and accountability into focus.

The promotion of active political involvement through German development cooperation goes beyond strengthening civil society and taking an active approach to designing development projects. It looks at how to promote a constructive relationship between state and society and at state-building in general. The multidimensional strategy to promote political participation and to encourage state-society relations focuses on three dimensions that are independent and mutually reinforcing. **Building and consolidating the legal and institutional framework** is vital in order to institutionalise democratic processes. Support is provided both at national and decentralised level and focus is put on instituting legal guarantees on the right to participation by enshrining the relevant regulations in law and establishing participation mechanism and fora for cooperation. Through helping civil society to formulate their interests and make those interests heard in political negotiations and decision-making processes the empowerment of the people is strengthened. Therefore, **strengthening civil**

**society** constitutes another approach to promoting active political involvement. State and society can only enjoy a constructive relationship when the state is responsive to civil society's active involvement in political decision-making processes. Therefore it is crucial to **improve the capacity of the state** and to enhance the democratic consciousness of actors in government, parliament and public administration and to strengthen democratic institutions. Promoting political involvement strengthens the legitimacy of state institutions and the democratic accountability of political players, makes the actions of government and public administration more transparent, strengthens checks and balances and allows effective action to be taken against corruption, arbitrary state rule and abuse of power.

Complex challenges require context-specific solutions. Therefore there is no blueprint for fostering political involvement, rather the different political and social situations require context-specific solutions and these efforts generally only bear fruit in the medium to long term. In German development cooperation, the level of governance and development orientation is identified by the BMZ Catalogue of Criteria for Assessing the Development Orientation of Partner Countries. Based on these criteria, country-specific decisions are taken. This also holds for anchor countries and emerging economies and the often difficult situation of countries with fragile statehood or conflict and post-conflict countries.

German development policy has identified several fields of action as well as entry points for promoting political involvement. The potential for active involvement is particularly great at the local level, enabling political participation to become more firmly established. Yet given the dimensions of power, resources and fundamental decisions

that are involved in political processes, efforts to strengthen civil society involvement in the political decision-making process must also extend to the national level. As a result, German development cooperation has adopted a multi-level approach, promoting political involvement in several areas, depending on circumstances and conditions in a given partner country. Thereby, the specific social, historical, political, economic and ethnic context is taken into account. These areas include the identification of political priorities, the drafting of development plans and poverty reduction strategies, the formulation of budgets, public spending, the provision of public goods and services, debates on new constitutions, the enshrining of democratic participation within institutions and the law, the strengthening of decentralised structures, the exercising of public supervision and control or the promotion of a free and independent media.

However, the promotion of political involvement also holds significant challenges and bears some risks. Among them are a possible lack of commitment or a failure of political will which may lead to empty talk, vague promises and inadequate results. Furthermore, existing democratic structures can be undermined or weakened by the creation of parallel structures when instead they should rather aim at creating connections to existing democratic institutions. In some cases the influence of powerful and influential interest groups prevents disadvantaged groups from getting involved. The danger of civil society being

instrumentalised by the state must also not be neglected, as well as the fact that civil society actors are often dependant on external sources of funding.

Promoting active political involvement is a joint task of the development partners. This applies to the formulation and structure of policies in partner countries and requires the strict implementation of the obligations undertaken in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. In line with the principles of the Aid Effectiveness Agenda, German development cooperation works together with other donors to coordinate and, wherever possible, harmonise their work. To this end, programme-based approaches are used that require special efforts with regard to good governance and political involvement. Wide-ranging public involvement in political processes and the legitimacy of the state must be promoted and transparency and accountability of the government to its own citizens must be strengthened when using these instruments.

Conscious of the need to promote resilient states and constructive state-society relations and of the risks and challenges of political involvement, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) applies a multi-level approach, putting forward a variety of instruments in response. These include Financial, Technical and Personnel Cooperation as state development cooperation which is complemented by the engagement of non-state actors.

# 1. Introduction

The promotion of political involvement is a major aspect of state-building, democratisation and good governance.<sup>1</sup> As an aspect of good governance it helps to make poverty-reduction efforts more effective. Ultimately, poverty is often both the cause and effect of an absence of democratic structures and political involvement, and of discrimination against minorities and women. Only when poor and disadvantaged social groups are able to articulate their interests and are involved in the shaping of political processes can poverty be reduced effectively. Active political involvement in democratic structures and fighting poverty go hand in hand.<sup>2</sup>

Mid-term reviews of progress towards the **Millennium Development Goals** have shown that good governance in partner countries is a decisive factor in determining the effectiveness of development efforts. Functioning governance structures are therefore crucial to a country's development. State players can only govern and manage the state in a sustainable way if they engage in a constructive dialogue with civil society and the private sector. Shaping the space in which state, society and business interact and make decisions is therefore vital for effective development cooperation. It is against this backdrop that promoting political involvement is a major aspect of development cooperation.

In order to increase aid effectiveness, in the **Paris Declaration** (March 2005)<sup>3</sup> a large number of partner countries and donors committed to enhance mutual and domestic accountability in the use of development resources and to undertake mutual assessments on development results. Together with the commitments made in Accra to intensify efforts towards more transparency and accountability, this has led to both the growing importance of promoting state actors' capacity for accountability as well as the capacity of civil society actors and parliaments to demand accountability. In particular, the **Accra Agenda for Action** (September 2008)<sup>4</sup> brought into force a wider definition of the idea of *ownership*: ownership is not limited to governments of partner countries but also includes their parliaments and civil society. In strengthening country ownership, commitment to reform, capacity to change, transparency and accountability, the promotion of political involvement has a key role to play.

This publication presents the concept that lies behind the German approach to promoting political involvement as well as the strategies pursued by German development cooperation, while illustrating current developments in international debate. By taking a look at practice, it aims to show the range of instruments employed by German development cooperation and the results of its work in partner countries.

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1 Good governance is both an aim in itself and also a key issue addressed in all sectors in which German and international development cooperation are engaged.  
BMZ Strategies 178 (2009): *Promotion of Good Governance in German Development Policy*; <http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/fach/konzepte/konzept178.pdf>

2 BMZ Special 137 (2005): *Promoting democracy in German development policy, Supporting political reform processes and popular participation. A BMZ Position Paper*:  
<http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/fach/spezial/Special137.pdf>  
BMZ (2003): *Recht, Demokratie, Frieden – Politik für Entwicklung*:  
<http://www.bmz.de/de/service/infothek/buerger/themen/Recht.pdf>

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3 *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005): <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>

4 *Accra Agenda for Action* (2008): <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/58/16/41202012.pdf>

## 2. Promoting Active Political Involvement Through German Development Cooperation

It is not least Germany's own history that leads the German government to attach great importance to the promotion of political involvement in development cooperation. The restoration of German unity in 1990 through the unification of the two German states, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, delivered compelling proof of the importance of political involvement and its potential to effect change.

Through its Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany strives to promote political involvement through both bilateral programmes in partner countries and multilateral cooperation. At bilateral level, it has been agreed with a large number of partner countries to focus development cooperation on the area of Democracy, Civil Society and Public Administration. Activities involve not only state institutions but also direct cooperation with civil society organisations. In addition to projects and programmes with a specific focus on this area, the principles of political participation are also systemically applied as binding guidelines when implementing projects and programmes in other sectors and areas of German development cooperation.

Political involvement, as understood in German development cooperation, means all forces within society having an equal say in political decisions. Yet the aim is not for each citizen to be involved in every policy decision. Rather it is about enabling as many different interest groups and social groups as possible (particularly the disadvantaged or marginalised) to participate in political processes on an equal footing and have proper representation.

Experience in development cooperation has shown that development processes can only be sustainable if all concerned state and non-state stakehold-

ers are involved in both their planning and implementation. Yet a participatory approach to planning and implementing development projects is not, in itself, enough to guarantee a lasting, constructive and reciprocal relationship between state and society, resulting in stable, resilient, democratic state structures.

The approach adopted in German development cooperation therefore goes beyond strengthening civil society and taking a participative approach to designing development projects. It looks at how to foster a constructive relationship between state and society and at state-building in general.

State and policy-makers do not derive their legitimacy solely from winning the popular vote in democratic elections. Citizens must also have the right to voice their political views between elections and in other ways than casting a formal vote. The principles of transparent, accountable and development-oriented government can only be upheld if an active civil society is informed about policy decisions, is involved and actively participates in decision-making processes and, moreover, is able to exercise a critical control function with regard to the state.

In German development cooperation, civil society is not seen as acting in isolation. Rather, it considers civil society and the state as being linked together in a reciprocal relationship. The state and policy-makers derive their legitimacy from the constant process of feedback and negotiation with citizens and with an informed, articulate and organised civil society.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Civil society is the term used to describe all forms of organised activity in which citizens engage – be it in clubs or associations or the wide range of lobby groups, social movements and non-governmental organisations. It includes all activities that are not profit-oriented and are independent of party-political interests.



### 3. A Multidimensional Approach to Promoting Active Political Involvement

In German development cooperation, political involvement is promoted using a multi-dimensional strategy. The aim is to achieve sustainable results with a broad impact and to influence structures.

Efforts to promote political involvement and promote sustainable and resilient state-society relations focus on three dimensions that are interdependent and mutually reinforcing:

- **Building and consolidating the legal and institutional framework**

In order to promote active political involvement and a stable democracy, it is vital that institutionalised democratic processes and the rule of law be in place. For civil society to participate in policy-making, a certain institutional framework and formal legal guarantees are required. Under the multi-level approach adopted in German development cooperation, support is provided at both national and decentralised level for the establishment of a democratic environment and the structures required for the rule of law, which are key to facilitating political involvement. A further focus is on instituting legal guarantees of the right to participation by enshrining the relevant regulations in law and establishing participation mechanisms and fora for cooperation between state and non-state actors (e.g. dialogue fora, roundtables, deliberative processes), as well as complaints and public control mechanisms (e.g. ombudsmen).

By building, institutionalising and legally guaranteeing opportunities for political involvement, the rule of law is also reinforced. This means that political involvement remains in place, regardless of who is currently in power.<sup>6</sup>

- **Strengthening civil society**

Political involvement requires people having information about their rights and opportunities for participation and being able to demand these from state authorities. German development cooperation supports members of civil society in finding out about their rights and asserting them. Members of civil society are also helped to formulate their interests and make these interests heard in political negotiations and decision-making processes. This is what is known as empowerment.

In this context, a special focus is on empowering and enabling disadvantaged groups. These are helped to articulate their interests and improve their negotiating skills, for example, by learning to organise, to pool their interests and to form networks so as to be able to assert themselves more effectively. Promoting effective lobby groups and representative groups and associations is an important aspect of strengthening civil society. As well as offering advice to civil society groups, specific measures are also implemented in German development cooperation to help these groups exercise their rights and duties within participation mechanisms and, thus,

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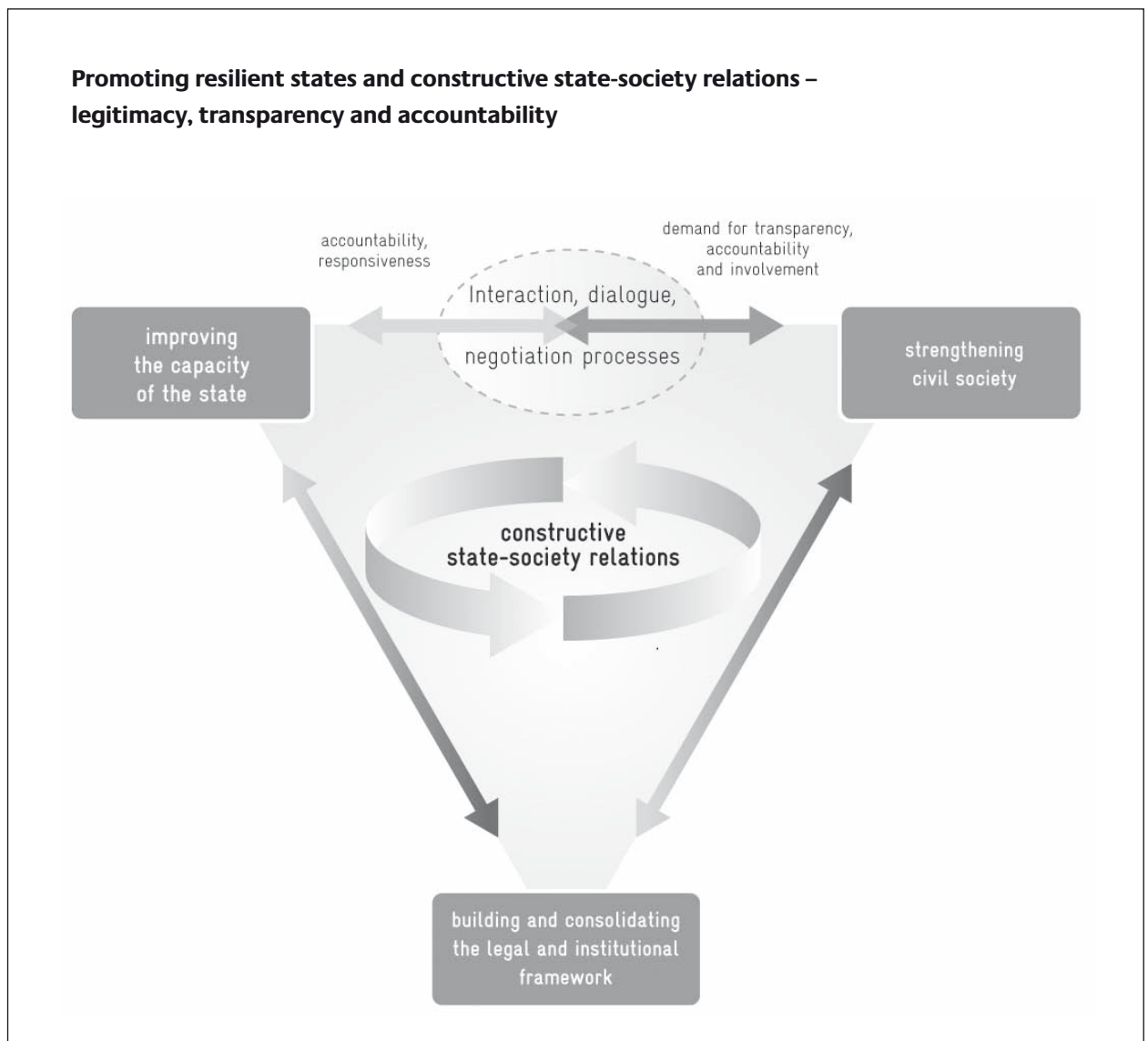
6 BMZ Spezial 097 (2004): *Die Bedeutung rechtsstaatlich-demokratischer Strukturen für den Prozess politischer Partizipation. Stellungnahme des Wissenschaftlichen Beirats beim BMZ*: <http://www.bmz.de/de/service/infothek/fach/spezial/spezial097pdf.pdf>

defend their own interests. This is done, for example, by supporting the process of decentralisation or by promoting sustainable local development.

The promotion of a free and independent media is another focus of German development cooperation. The media plays a key role in the democratic development of society and is vital in enabling an informed civil society to participate in the political process.

Generally, German development cooperation seeks to support civil society to fulfil its functions of drawing together society's interests and presenting them to state authorities, and of demanding and monitoring the respect, protection and fulfilment of individual and collective rights.

Strengthening civil society enables it to better fulfil its role as a critical but constructive watchdog and as a lobby. It also promotes democratic consciousness among the citizens, promotes the integration of disadvantaged groups and helps to bring greater transparency to policy-making.





- **Improving the capacity of the state**

State and society can only enjoy a constructive relationship when the state is responsive to civil society's active involvement in political decision-making processes. In order to enhance the state's responsiveness to its citizens, efforts are made through German development cooperation to enhance the democratic consciousness of actors in government, parliament and public administration and to strengthen democratic institutions.

Policy-makers and state actors learn to shape decision-making processes in such a way that civil society is able to play an active role at both national and decentralised level in terms of raising issues, being involved in political decision-

making processes and in implementing these decisions. Representatives of state authorities and those working in public administration are helped to deal competently with civic participation and to institutionalise it in their structures and procedures. At the same time, they are assisted in bringing transparency to administrative processes and to be accountable regarding the actions of government and administrative bodies.

Promoting political involvement strengthens the legitimacy of state institutions and the democratic accountability of political players, makes the actions of government and public administration more transparent, strengthens checks and balances and allows effective action to be taken against corruption, arbitrary state rule and abuse of power.

### **Bolivia: Breaking down barriers to poverty reduction by strengthening civil society and promoting democracy and decentralisation**

After decades of military dictatorship Bolivia returned to a democratic rule in the early 1980s and since then it has gradually achieved political and economic stability. But the majority of the population has not seen lasting improvement in its living conditions. Bolivia is still one of the poorest countries in South America in per capita income and the development of political, institutional and economic conditions has not kept pace with the momentum for reform ushered in by the country's wide-ranging politics of modernisation.

Since Evo Morales took office in January 2006 as the country's first ever indigenous president, Bolivia has been in the grip of on-going political and social change. The Bolivian government's goals for economic and social policy and its deep commitment to reform pose great institutional challenges. A new constitution was passed in a referendum in February 2009 and expectations – especially among the indigenous population – are very high. Fulfilling these expectations holds enormous potential for conflict with the political opposition and various local and economic interests. The biggest challenge in the immediate future is to match the implementation of the new constitution with strongly democratic and efficient governance in which civil society participates fully and responsibly.

A key problem in Bolivia is the weakness of state structures and institutions at both national and decentralised level. At the same time, the continuing social, cultural, political and economic exclusion of large sections of the population further reinforces structural imbalance and increases the potential for conflict.

In the framework of drafting the new constitution, German development cooperation has provided advice on the work of the constitutional assembly. In this context it contributes to the goal that the state authorities and the various levels of government should implement governance reform processes in a cooperative way and actively involve civil society, as well as to the improvement of their capacities.

**Strengthening the legitimacy of state institutions by capacity development is a central challenge of German development cooperation.**<sup>7</sup> Another key task is to promote active involvement of civil society particularly of the poor and marginalised groups – such as indigenous people and women – in order to reduce social exclusion. Both of these tasks are directly connected to the implementation of the Bolivian poverty reduction strategy, in which Germany supports the Bolivian government. In this context, German bilateral development cooperation, through Financial, Technical and Personnel Cooperation, uses complementary approaches to strengthen both communal administrative levels and local civil society.

Through **Financial Cooperation (FC)** implemented by the **KfW Entwicklungsbank**,<sup>8</sup> the **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)**<sup>9</sup> will support municipalities in the provision of communal infrastructure, via the Social Investment Fund (FPS). This fund supports financial investments for small projects in the areas of education and health as well as in productive areas (e.g. irrigation systems, road-building and creating access to markets). However, FC commitment extends beyond financing alone: it also builds up the FPS as a national-level resource in its capacity to provide services in planning and execution, for example in analysing project plans, supervising construction, and inspecting and operating infrastructures, and at the same time it raises the participation of the public in planning and directive mechanisms at community level. Local governments actively participate in the implementation of projects, and they receive support from the FPS. The FPS also involves the local population in identifying projects.

In addition, through **Technical Cooperation (TC)**, implemented by the **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)** in a wide-ranging advisory programme (PADEP),<sup>10</sup> the BMZ supports the Bolivian government in building democratic and rule-of-law structures and in increasing the efficiency, transparency and responsiveness of public administration. As a result of the decentralisation process, cities and communities have been given critical responsibilities and tasks in poverty reduction. These are supported by the introduction and implementation of mechanisms for civic participation and service agreements with the public, as well as in meeting their obligations to provide information and to be accountable.

As well as its contribution to **Personnel Cooperation** through the **German Development Service (DED)**,<sup>11</sup> the BMZ supports certain communal administrations and intermediary organisations in making public investments and services more transparent and results-oriented, in increasing civic participation and developing sector policies with broad-ranging effects.

And finally, the BMZ through **Capacity Building International (InWEnt)**<sup>12</sup> contributes to improving advanced education and training for local governments. Through needs-oriented capacity-building programmes provided by InWEnt, the BMZ supports the decentralisation process and the building of efficient and responsive local govern-

7 More information on German development cooperation with Latin America: BMZ Strategies 163 (2008): *Strategy on Development Cooperation with Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean*: <http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infotehek/fach/konzepte/konzept163.pdf>  
BMZ Strategies 141 (2006): *Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean*: <http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infotehek/fach/konzepte/konzept141.pdf>

8 [http://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/EN\\_Home/Countries\\_and\\_Projects/Lateinamer74/Bolivia2/index.jsp](http://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/EN_Home/Countries_and_Projects/Lateinamer74/Bolivia2/index.jsp)

9 <http://www.bmz.de/de/laender/partnerlaender/bolivien/index.html>

10 *Decentralised Governance and Poverty Reduction Support (PADEP)*: <http://www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/lateinamerika-karibik/bolivien/14080.htm> and <http://www.padep.org.bo/>

11 <http://bolivia.ded.de/>

12 <http://www.inwent.org/regionen/lateinamerika/index.php.en>

ments in Bolivia. For example, specialist and executive staff in the local governments are trained in building a responsive administration, creating efficient local networks and improving the quality of public services. In addition, their awareness for the concerns of minorities and disadvantaged groups is raised.

**In the context of promoting active political involvement of civil society, it is an important field of action for German development cooperation in Bolivia to directly strengthen and improve the capacities of civil society organisations.**

Through Technical Cooperation (TC) the BMZ supports civil society organisations in strengthening their capacities so that they are able to exercise public control and to responsibly participate in dialogue and consensus-building in negotiation processes with state actors. Through this, indigenous organisations are better able to demand the rights of the indigenous population effectively. Organisational advice helps them to assert their interests in negotiations and decision-making processes in a way that is grounded in expertise. For example, the TC activity Proindígena advises CIDOB, the umbrella organisation representing the indigenous people of the low lands of Bolivia, on issues of environmental protection and climate change.<sup>13</sup>

With Personnel Cooperation implemented by the DED, the BMZ strengthens the organisational and institutional capacities of disadvantaged groups of the population, especially indigenous people, small farmers, and women. These are empowered to participate in the public policy processes and in local and regional development with increasing responsibility and with equal rights. Furthermore, indigenous groups are supported in implementing self-determination and self-administration in the framework of the new constitution; an example is the umbrella organisation of the Guaraní (Asamblea del Pueblo Guaraní, APG) in the Bolivian Chaco region. Both the implementation of autonomous administrative areas and the shaping of local development in multicultural districts benefit from Personnel Cooperation.

Wide-ranging German **bilateral engagement** in the area of good governance<sup>14</sup> is characterised by a **Twin Track Approach**: the promotion of good governance is itself a priority area and also occurs in the context of promoting other priority sectors (agriculture, water). This is especially true of the promotion of active political involvement and can be shown with the example of the priority area sustainable agricultural development:

In the Sacaba irrigation programme, implemented by the KfW Entwicklungsbank, the BMZ made two aspects central: the participation of the people in the planning and execution of irrigation measures, and improving the capacities of irrigation organisations in the sustainable economic management of these measures. Around 1600 families, mostly indigenous, are now organised in the Sacaba Valley irrigation association. However, irrigation water is a scarce resource in the Sacaba Valley and many families in the association villages and the surrounding localities had little or no access to it. By promoting participation, an open, wide-ranging dialogue about the use of water as a resource developed, which crossed all cultural, social, political, linguistic and technical boundaries. Various types of investment were explored, examining their economic, social, organisational and ecological consequences. The results were then assessed jointly, and the best solution was planned in detail and implemented. Through this process, a broad vision came into being, developed first by leading members of the irrigation association and the Prefecture's project team and then agreed with all other

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/lateinamerika-karibik/regionale-themen/7346.htm>

<sup>14</sup> Cf. BMZ Strategies 178 (2009) : Promotion of Good Governance in German Development Policy: <http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/fach/konzepte/konzept178.pdf>

people involved. The comprehensive involvement of the various interest groups led to successes, which, at the start of the project, had not been thought possible. Relatively prosperous irrigation farmers demonstrated that they were prepared to share “their” water with new members. The additional water benefited above all families who previously had no water rights. Communities in the mountains that had been resented as “water thieves” became full and valued members of the irrigation association, which emerged strengthened from the process. It was also possible to prevent conflicts between cities and rural areas on future water use.

Another part of the programme “Sustainable agricultural development in Bolivia”, implemented by the GTZ on behalf of the BMZ, promotes the role of coordinating bodies in implementing management plans. For example, in order to support local watershed management measures in the valley of the Comarapa River, a provincial association consisting of community and provincial administrations as well as civil society organisations was facilitated in coordinating and implementing pilot projects to protect the basin area and to improve agricultural production. This increase in the effectiveness of subnational units and improvement in co-determination and participation led to better adapted, sustainable solutions and directly benefited the rural population.

The promotion of active political involvement in the priority area sustainable agricultural development is thus a significant addition to the contributions made by Germany in the framework of the priority area State and Democracy.

**German non-governmental organisations and the German political foundations also work to strengthen civil society actors in partner countries.**

In Bolivia, for example, **MISEREOR** supports initiatives by target groups and local grassroots organisations. The National Network for Citizen Participation and Social Oversight (Red Nacional de Participación Ciudadana y Control Social, RPCCS) was set up by over thirty of MISEREOR’s project partners along with other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in 2002 with the objective of promoting an exchange of experiences and building the self-confidence of the population.

In Bolivia the **German political foundations** support above all the consolidation of democratic structures and civic education. For example, they promote the dialogue skills and professionalisation of decision-makers at all levels of the state, as well as leaders of civic groups and indigenous organisations. In this way the German political foundations support Bolivian partner institutions in the area of democracy promotion. The BMZ supports the engagement of the German non-governmental organisations and political foundations in Bolivia.

As the example of Bolivia shows, German development cooperation is implemented through various instruments, each of which has its own specific advantages. It is based on policy passed by the Federal Government,<sup>15</sup> around guiding concepts that have been developed by the BMZ. The measures used in German development cooperation overlap in content, geographical area and/or institutions and also complement each other. The German approach is also characterised by the fact that development policy efforts are pursued with the largest possible number of actors in state and society in the partner country and at all levels. The large number of supportive measures in Bolivia allows the BMZ to make a significant contribution to addressing the immense challenges of the country’s development. Through this commitment, Germany makes an important contribution to sustainable poverty reduction and stabilisation in Bolivia.

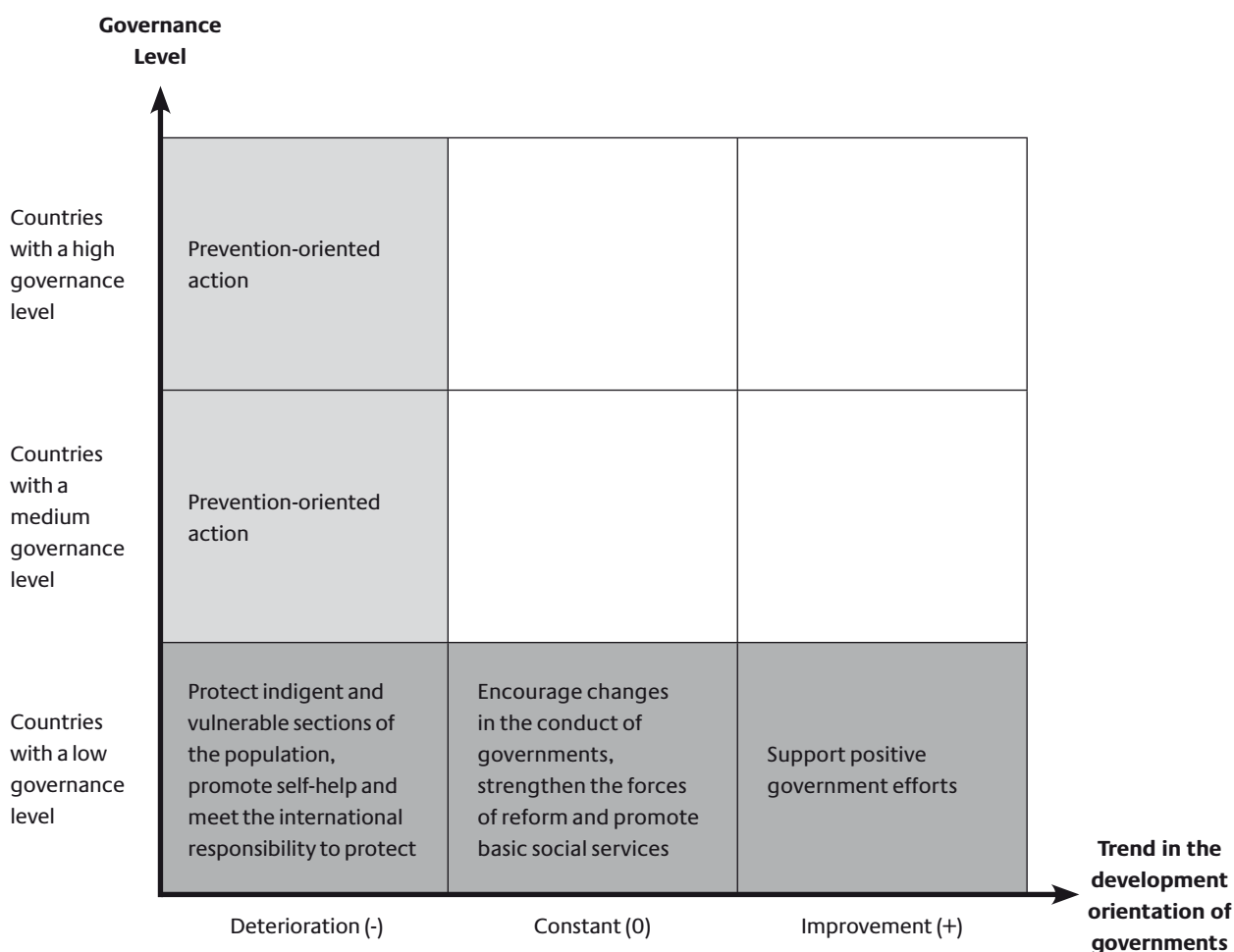
<sup>15</sup> Further information on German development policy: *Towards One World Development Policy White Paper*, The German Government’s 13th Development Policy Report (2008): [http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/buerger/Weissbuch\\_en.pdf](http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/buerger/Weissbuch_en.pdf)

## 4. Complex Challenges Require Context-Specific Solutions – Different Political Frameworks for Promoting Active Political Involvement

There is no blueprint for fostering political involvement. Rather, it is a question of considering the different political and social situations, the socio-cultural settings and the individual needs of the partner countries. Given the diversity of the challenges the various partner countries face – be they anchor countries, emerging economies, fragile states, or countries in crisis or emerging from conflict – the approach must be matched to

the specific context. These efforts generally only bear fruit in the medium to the long term.

The specific form of assistance is determined by the level of governance and development orientation of the partner country.<sup>16</sup> The evaluation follows the BMZ Catalogue of Criteria for Assessing the Development Orientation of Partner Countries, which defines key elements of good governance:



<sup>16</sup> Cf. BMZ Strategies 178 (2009)

- Pro-poor and sustainable policies
- Respect for, protection and fulfilment of all human rights
- Democracy and the rule of law
- Efficiency and transparency of the state
- Cooperative stance within the international community

These criteria are the basis for all country-specific decisions made by the BMZ and influence the choice of strategies for action to be pursued in the partner country. The higher the development orientation of a partner country, the greater the extent to which the entire range of development-policy instruments of German development cooperation comes into effect. If, however, development orientation is low or deteriorating, development cooperation relies far more on civil society actors and flexible ways of acting.

#### **Anchor countries and emerging economies<sup>17</sup>**

In German development cooperation, states which play a central role in regional economic development because of the size of their economies, have a special political influence in their regions and increasingly also contribute to shaping international politics are called anchor countries. They play a key role in fighting poverty, climate and environmental protection, securing peace, designing a just economic world order and realising democracy and good governance. Hence, German development

cooperation supports anchor countries in playing a positive role in their respective region and at the global level. Cooperation targeted to reform state structures and to strengthen good governance in the anchor countries is of central importance. When designing cooperation not only governance level and development orientation must be taken into account but also the particular challenges arising from the role of each anchor country in its region and in the global context.

With the exception of Mexico and Brazil, anchor countries are not identical with those countries usually defined as “emerging economies” or “more advanced countries” in international development cooperation. Emerging economies are those countries, which, on the basis of their state of development and the dynamics of their economy are no longer developing countries in the narrow sense, but are not yet industrialised countries.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Countries with fragile statehood<sup>19</sup>**

Promoting active political involvement is also of great importance for sustainable state-building processes and for preventing or responding to fragile statehood. Within the OECD community the appeal to “stay engaged, but differently”, has caused a paradigm shift. In accordance with this principle, Germany has also recognised that withdrawing from countries with fragile statehood only makes sense in exceptional cases and is no solution to the problem.

There is no standard international definition of fragile statehood. However, there is a consensus

17 BMZ Special 119 (2004): *Anchor Countries – Partners for Global Development - A BMZ Position Paper*: [http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/fach/spezial/spezial119\\_90.pdf](http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/fach/spezial/spezial119_90.pdf)

18 Cf. DIE (2004): *Schwellen- und Ankerländer als Akteure einer globalen Partnerschaft*: [http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/\(ynDK\\_contentByKey\)/ADMR-7BSD9U/\\$FILE/1-2004.pdf](http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/(ynDK_contentByKey)/ADMR-7BSD9U/$FILE/1-2004.pdf)

19 The BMZ strategy paper “Development-Oriented Transformation in Conditions of Fragile Statehood and Poor Government Performance” goes into more detail on specific aspects of partner countries with less developed or fragile states or low development orientation (i.e. state-building). BMZ Strategies 153 (2007): *Development-Oriented Transformation in Conditions of Fragile Statehood and poor Government Performance* <http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/fach/konzepte/konzept153.pdf>



that states in fragile situations are those that have inadequate or insufficient political and administrative capacity to fulfil the core roles of a state or those in which the political will to improve and to engage in development-oriented reform is lacking.<sup>20</sup>

Where there is a low level of governance, where state institutions are weak or on the verge of collapse and where the state either fails to perform its core roles or performs them largely inadequately, then fragile statehood can generally be assumed. In countries with a medium or high level of governance performance where the development orientation of the government performance is deteriorating, there is a need for prevention to counteract state failure and a (further) slide into fragility.

In the Paris Declaration, the international donor community committed itself to engage more firmly and effectively in fragile states and situations than before and to take due account of the structural causes of fragility. Beyond this, its engagement in countries with fragile statehood aims at building or strengthening legitimate, well functioning and consolidated institutions of state and society and to counterbalance state failure or state collapse. Partner countries have committed to put more emphasis on building institutions and creating governance structures that enable effective and efficient government and administration and which provide society with security, protection and fair access to basic social needs. Partner countries have also committed to promote widespread participation of diverse non-state actors when defining development priorities.

At present, the concept of state-building is at the centre of discussion on how to prevent and overcome fragile statehood.<sup>21</sup> According to the OECD, state-building is to be understood as an endogenous process that is based on a constructive and inclusive relation between state and society and which strengthens the capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state. Its goal is to build or strengthen resilient democratic state structures.<sup>22</sup>

However, state structures are only resilient and effective in the long term if they can react appropriately to external shocks, are engaged in a constructive dialogue with society and respond to the needs of their citizens. Therefore state-building processes and the support thereof should not be viewed as purely technical issues, but rather as inherently political processes whose fundamental purpose is the relationship between state institutions and citizens. It aims to recognise and strengthen society's role in a well-functioning state.

German development cooperation therefore does not limit its support to state institutions, but also regards their roots in society, the legitimacy of state actions, society as a whole and the interfaces between state and society as central elements in sustainable state-building processes. In this sense it is linked to the promotion of political involvement in all its dimensions of cooperation.

In contrast to well-governed countries, different forms of cooperation are to be applied within fragile statehood and poor governance, given that the more legitimate the state actors are and

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20 OECD (2007): *Principles for good international engagement in fragile states and situations*: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/61/45/38368714.pdf>

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21 OECD (2008): *Concepts and dilemmas of state building in fragile situations – from fragility to resilience*: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/51/41100930.pdf>; OECD (2008): *State building in situations of fragility – initial findings*: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/62/9/41212290.pdf>

22 GTZ (2008): *State-building in the Context of Fragile Statehood and Poor Government Performance. Lessons Learnt by German Development Cooperation. Sector Project Good Governance and Democracy*: <http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/gtz2009-0120en-fragile-statehood.pdf>

the more stable the state institutions, the more likely the entire range of development-policy instruments will be applied and incentives systems will be employed. The greater the loss of legitimacy by state actors and the more unstable the current situation, the more development cooperation must turn to specialised forms of management, a flexible application of instruments and increased cooperation with civil society. Particularly in situations where the development orientation of a partner country's government is low or deteriorating, the strengthening of civil society actors takes on a special importance. However, the capacity for alignment with state structures must be ensured. To this end, the BMZ Strategy Paper "Development-Oriented Transformation in Conditions of Fragile Statehood and Poor Government Performance" describes different strategies for action according to the level of governance and government performance when dealing with and preventing fragile statehood. Including the public through active democratic involvement and the responsiveness to citizens of the state's actions are important approaches in this case.

### **Conflict and post-conflict countries<sup>23</sup>**

In conflict and post-conflict countries and countries with high or acute potential for crisis, promoting active political involvement can make an important contribution to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building. It can help to reduce structural causes of conflict and can be a contributing factor in preventing conflicts from being pursued violently in the first place or in defusing them at the earliest possible moment. For example, legal reforms or the promotion of the capacity for dialogue among different groups can remove structural causes of conflict and create routes towards peacefully addressing conflicts.

Countries in which violent conflicts recently occurred create a special challenge for the promotion of active political involvement and democracy. Civil wars or violent conflict between states do not only destroy the physical infrastructure but also the social fabric, trust in the state's function of providing protection and maintaining order, as well as in norms, institutions and political processes. Societies affected by conflict are often divided and traumatised by enforced displacement, massive abuses of human rights and war crimes. The reconstruction of social and economic infrastructure is essential, particularly in the immediate post-conflict phase, in order to make noticeable improvements to people's daily life. Especially in post-conflict situations, people's expectations of a rapid improvement of their circumstances are high. In these situations, there may be tensions between social realities and expectations of peace, justice and development.

In addition to the reconstruction of social and economic infrastructure and state institutions, reconciliation, social equality and active political involvement on an equal footing of groups in society in a manner that is adapted to the individual cultural and social context must also be present. By promoting active political involvement, German development cooperation supports state and society actors in non-violent conflict resolution as a contribution to peace-building after violent conflict.

In these situations, it is important to tailor all measures in a conflict-sensitive way. This means, for example, that they must, at the very least, not accidentally exacerbate old lines of conflict ("Do no harm" approach). Further they must aim for de-escalating effects that support peace-building. Otherwise the danger arises in post-conflict countries of destabilising through the promotion of political involvement.

<sup>23</sup> Promotional approaches relevant to governance in crisis, conflict and post-conflict countries are treated in BMZ-Konzept 131 (2005): *Krisenprävention, Konfliktbearbeitung und Friedensförderung*: <http://www.bmz.de/de/service/infotehk/fach/konzepte/konzept131.pdf>

### **Cambodia: Responsible and transparent exercise of power through political involvement and good governance**

Cambodia's institutional and social structures were almost entirely destroyed by war and the Khmer Rouge's regime of terror and the country had to start from scratch in almost all areas after the first free elections in 1993. Today Cambodia still faces many challenges: democratisation, fulfilling human rights, promoting civil society, building public administration and systems of justice and finance, as well as boosting business and fighting widespread corruption. More than a third of the population today lives below the poverty line, most in rural areas. This history has posed to be Cambodia's biggest challenge: how to bring together a society which, as a legacy of its past, has little experience of active involvement in political decision-making processes and a government which is not accustomed to dialogue. This year, Cambodia has for the first time in its history elected councils in provinces, towns and districts, entering into a decisive phase of one of the biggest reforms since the introduction of the constitution.

The **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is making a direct contribution to building democratic structures according to rule of law principles** in Cambodia by supporting the national reconciliation process. The BMZ is supporting the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), the tribunal examining the crimes of the principal persons still alive, who were responsible for the Khmer Rouge regime of violence (1975-79). The German government contributes financially to the overall budget and the Victims Unit of the ECCC and also supports a broad dialogue in society on how to process with these serious crimes, through a programme implemented by the Civil Peace Service (CPS) of the DED. At the same time, the work of the DED-CPS has been complemented since 2008 by a capacity development programme for judges in training and the staff of reconciliation organisations. Before taking up internships at the ECCC, Cambodians who will take responsibility for the rule of law and peace in their society have received training and have visited Europe to see memorials of the Nazi crimes and the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Promoting good governance is a key requirement for developing an understanding of these circumstances and for supporting sustainable development and poverty reduction in Cambodia. For this reason, Germany is actively supporting the country's development and democratisation process. Promoting democracy, civil society and public administration is a cross-cutting issue in German development cooperation in Cambodia; an inherent part of all projects supported, while also being the object of independent programmes.

Decentralisation and administrative reform is an essential contribution to **building capable, responsive, citizen oriented state structures** at all levels. In May 2008 the government passed a legal framework that clears the way for wide-reaching reform. In May 2009 councils were elected in the provinces, towns and districts. As a result, all administrative levels will be subject to democratic control in the future. Through this reform, the government aims to promote democratic development in Cambodia, to improve the provision of public services to the people and to establish new forms of political decision-making processes. German development organisations advise ministries, provinces and communities in implementing this reform; they conduct training measures for different target groups (councillors, officials, politicians) to help the key actors implement the reform efficiently and effectively.

The decentralisation process can only succeed with the **comprehensive involvement of the people of the country** in communal politics.

Through **Technical Cooperation (TC)** implemented by the **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)**,<sup>24</sup> the **BMZ**<sup>25</sup> supports the implementation of the decentralisation and administrative reform in Cambodia on several levels. It helps to develop the process through which the responsibility for decision-making and administration is transferred to the regional and communal levels; it also offers extensive training measures for the staff of ministries as they direct the decentralisation reform and for the representatives of the communities and administrations at district and provincial level, so that they can implement the plan efficiently, effectively and in accord with the expectations of the public.

The decentralisation process can only succeed with the **comprehensive involvement of the public** at the communal level, so the GTZ is committed to establishing **innovative fora to strengthen the dialogue between (civil) society and the various levels of politics**. Members of committees have been trained at national, provincial and district level and procedures for decentralised planning, finance, and the coordination of development measures have been put into practice together with the public. At communal and village level, community representative bodies are being empowered and supported in fulfilling the new tasks arising from the decentralisation reform, with the full involvement of the public. Advising actors at all levels of the state as they introduce and institutionalise these dialogue fora is an important way of promoting active political involvement.

**Rule-of-law structures and institutionalised democratic procedures** are preconditions for active political involvement. German development cooperation in Cambodia therefore advises the government during the drafting of the legal framework and is committed to achieving a secure, legislative basis for participation mechanisms.

Through a TC project to promote women's rights,<sup>26</sup> the BMZ helps, for example, to ensure that those affected by legislation relevant to women's rights have opportunities to influence the legislative procedure. In various workshops to draft a law on protection from domestic violence, civil society organisations were thus able to take an active role.

Along with the continuing weakness of state structures, the lack of transparency and reliability in the system of public finances pose significant obstacles to development in Cambodia. German development cooperation therefore supports the development of the National Audit Authority (NAA) into a competent, independent auditing institution free from corruption. Transparency and correct accounting are necessary preconditions for the use of public funds. This can be achieved by giving advice to the NAA on organisation and process particularly regarding the structure of cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and Parliament. In addition, transparency is promoted by making public the results of audits.

Through **Financial Cooperation (FC)** implemented by the **KfW Entwicklungsbank**,<sup>27</sup> the BMZ provides training at communal level (learning by doing) in **rule-based administrative practices in state authorities** and helps build up reciprocal communication between authorities and citizens. So, for example, through FC in rural road-building, the BMZ promotes citizens' involvement in public investment planning (through village committees),

24 GTZ-Programme *Support to Administrative Reform and Decentralisation*: <http://www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/asien-pazifik/kambodscha/12934.htm>

25 More information on German development cooperation with Cambodia at: More Information on German development cooperation with Cambodia:  
<http://www.bmz.de/en/countries/partnercountries/kambodscha/index.html>  
<http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/buerger/KamboschaFaltblatt.pdf>  
<http://www.gdc-cambodia.org>

26 <http://www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/asien-pazifik/kambodscha/8825.htm>

27 [http://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/EN\\_Home/Countries\\_and\\_Projects/Asia/East\\_Asia\\_and\\_Pacific/Cambodia16/index.jsp](http://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/EN_Home/Countries_and_Projects/Asia/East_Asia_and_Pacific/Cambodia16/index.jsp)

transparent and fair public service tenders and the legally correct allocation of contracts. In addition, support is provided for everyone involved – both in state agencies and in the population – with regard to quality assurance during the construction phase as well as for operation and maintenance of the roads in order to secure the infrastructure in the long-term. Through the road-building programme, decentralised public agencies receive support in meeting their accountability obligations to the public, doing so in line with the law.

Similarly, through **Personnel Cooperation** implemented by the **German Development Service (DED)**<sup>28</sup> the BMZ begins at the level of general administrative advice and seeks to strengthen decentralised town and regional planning. Methods for civic participation, environmentally oriented planning and decentralised administration are crucial for the establishment of democratic planning procedures in Cambodia. Since 2002 the BMZ has supported the decentralisation and administrative reform process in Cambodia in the provinces Siem Reap and Battambang through Personnel Cooperation, which in turn is conducted in cooperation with political foundations. In all locations, pressing land issues are the major problem. Support for state partners also includes the search for solutions to the problem of so-called informal settlements. The active inclusion of civil society organisations is a promising approach to this work at the interfaces of state and society.

Through Personnel Cooperation, the BMZ also helps the public and civil society organisations to unite their interests and articulate them to community representative bodies. Support has been given since 2008 to the activities of non-governmental organisations in the area of land and residence law. Personnel Cooperation is particularly well-suited to bridge-building between state and civil society and should help to promote the dialogue between state institutions, donors and civil society on this pressing issue.

Building up the institutional strengths of civil society organisations, with special attention to raising their participation skills, is a task commissioned by the BMZ from the **Capacity Building International (InWEnt)** in Cambodia. It works closely with the Lutheran World Federation, Cambodia Program (LWFC) and through capacity building measures supports the on-going initiatives for citizen participation in rural areas. A particular goal is to enable villagers to become actively involved in political matters and to learn participatory methods.

German non-state organisations and the German political foundations also work to strengthen civil society actors in the partner countries. The Evangelische Entwicklungsdienst (EED) is engaged in this field in Cambodia, working closely with the Lutheran World Federation. The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (KAS) also works on this issue at subnational level and in close cooperation with TC. The KAS, with its partner organisation Buddhism for Development (BFD), helps build the strengths of local authorities, especially the structures and mechanisms for civic participation. In this, the BFD works with village advisors who also make an important contribution to local conflict management. The BMZ supports the engagement of the German non-state organisations and political foundations in Cambodia.

The activities of the various German implementing organisations in Cambodia are closely interlinked. German development cooperation's wide-ranging engagement contributes to strengthening political involvement in Cambodia and to building and developing governance structures. Through this Germany contributes to encouraging dialogue within society, strengthening the rights of women and minorities and securing institutionalised participation procedures and rule-of-law structures.

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<sup>28</sup> <http://cambodia.ded.de>

## 5. Fields of Action in Development Policy and Entry Points for the Promotion of Political Involvement

A wide range of options exist for political involvement at all levels. The potential for participation in political decision-making is particularly great at the local level. Citizens can discuss issues that have a direct impact on their daily lives with local authorities and decision-makers. By getting involved in the workings of (grassroots) democracy, gaining awareness of their rights and asserting these more strongly as regards government authorities, citizens gain greater self-determination, and political involvement becomes a firmly established principle. Yet given the dimensions of the power, resources and fundamental decisions that are involved in the political process, efforts to strengthen civil society involvement in the political decision-making process must also extend to the national level.

That is why a multi-level approach is adopted in German development cooperation, with efforts being made to foster political involvement at both national and decentralised level in the following areas:

- **the identification of political priorities and the formulation of policies** – by helping the responsible authorities to establish efficient participation mechanisms and by supporting civil society in identifying and formulating needs and setting priorities;
- **the drafting of development plans and poverty reduction strategies** – by advising governments and administrative authorities on how to develop and operate participatory planning processes, the upgrading of their skills and the improvement of stakeholders' capacity for dialogue;
- **the formulation of budgets** – by involving civil society in the formulation of local budgets, helping civil society to read and understand national budgets and analyse the implications of how funding is allocated, and by strengthening parliament so as to enable it to better exercise its control function as regards budgetary matters;
- **public spending** – by enabling civil society and parliaments to hold government and public administration to account regarding the use of public funds and by helping of-office-holders and decision-makers to render appropriate and systematic accountability regarding public revenues and expenditure;
- **the provision of public goods and services** – by helping civil society and state actors to apply the proper procedures in a transparent way and to ensure participation in the planning, awarding of contracts for, installation and long-term provision of public services and infrastructure with the aim of assessing and increasing the benefit, accessibility and quality of public goods and services;
- **debate on a new constitution** – by providing stakeholders with advice and information, establishing a space for discussion and reflection on the issues to be dealt with by the constituent assembly and establishing a dialogue focused on transparency and consensus;



- **the enshrining of democratic participation within institutions and the law** – by sharing experience of established forms of democratic participation with legislators, which is then translated into standards and laws;
- **the strengthening of decentralised structures** – by advising and supporting local authorities in the establishment of responsive and accountable administrative structures, the efficient provision of local services and infrastructure and the fulfilment of their duties to inform and to accountability;
- **the exercising of public supervision and control** – by supporting and advising state and civil society actors on the establish-  
ment and development of supervision and control systems (e.g. ombudsmen’s offices or independent judicial institutions);
- **the promotion of a free and independent media** – by training journalists and assisting in the establishment of low-threshold means of information and communication (e.g. local citizens’ media, such as citizens’ radio).

These fields of action need to be adapted to the specific circumstances and conditions in a given partner country, the willingness of the partner and in coordination with donors. In addition, German development cooperation’s approaches in all areas take the specific historical, social, political, economic and ethnic context into account.

### **Zambia: Promoting constructive state-society relations by strengthening civil society, democracy and the rule of law**

Zambia is considered to be politically stable with democratic structures that, while still relatively new, are nonetheless robust in comparison with other countries in the region. The country’s transition from a centralised state to a democratic republic with a free-market economy is now well underway. However, despite ample mineral resources, large tracts of land suitable for agriculture, and vast water resources, Zambia remains one of Africa’s poorest countries. A very high rate of HIV infection, the neglect of agricultural development, a poor infrastructure and corruption pose obstacles to development. German bilateral engagement with Zambia takes up these challenges in various ways: in addition to macroeconomic support, and the priority area of water, it also includes measures to promote good governance and active political involvement.<sup>29</sup>

In order to increase the effectiveness of development cooperation in line with the Paris Declaration, Germany supports the Zambian reform efforts in cooperation with other donors in the context of the **Joint Assistance Strategy**. Germany co-finances the Zambian budget by means of general budgetary assistance, along with other bilateral and multilateral donors. The aim is to support the implementation of the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP) and thus to make a contribution towards reducing poverty. This plan places a clear emphasis on pro-poor growth, with good governance as a cross-cutting issue for all policy areas. Key elements of the FNDP include promoting economic development and improving the social policy framework as well as other cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS, gender equality and the environment. At the same time, strengthening good governance plays a central role. The involvement of civil society is essential for the successful implementation of the FNDP, as it is for a range of other governance reform processes which the government of Zambia is currently carrying out – e.g. the adoption of a new constitution, parliamentary reform, the decentralisation policy, the new anti-corruption policy or the Access to Justice Programme. However, civil society organisations and networks

<sup>29</sup> More information on German development cooperation in Zambia at: <http://www.bmz.de/en/countries/partnercountries/sambia/index.html>

have not yet been consistently and effectively involved in the implementation of the FNDP and other governance reform processes. For this reason Germany supports civil society organisations and networks in their efforts to contribute to national governance reform and poverty reduction in an accountable manner.

While focusing on **the inclusion of civil society organisations in reform processes and the establishment of dialogue structures between state and civil society**, the German contribution differs from the largely sector-specific support of bi- and multilateral donors. It addresses the national as well as the provincial and district level (multi-level approach), and it is characterised by the successful combination of the different instruments of German development cooperation. By supporting governance reform processes on the national level, the desired results will, to a great extent, have an effect on all of Zambia.

In the context of general budgetary assistance, the **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** takes a leading role in supporting the implementation of the Zambian poverty reduction strategy, within the framework of **Financial Cooperation (FC)** through the **KfW Entwicklungsbank** (Poverty Reduction Budget Support, PRBS). The funds provided are channelled directly into the Zambian national budget. This is accompanied by an intensive policy dialogue on the key indicators of the strategy. Furthermore, by intensifying regular political dialogue with the Zambian government the BMZ engages constructively with policy-making and promotes the political involvement of the national parliament and civil society. At the same time, national government and civil society organisations as well as international development partners are members of Sector Advisory Groups that for the first time allow a broad public debate about the use of public funds. This intensive and structured dialogue strengthens the accountability of the state and the transparency of governance reform processes. Using Zambia's own institutions and systems also helps to avoid parallel structures or shadow budgets. Consequently, the dialogue is focused on support for the Zambian reform programme of public budget management.

Complementary to this FC engagement, Germany also provides **Technical Cooperation (TC)** to the Zambian government implemented by the **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)**, which gives advice to the finance and planning ministry. Through the budget support and capacity development provided to the partner country, Zambia is enabled to fulfil its tasks with a pro-poor orientation and to organise the allocation of public expenditure efficiently.

On behalf of the BMZ, the GTZ promotes dialogue between state and civil society in the framework of an additional TC programme. The objective of this Good Governance Programme is the systematic inclusion of civil society organisations and networks in governance reform processes and in the implementation of the national poverty reduction strategy. The programme promotes civil society in its networking capacities and supports it in its efforts to contribute to transparent and accountable governance reform processes; further, it promotes broad public involvement in political decision-making processes.<sup>30</sup>

The programme seeks to build up the organisational capacities and skills of civil society organisations and networks through training, thematic advisory services, and financial support.<sup>31</sup> These activities address, for example,

30 BMZ Topics 165 (2007): *In partnership for a strong Africa - Cooperation in the area of good governance*: <http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/fach/materialien/materialie165.pdf>

31 <http://www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/afrika/596.htm>

budget tracking and monitoring at the national level as well as at decentralised levels, the strengthening of dialogue skills, enhancing voter participation, evaluating the access to justice for all, particularly with regard to disadvantaged groups (Access to Justice Programme) as well as the contribution to and monitoring of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) by civil society actors. Civil society organisations are provided with the necessary qualifications to responsibly fulfil their mandate as stakeholders in matters of public interest and to effectively participate in political decision-making processes. Beyond this, civil society actors are strengthened in their responsibility as a watchdog to hold the state accountable.

Through the **Personnel Cooperation** provided by the **German Development Service (DED)**<sup>32</sup> the goals of the Good Governance Programme are extended to the province and district levels. There is close cooperation with civil society organisations and networks at the local level. As well as small, thematically oriented organisations, five larger organisations are being supported financially and through advisory services in order to develop and implement systematic contributions. Support is provided for, among other things, strategic planning, coalition building on issues relevant to many organisations, writing analyses and reports about the implementation and effects of state reforms, the organisation of activities, workshops and conferences, and the training of specialist staff. The DED also supports the provincial offices of the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) with a total of three foreign and five Zambian experts in the Western, Southern, North-Western, Eastern and Luapula Provinces. In addition to the Good Governance Programme, the DED also provides two advisors on the promotion of democracy, one in the Eastern and one in the Southern Province.

A constructive dialogue between state and civil society is only possible if there is a high level of institutionalisation in its interfaces at the national level as well as at decentralised level. In order to include as many different interests as possible in national decision-making processes and to fully implement the citizens' rights to a broad political involvement, **strengthening civil society must go hand in hand with reinforcing existing democratic structures**. Therefore, one focus of the Good Governance Programme is to promote the establishment of structures for dialogue between parliament and civil society, e.g. through the organisation of round tables, dialogue boards and special training opportunities. Civil society actors learn how to hold parliamentarians to account, especially concerning current problems or structural issues in their constituencies.

At the same time, the Good Governance Programme supports the **institutionalisation of legal guarantees and the protection of civil rights, rules and procedures** by establishing dialogue structures based on transparency and consensus within the framework of the current constitutional debate: in the National Constitutional Conference (NCC) created in 2007, all citizens have the chance to participate in the debate on the content and implementation of a new constitution.

By its wide-ranging engagement, Germany contributes to the development of **constructive state-society relations** in Zambia and to a further increase in mutual trust and confidence. Governance reforms and poverty reduction strategies that are developed in cooperation between state and civil society are more likely to be widely accepted and hence will lead to more commitment for and the acceptance of mutual obligations; they are suited to meeting the needs and interests of the people and thus can make a contribution to achieving the MDGs, strengthening human rights and, with that, consolidating the democratic system.

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<sup>32</sup> <http://zambia.ded.de/>

## 6. Risks and Challenges

Promoting political involvement makes an important contribution to building stable and democratic structures, as well as constructive state-society relations. Thereby, it enhances peace and sustainable development. However, the promotion of political involvement also holds significant challenges, and bears risks that should not be underestimated.

Thus active involvement in political decisions on an equal footing by the broadest possible section of civil society necessitates the support of the relevant decision-makers in politics and administration. Lack of commitment or a failure of political will may lead to empty talk, vague promises and inadequate results. The risk arises that non-governmental organisations and civil society groups will be palmed off with apparent offers of dialogue, and subsequently, no jointly agreed political proposals for reform will emerge. Where dialogue processes have led to the joint formulation of policies, their implementation must not be postponed or prevented, but must be followed through. Otherwise there is a danger of growing frustration among the public and the participating civil society organisations, which contains a high potential for conflict in the medium and long term.

Existing democratic structures and democratically legitimised decision-making bodies must not be undermined or weakened by the creation of parallel structures. The promotion of political involvement of civil society should rather aim at creating connections to existing democratic institutions. This will consolidate the capacity and strength of these existing democratic structures and institutions, and increase their value through participatory elements. While using existing structures, new forms of communication and participation can thereby be developed.

Democratic systems bear the risk that political decision-making processes may be co-opted and dominated by powerful and influential interest groups. Therefore, it is of particular importance that disadvantaged groups are strengthened, and that their interests are consistently taken into account. It must be ensured that weaker and less well-organised groups have the possibility to get involved, that they can articulate their interests, and that their specific rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. In this context, one main challenge is finding a balance between forms of direct and representative participation. Elements of direct participation (e.g. in drafting development plans in order to prioritise measures) gain in importance compared to representative forms when there is no functioning process for informed decision-making. Care must also be taken, that not only those civil society actors favourable to state institutions are included in decision-making processes, but that critical positions are also considered. Finally participation processes have their greatest effect when the broadest possible spectrum of viewpoints in society is included in decision-making.

The broad involvement of civil society always bears a risk of conflict and of confrontation between irreconcilable positions. Therefore, it is key to strengthen the capacity for dialogue of those involved, and to promote constructive approaches that go beyond making accusations or lodging complaints but instead seek collective solutions. In this context, the initial conditions in a given situation determine if and to what extent development cooperation can contribute to creating new spaces for interaction and cooperation. If state and civil society actors are confrontational towards each other, the simple act of creating contact and building trust and confidence can be a measure of success. Especially in sensitive and

politically charged situations, participatory procedures should be specially designed to deal with conflicts in a non-violent manner, and to solve problems. Often the use of professional mediators and moderators is essential in such situations.

Finally, when promoting the active involvement in political processes, it is also necessary to counterbalance the danger that the state may use this arena to appropriate civil society, and that civil society actors may be exploited by the state for its own purposes, or be co-opted entirely. There is also a risk, that civil society actors, for their part, may associate themselves too closely with the state. In this case, they risk losing their credibility and legitimacy. Especially in established and tried-and-tested processes, representatives of civil society may be tempted to let themselves be co-opted by state interests to secure their own new-found position of power and influence. To address this danger, it is necessary to ensure that the dialogue and the spaces of interaction between state and civil society are as open and transparent as possible, and to ensure a clear division between state and non-state actors.

In addition, the promotion of civil society forces as such may become problematic. Since civil society actors are often dependent on external sources of funding, they may increasingly match their priorities to those of the donors instead of bringing the concerns of the local people into the political process. Donor support for civil society organisations should not lead to this kind of extraversion, which would have negative conse-

quences for their local support and legitimacy. International support should also avoid creating false incentives that could lead to funding being misappropriated. For example, existing local institutions may be re-labelled as non-governmental organisations, or fake organisations can even be set up. Participatory processes must be based on the fact that representatives of social groups actually represent such groups, and that they are accountable to them via feedback mechanisms.

It cannot be assumed that civil society organisations are oriented towards democracy and reform *per se*, nor that they represent (broad) interests in society. Organisations may even be part of the clientelism of a country's elite. Therefore, when promoting civil society forces it is important to conduct a thorough analysis of those involved and to monitor any transformation processes of the partners.

In many partner countries, only few civil society organisations meet the OECD model (such as NGOs and professional associations). At the same time, the non-state sphere includes a very large number of other actors, organisations and institutions with, for example, religious, cultural or ethnic legitimacy, some of which are deeply rooted in society. It may be useful to also promote the active involvement of these actors in political decision-making processes. As in the collaboration with "classic" civil society organisations, it is, nonetheless necessary to carry out an exacting analysis of their legitimacy, interests and distribution of power.

## 7. Promoting Active Political Involvement as a Joint Task of the Development Partners

The objective of international development co-operation is to make a sustainable improvement in the daily lives of the people of the partner countries. With the Paris Declaration, the international community introduced important new directions in developing and improving the effectiveness of aid and agreed on ground rules for cooperation. In the years since then, all actors have become ever more aware that the partner countries must themselves take more ownership of the management of their own development. The Accra Agenda for Action extended the idea of ownership: ownership is not limited to governments of partner countries, but includes also their parliaments and civil society. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) supports the agreements reached in Paris and Accra and intends to improve the effectiveness of German development cooperation by implementing them.

A stronger role for civil society and the promotion of active political involvement is an essential pillar of good governance and is a joint task for the development partners. This applies also to the formulation and structure of policies in the partner countries: development processes can only achieve long-term effects if they are supported by the people of the country. Promoting good governance and constructive state-society relations is therefore an important requirement for the strict implementation of the obligations undertaken in Paris and Accra.

After the Accra Agenda for Action was passed in early 2009, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development drew up a plan of operations to raise the effectiveness of German development cooperation containing measures for implementing the decisions taken in Accra.<sup>33</sup>

The promotion of active political involvement is also relevant to improved harmonisation and co-ordination of donors' contributions and services. In line with the principles of the Aid Effectiveness Agenda, German development cooperation works together with other donors to coordinate and, wherever possible, harmonise their work. To this end, the international donor community has agreed to provide two-thirds of aid as programme-based approaches (PBA) by 2010. A PBA is understood as the integration of contributions by different donors and implementing organisations in a programme owned by the partner country. PBAs include general and sectoral budget support as well as basket funding and contributions to technical assistance pools. The approach also includes projects in technical and financial cooperation that are integrated into an overarching programme owned by the partner country and are coordinated with the contributions of other donors. When the requisite conditions exist, donors commit to using partner country systems wherever possible to implement aid programmes – for example, monitoring and evaluation systems. The processing of financial contributions provided jointly with other donors

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<sup>33</sup> The German plan of operations is already being implemented. Key fields of action identified include: the widest possible degree of accountability, with the involvement especially of civil society; effective cooperation in development policy with countries in situations of fragility and/or conflict; and a better harmonisation and coordination of donors' contributions and services.



is often subject to the national budget and public financial management of the partner country. Therefore questions of good financial governance play a major role in PBAs.

Overall, PBA requires special efforts with regard to good governance: on the one hand, it is necessary to improve the mutual accountability of partners and donors; on the other, the broad involvement of the public in political processes and the legitimacy of the state must be promoted (democratic accountability), and not least, the transparency and accountability of the government to its own citizens has to be strengthened (domestic accountability).

Germany's participation in budget support programmes in particular is conditional on the partner country's meeting certain minimum standards of governance – both in the area of good financial governance and in the area of democratic governance. It is also the case that contributions in the form of budget support achieve a higher degree of effectiveness according to the degree

of the partner countries' capacities to absorb the funding. These capacities can be improved if budget support is combined with targeted measures and targeted capacity development in order to strengthen good governance and in particular the partner countries' administrative capacities. Essential aspects are: the building of a democratic environment and rule-of-law structures; strengthening the ability of parliaments to fulfil their democratic mandate and their function of providing checks and balances with regard to government; supporting civil society and facilitating its ability to take on a critical but constructive watchdog function, also regarding the transparent and effective use of public funds; and enabling state actors to engage with citizen involvement and to design participation processes.

Through a continuous political dialogue<sup>34</sup> at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and development, Germany, in association with the development partners at international and bilateral level, can make a significant contribution to raising the effectiveness of development cooperation.

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<sup>34</sup> The political dialogue serves the high-level communication between donors and partner countries and also the agreement of joint development goals. Beyond the quantitative and qualitative goals of development cooperation, the political dialogue also addresses questions of respect for human rights, as well as democratic structures, political involvement and good governance.

## 8. Synergies as Motors of Successful Development Cooperation – German Development Cooperation’s Range of Instruments

The plurality of institutions engaged in German development cooperation and the diversity of instruments available make it possible to offer an appropriate response to a variety of different challenges. It is vital to the success of the pluralistic system of German development cooperation that the different actors bring to bear their comparative advantages and complement each other in the division of labour, combined in a joint approach.

The **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** is responsible for formulating the guiding principles and strategies of German development policy. It determines the long-term strategies for cooperation with the various actors concerned and regulates implementation. It commissions a variety of German implementing organisations to achieve the government’s development goals within the framework of official bilateral development cooperation.

Under Germany’s multi-level approach, various forms of advice and financial support are combined at both national and decentralised level. For example, through the **KfW Entwicklungsbank, Financial Cooperation (FC)** is able to support community investment funds to create effective incentives for civic participation in the communities supported. In addition, conditions for citizens to participate in local development processes can be noticeably improved by developing national instruments for financing and auditing. **Technical cooperation (TC)**, by promoting capacity development, targets the ability and cooperation skills of actors and organisations concerned. The **Deutsche Gesellschaft für**

**Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)** supports, among other things, political decision-makers and community administrations in the development and implementation of participatory planning processes. In this context, it promotes the dialogue skills of those involved. In order to promote active political involvement, the **German Development Service (DED)** supports civil society organisations as well as state actors, especially community actors, in developing their capacities. Here, DED experts take on the role of forming a bridge between actors, and promote local political dialogue. Through their advisory activities with local organisations, experts from the **Centre for international migration and development (CIM)** strengthen the creation of community self-government structures, and promote the ability of these structures to articulate their interests to other branches of the state. At the same time, further education programmes of **Capacity Building International, Germany (InWEnt)** strengthen the capacities of the community employees in order to improve the service delivery of the communities, and to maintain the infrastructure on a sustainable basis. Meanwhile, with the **Civil Peace Service (CPS)**, the German government has at its disposal an appropriate instrument for crisis prevention and peace-building in development cooperation activities.

State development cooperation is complemented by the engagement of German non-state actors in the area of promoting active political involvement. In this context, the **political foundations** with their many years of experience, and as a specific German institution, are of particular importance. They promote democratic structures pri-

marily at parliamentary level or in cooperation with political parties or the media. The clear political direction of the foundations – aligned with the parties represented in the Bundestag – makes it easier for partners to build up relations of trust on the basis of a shared political outlook. Further to this, German **civil society organisations** such as the **faith based development organisations** or other non-state organisations especially aim to strengthen disadvantaged groups of society as well as grassroots organisations by assisting them in articulating their interests, and in gaining access to resources.

Especially in countries whose government performance demonstrates little commitment to development-oriented transformation or which are affected by crises or violent conflict, the instruments of state development cooperation reach their limits. In these cases, non-state actors are particularly well-placed to strengthen the forces in society oriented towards reform and so support a bottom-up approach towards democratisation and active political involvement. The BMZ supports the work of these organisations financially. The constant exchange of opinions and experiences are part of the joint project.

The BMZ is in charge of coordinating these various actors and instruments of German development cooperation. This is a precondition for the successful deployment of this structure. Only by working together can synergies be achieved. Furthermore, good coordination among the international donor community and a clear division of labour, as agreed in the Paris Agenda, is also indispensable. Resources must be focused and directed towards shared goals. Coherent coopera-

tion among German actors, and also with other donors and international organisations, is an important precondition for the effective promotion of active political involvement.

Yet this approach adopted in German development cooperation can only succeed with support from a broad section of society. For this reason, the German government also conducts development education and information measures in Germany in order to inform the public of the government's development aims, and to show global interconnections. Non-governmental organisations are vital partners for the BMZ in this context. Many of them have valuable experience of working with civil society organisations in developing countries, and can make use of this experience in their information and education work.

Promoting active political involvement in partner countries is a long and challenging process. Success comes only over the medium or long term. To promote active political involvement in partner countries, German development cooperation follows an integrated overall strategy. Only when the strengthening of civil society goes hand in hand with support for state institutions and consolidation of legal and institutional frameworks at all levels of the state, is it possible to achieve active political involvement on an equal standing by all forces in society in political decision-making processes and so ensure sustainable and resilient state-society relations. The promotion of political involvement thus makes an important contribution to promoting good governance, the fight against poverty and sustainable democratic development.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>BMZ</b>	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>CIM</b>	Centre for international migration and development
<b>CPS</b>	Civil Peace Service
<b>DED</b>	German Development Service
<b>FC</b>	Financial Cooperation
<b>GTZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
<b>InWEnt</b>	Capacity Building International
<b>KfW</b>	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PBA</b>	Programme-based approach
<b>TC</b>	Technical Cooperation

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**Bonn Office**

Dahlmannstraße 4  
53113 Bonn

Germany

Phone +49 (0) 228 99 535 - 0

Fax +49 (0) 228 99 535 - 3500

**Berlin Office**

Stresemannstraße 94  
10963 Berlin

Germany

Phone +49 (0) 30 18 535 - 0

Fax +49 (0) 30 18 535 - 2501

[poststelle@bmz.bund.de](mailto:poststelle@bmz.bund.de)

[www.bmz.de](http://www.bmz.de)

**Editors-in-chief**

Birgitt Nett

*Division Governance; Democracy; Rule of Law*

Gaby Holleder

*Division for Development Education and Information*

Doris Beerling-Henestroza, Katrin Schäfer

*GTZ Sector Advisory Project "Good Governance and Democracy"*

**Official responsible**

Claudia Pragua

*Division Governance; Democracy; Rule of Law*

Klaus Krämer

*Division for Development Education and Information*

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