Shaping the future with shared values and interests – The BMZ’s new Latin America policy
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Latin America has evolved into a continent to safeguard the global future. As a result of its growing importance both politically and economically, the region sees itself increasingly as a vital player in helping to solve the global issues of the future. With the world’s largest expanse of tropical rainforest and more than 40 per cent of the planet’s biodiversity, Latin America is a key partner in protecting the rainforest and combating climate change. As their influence in political forums such as the G20 and the United Nations has grown, a post-2015 agenda geared towards development and an ambitious new climate regime can only be achieved by working together closely with the countries of Latin America. Although the continent has recorded rapid economic development over the past decade, this cannot hide the fact that challenges remain: Latin America is the continent with the highest levels of social inequality and is one of the most violent regions on earth. In order to shape the continent’s future with shared values and interests, our development support in Latin America totals around one billion euros a year.

Our development activities in Latin America will focus in particular on environmental and climate protection. In so doing, our aim is to promote a partnership for sustainable development – of interests and values – based on the model of a social and ecological market economy. The Global Development Partners, those advanced emerging economies with which we cooperate on an equal footing, bear a particular responsibility in this regard.

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1 For the purpose of this position paper, Latin America is South America, Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean.
Key points of the BMZ’s new Latin America policy in this electoral term

PROTECTING THE RAINFOREST AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE:

→ Increase the capacity for generating electricity in Latin America by 2,500 megawatts from renewable energies.

→ Forge an international partnership to provide effective protection for over 60 million hectares of tropical rainforest in the Amazon region.

→ Transform 10 initial and further training institutions in Latin America into centres of excellence for renewable energies and energy efficiency through intelligent networking.

→ Set up a geothermal development facility for Latin America, which will generate one billion euros in private investment and provide up to two million people with clean energy.

→ Provide effective protection and conservation for at least 20 per cent of the coastline of participating Caribbean countries by 2020 via a joint initiative with the islands of the Caribbean.

→ 20 municipal climate partnerships.

→ 20 triangular cooperation projects in third countries, carried out together with strong Latin American countries.

→ 20 new school partnerships with Latin America.

→ Stage a dialogue forum with representatives of civil society, politics and business on the social, environmental and human rights aspects involved in the extraction of raw materials.

STAMPING OUT VIOLENCE, STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS:

→ Support the peace process in Colombia; profits from peace for a country in upheaval.

→ Create a brighter future for young people as part of the violence prevention pillar of the Central America Security Strategy.

→ Strengthen human rights institutions and defenders.

USING ALL SOCIAL FORCES FOR DEVELOPMENT – MOBILISING ACTIVITIES IN GERMANY:

→ Over 1,000 projects with churches and civil society.

→ 50 public-private partnerships for environmental and climate protection, sustainable economic development, food security, health and education.
1. Latin America as a strategic partner on an equal footing

Latin America has experienced rapid economic and social development not only in recent years but also over the past few decades. What were once developing countries have now evolved into emerging economies.

In addition to the two main emerging countries of Brazil and Mexico, the development of other countries has been increasingly dynamic as well. Thanks to a stability-oriented economic policy, Latin American economies on the whole weathered the economic and financial crisis of 2009 relatively unscathed. Countries such as Peru and Colombia recorded positive growth rates even in the crisis years, underpinned by rising resource revenues. The robust growth of the last twenty years has also helped to reduce poverty. Increasingly urban middle classes have emerged, demanding civil and social rights.

Yet Latin America’s resource-based economic model is stretched to its limits. The exploitation of mineral as well as agricultural and forest resources comes at a high social and environmental cost and frequently leads to conflicts with local populations over land and water resources.

Added to this is the fact that Latin America remains the continent with the highest levels of social inequality. Despite considerable success in the area of poverty reduction, almost 30 per cent of the population – around 167 million people – is still considered poor; approximately 10 per cent of the population even lives in extreme poverty. Large sections of the population – most notably indigenous groups – remain excluded from the development process. In rural areas, especially in Bolivia, Guatemala, Haiti or Honduras, the degree of chronic malnutrition is in some areas comparable to that in the world’s poorest countries.

In many Latin American countries, the lack of job prospects and the social marginalisation of large parts of the population that stem from poverty create the breeding ground for violence and criminality. Together with weak government structures and considerable shortcomings in the rule of law and in governance, organised crime and drug trafficking now pose a major threat to people’s security in many places. With the highest murder rates and 42 of the world’s 50 most violent cities, Latin America is today the most violent region on earth.

The continent boast a wealth of natural resources. It is home to the world’s largest expanse of tropical rainforest where over 40 per cent of all biodiversity can be found. However, since the region’s economic model does not focus sufficiently on ecological and social sustainability, the distinctly negative consequences for the global climate and the environment are evident. For instance, among the countries with the highest number of animal species at risk of extinction, five are in Latin America. The continent is also responsible for roughly an eighth of global greenhouse gas emissions. Brazil alone is the fourth, and Mexico the eleventh biggest emitter. As the economy grows, so too does the appetite for energy.
The countries in the region have developed into key players on the global stage and are actively involved in shaping international policy. For Germany, they have now become strategic partners on an equal footing. As members of the G20, Brazil and Mexico have a particular responsibility in policy terms. The reaching of a new global agreement on climate change and the adoption of the post-2015 agenda for sustainable development in 2015 will map out the international course for the coming decades. At the same time, we are helping to facilitate a paradigm shift towards a global partnership which sets common goals and establishes a shared responsibility on the part of all countries for the global common good. Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Guatemala and Costa Rica are all countries which play a prominent role in climate protection and sustainable development on account of their own initiatives and which make a particularly constructive contribution to international negotiations. Working together with these countries, we want to make progress in addressing the urgent global challenges and to enhance the sustainability agenda further. We conduct negotiations with them on these forward-looking agendas and also take direct and concrete action, as part of our development policy, both in and together with these countries on global issues of key importance. Underpinning our alliance with Latin America is shared values and interests, and alongside the countries of the region we are tackling global challenges head-on within the framework of a partnership of interests and values for sustainable development.
2. The BMZ’s development activities in Latin America: progressive and diverse

We, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), have more than 800 members of staff from implementing organisations working in 22 countries in the region. Our development activities with Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Peru are particularly prevalent and take the form of bilateral projects. With Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay and the Caribbean we work together on measures which have a regional focus or concentrate on specific issues. Given the fact that the countries that make up Central America and the Caribbean are small in size, and taking into account the integration efforts of these countries, regional cooperation is a very effective form of cooperation.

As a central partner in the protection of global public goods, the priority area of our cooperation with Latin America is environmental and climate protection. This area accounts for more than two thirds of our annual development contributions. In addition, we work together with our partners to improve the framework conditions for sustainable, inclusive and green growth.

Our annual development assistance to Latin America amounts to around one billion euros. This exceptional level of financial support enables us to have a far-reaching impact and is created by leveraging grants and loans from the German federal budget with market funds. Added to each euro that we provide in funding are an extra two euros on average that are raised on the capital market.

Structuring the terms and conditions of our Financial Cooperation so that they are in line with the market is characteristic of our commitment in Latin America, reflecting the comparatively greater capacity of the region and placing an emphasis on ownership by our partners.

As far as our Financial Cooperation in areas suited to loan financing is concerned, we will increase the share of market funds in future and issue loans on terms and conditions that are more similar to those available on the market. This will enable us to use budget funds to even greater effect. In Technical Cooperation, we want to increasingly carry out German development projects and programmes with the financial support of other donors. This cooperation is to become more market and competition-based, so that governments in Latin America too can either cofinance or self-finance development inputs more than they have done in the past.

Especially in cooperation with emerging countries such as Mexico or Brazil, we are embracing new and innovative forms of cooperation which are characterised by a partnership on equal footing. The trademark feature of German development cooperation here involves providing specific technical expertise with attractive offers of financing in those sectors that are of strategic importance to Germany and its partners. To this end, we combine the instruments of official development cooperation with the expertise of German companies, business associations and academic and research associations. One example is cooperation with Mexico in the field of energy, the environment and climate, combined with our support in vocational education. These forms of integrated cooperation contribute not only to solving development challenges but also to safeguarding Germany’s status as a centre of science and industry. They create win-win situations for all of the parties involved and form the basis of the added value of German development cooperation within the context of advanced, competitive developing market economies.
Another innovative instrument of German development cooperation in Latin America is **triangular cooperation**. As **new donor countries within the framework of South-South cooperation activities**, several countries in the region are increasingly assuming global responsibility themselves. Mexico in particular is actively working to ensure that new donors also align themselves with international standards for delivering effective development cooperation. We use our **Latin America Triangular Cooperation Fund** to finance joint measures in third countries, for which at least half of the overall international contribution is raised by our partner countries. In this way, we are able to combine successful experience of reforms carried out by our partners with German innovations and at the same time mobilise additional development funding.

Our broad-ranging activities are carried out with **a wide range of partners**. In addition to the implementing organisations of bilateral cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), KfW, the National Metrology Institute of Germany (PTB) and the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR)), we work together closely with civil society, churches, political foundations, the German private sector, and German **Länder (“federal states”)** and municipalities.

As the European Union’s largest donor, we play an active role in shaping **European development cooperation** with Latin America and the Caribbean. In so doing, we attach particular importance to an **effective and efficient division of labour** and actively promote joint strategies of all European partners.

**Cooperation with regional development banks** is another instrument via which we mobilise more funding from other partners for the benefit of Latin American development. For instance, we will work with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank towards the sustainable, climate-friendly **restructuring of the energy supply** in Latin America and the Caribbean. The **EU’s Latin America Investment Facility (LAIF)** acts as a mechanism for recruiting other donors and contributing to the attainment of our development objectives. We cooperate with the **United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**, a recognised think tank, in order to inject new momentum for **structural change, sustainable social protection** and a **clean energy supply**.
3. Protecting the rainforest and marine ecosystems and using our natural resources sustainably

Latin America boasts a huge diversity of natural resources which play a fundamental role in the stability of our climate and in safeguarding creation. The continent is home to by far the largest expanse of tropical rainforest on earth. Acting as the “lungs of the world”, rainforests capture on average of 660 tonnes of carbon dioxide per hectare and therefore are instrumental in the fight against climate change. They are also home to a unique array of animal and plant life. In addition, Latin America has approximately 30,000 kilometres of coastline inhabited by over 13,000 animal and plant species. One in five of these species is endemic, meaning that it can only be found on the coast of Latin America. The region’s extensive fish stocks make a major contribution to ensuring food security. Experience has shown that coordinated international efforts are the only way to promote protection of the rainforest in a sustainable way. Greenhouse gases released by deforestation make up around 17 per cent of global emissions. We are therefore committed to making protection of the rainforest a key element of international climate protection. As part of our development cooperation, we support the countries at the forefront of forest conservation which have already taken it upon themselves to initiate measures in this regard. Until a system of international financing is in place, we are supporting them by providing bridging finance. This is done based on the emissions actually saved from avoided deforestation and at least half of the funds must benefit forest dwellers.

Covering 5.5 million square kilometres, the Amazon basin contains the world’s largest rainforest. As the most important country traversed by the river, Brazil is a key partner for Germany in the protection of the rainforest. Together with the Brazilian government, the state governments and civil society, and with support from the World Bank, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and German development cooperation efforts, we are forging a partnership to protect 60 million hectares of rainforest. The Amazon Region Protected Areas Programme is designed as a joint initiative to ensure long-term financial security for the maintenance of protected areas. Conserving biodiversity, capturing carbon and protecting the forest are therefore at the core of a paradigm shift in environmental policy for the Amazon region.

In Central America, we are also supporting the creation of a Mesoamerican Biological Corridor to link the isolated protected areas from southern Mexico down to Panama and thus provide sufficient space for animals to roam. In this, we are focusing on cross-border protected areas and on strengthening cooperation between the countries involved.

However, protecting the rainforest is not an end in itself. Rather, the focus here too is on people. After all, the rainforest can only be protected effectively if the people living in and around it benefit directly from its conservation. For this reason, our strategy combines forest conservation with a sustainable approach to forest use, generating additional income for the rural population where it is most urgently needed. Working together with indigenous organisations, we foster the strengthening of sustainable value chains from forest management. We support the reforestation of degraded land and are using it for sustainable agriculture and forestry.
As well as its extensive forests, Latin America has a unique marine ecosystem. The Mesoamerican Reef along the coasts of Mexico and Central America is the second largest reef system in the world. It provides a habitat for many of the continent’s rare species of marine animals. Its reefs and mangrove forests also act as important natural protection systems that form a buffer against hurricanes and coastal erosion. Off the Peruvian coast, numerous capes and small islands are home to, among others, endangered bird species, seals, sea lions and Humboldt penguins. The surrounding stretches of water are a key habitat for fish, molluscs and shellfish. By protecting and restoring the coastal and marine ecosystem along the Mesoamerican Reef, in the Caribbean and off the coast of Peru, we are making a contribution to biodiversity conservation and are safeguarding the habitat which the fish stocks need in order to recover. Protecting our natural resources thus also serves humankind and helps to ensure its food security.

WHAT EXACTLY DO WE WANT TO DO?

→ Together with other donors, finance funds that will safeguard the preservation of protected areas in Brazil and Mexico over a transitional period. After this, the two countries will bear the costs. This is what sharing the burden fairly looks like.

→ Forge an international partnership to provide effective protection for over 60 million hectares of tropical rainforest in the Amazon region.

→ Promote research-based innovations for biodiversity conservation and the fight against climate change by means of university partnerships with Brazil.

→ In Central America and the Caribbean, encourage the conservation and restoration of coasts to protect the unique mangrove forests and coral reefs and thus provide fish stocks with a habitat in which to recover.

→ Off the coast of Peru, preserve the marine ecosystems and small islands which are still home to rare bird species, seals, sea lions and Humboldt penguins.

→ Through a joint initiative with nine Caribbean countries, provide effective support and conservation to at least 20 per cent of these countries’ coastlines by 2020.

→ Together with the pioneering countries of Brazil and Colombia, structure rainforest conservation work so that it is geared to results. Payments are to be based on actual emissions saved by not cutting down forests. At least half of the money must benefit forest dwellers.

→ Supporting the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol as part of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Mexico and Central America to contribute towards the fair and sustainable use of biological resources.

→ As part of a biodiversity partnership for Mesoamerica (Mexico and Central America), work together with international companies, public bodies, civil society and scientific and academic institutions to launch development partnerships for the sustainable use of biodiversity.

→ Support the creation of a Mesoamerican Biological Corridor to link the isolated protected areas from southern Mexico down to Panama and thereby provide a continuous habitat for animals and plants.
4. Tackling climate change

We would like to support our partner countries in laying the right foundations for a clean energy supply. A failure to invest now in low emission technologies will have a detrimental effect on the climate footprint for decades to come.

With our development activities, we aim to improve energy efficiency and promote renewable energies. To this end, we are working together in particular with the private sector in Latin America as the main consumer and producer of energy, as well as the source of capital funding for energy-saving investments. In addition, we would like to help the private sector to assume greater responsibility for the global common good. We focus deliberately on establishing links with the business community in Germany and are thus contributing to technology transfer and to the sustainable restructuring of energy systems based on market principles. In Central America and the Andean region, we would like to improve the degree to which the potential of geothermal energy is harnessed for the benefit of the public. With its active volcanoes, the region is well suited to supporting an energy transition in Latin America by means of this low emission technology.

We are putting the expertise already gained by German municipalities in climate partnerships to good use and are drawing on the experiences of the energy transition in Germany when advising on energy legislation. We will use initial and further training institutions at local level to address the shortage of skilled labour and contribute towards excellence for sustainability in crafts and trades in Latin America.

In addition to its causes, the effects of climate change and the susceptibility to associated natural disasters must also be tackled. Innovative approaches to these issues will take account both of people and the natural world. Our work therefore focuses on areas where protection of the environment serves to protect human beings.

In the Andes, the melting of glaciers is causing key water reserves to disappear. Through intelligent and sustainable approaches to managing water as a precious resource, we are helping to break the vicious circle of climate impacts, water scarcity and malnutrition.

One fact which we bear in mind is that today, 80 per cent of Latin America’s population lives in cities. Slum areas in particular are extremely vulnerable to heavy rains and floods. For this reason, we are actively involved in setting up effective early warning systems and are using targeted investments to create a secure infrastructure.
WHAT EXACTLY DO WE WANT TO DO?

→ Use German development cooperation finance in Latin America to increase the capacity for generating electricity by 2,500 megawatts from renewable energies.

→ Work with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to help renewable energies make a breakthrough: As the top donor to the Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Initiative (SEC-CI), contribute 10 million euros towards mobilising investments of over two billion euros.

→ Set up a geothermal development facility in Latin America together with other donors in order to mobilise private investments of one billion euros. The facility will reduce CO2 emissions by a total of 50 million tonnes and provide over two million people with clean and safe electricity at peak capacity.

→ Transform 10 initial and further training institutions in Latin America into centres of excellence for renewable energies and energy efficiency through intelligent networking.

→ Support 20 climate partnerships between German and Latin American municipalities.

→ Advise Honduras and El Salvador on the drafting of energy efficiency legislation.

→ Create 26,000 energy-efficient homes in Mexico.

→ Improve the state of nutrition of people in Bolivia and Guatemala through the sustainable management and efficient use of water as a resource and, as a result, increase the level of income generated from agriculture.

→ Invest more than 150 million euros in Peru to tackle the water scarcity that has been created by climate change.

→ Initiate 50 public-private partnerships to complement the social commitment of companies in environmental and climate protection in particular, but also in the area of sustainable economic development, food security, health and education. We will develop the most successful approaches further so as to create strategic partnerships.
5. Promoting development-oriented governance, involving civil society and strengthening social justice

Despite the fact that most of the countries in Latin America have a democratic system of government, allowing all sections in society to participate equally in the development process is a challenge which they continue to face. However, the foundations for ensuring social cohesion are often weak. Some countries still lack efficient, decentralised and inclusive governmental and administrative structures which are needed to be able to allow an adequate level of citizen participation. The indigenous population in particular often lacks fair opportunities and prospects in society. Exploitation of mineral deposits repeatedly leads to conflicts, especially if the rights of the indigenous population to consultation are ignored.

Good governance and participation by civil society are essential if social and economic development is to be inclusive. We therefore support the creation of decentralised structures of government and administration that operate effectively and are responsive to citizens’ concerns and encourage social participation and the self-determination of disadvantaged sections of the population.

Inefficient and opaque tax systems, tax evasion and corruption mean that many countries in Latin America lack the levels of government revenue needed to introduce a social policy. In order for governance to be development-oriented, these countries require public finance systems that are transparent, fair and efficient. Furthermore, such systems must allow resources to be mobilised which can then be used to finance inclusive social and economic development on a sustainable basis.

For this reason, the BMZ supports bilateral and regional programmes to promote responsible fiscal policies. In so doing, we are making a structural contribution to addressing social inequality, creating the scope for action to be taken on poverty reduction in reducing poverty and are helping to ensure that scarce public resources are used transparently, effectively and in a controlled manner in the partner countries.

The sharing of experiences between different countries on different approaches to social policy allows us to also support the development of national social welfare systems.
WHAT EXACTLY DO WE WANT TO DO?

→ Further improve the transparency and distributive justice of democratic systems in the Andean countries of Peru and Bolivia, as well as the opportunities they provide for participation, by means of programmes on government reform, decentralization and citizen participation.

→ **Strengthen government structures** in Guatemala, Honduras, Bolivia and Colombia, among other countries, via **Structural and Regional Policy Funds** (innovation funds), set standards for the observance of human rights, promote the fight against corruption and contribute to the respect of rule-of-law principles. Support civil society groups in Mexico in their major commitment to tackle violence and human rights violations.

→ **Strengthen the self-determination of the indigenous population**, increase access to justice for disadvantaged population groups and support the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and other human rights institutions.

→ **Support reforms to tax systems and public financial management** in Guatemala, El Salvador and other countries so as to create financial scope for greater social equity.

→ **Strengthen** independent and properly functioning courts of audit in the region.

→ Develop **innovative approaches for the sustainable financing of social welfare systems** together with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

→ **Strengthen involvement by civil society**: stage a forum with representatives of civil society and from the fields of politics and business on the social, ecological and human rights aspects involved in the extraction of raw materials.
6. Stamping out violence

The world’s highest murder rates and a high level of domestic violence, directed in particular against women and girls, reflect the way in which interests are asserted by resorting to violence. In Central America especially, the violence that accompanies drug trafficking and organised crime is one factor leading to the proliferation of brutal youth gangs. In Colombia, violent conflicts are continuing, even as the peace process is ongoing. Industrialised agriculture as well as investments in mining and energy projects frequently lead to conflicts. The serious environmental impact of such measures causes people to put up resistance, which in turn is met with violence and intimidation.

The extreme level of violence reduces the development opportunities of the affected countries considerably. The causes of the problem of violence are varied and often reflect unresolved conflicts that date from the past. These causes are exacerbated by a lack of distributive justice, unstable family relationships, insufficient educational and training opportunities as well as poor job prospects. Government capacity in the area of justice and citizen security is in many cases so weak that acts of violence often remain unpunished.

We are therefore supporting the countries of Latin America in their efforts to reduce the structural causes of the problem and strengthen their capacities for non-violent conflict management. In Central America, we are providing support in particular to the violence prevention pillar under the regional Central America Security Strategy.

WHAT EXACTLY DO WE WANT TO DO?

→ Create a brighter future for young people in Central America by promoting youth employment, educational opportunities and preventive work with young people.

→ Support the peace process in Colombia by making a firm commitment to work in close partnership within the framework of a Colombian post-conflict agenda.

→ Contribute to reconciliation and reparation measures in relation to human rights abuses in the countries emerging from civil war, namely Peru, Colombia and Guatemala.

→ Strengthen civil society – especially as part of the Civil Peace Service (CPS) – in measures for protecting human rights defenders, coming to terms with the past, supporting victims of violence and for non-violent conflict management.
Main thrusts of the BMZ’s Latin America policy

→ Latin America is a strategic partner on an equal footing, and has shared values and interests with Germany. The continent plays a fundamental role in international environmental and climate protection. We are therefore intensifying our cooperation with the countries in the region so as to create a partnership – of interests and values – for sustainable development.

→ Many countries in Latin America have now become emerging economies and are assuming responsibility for attaining global and regional development goals. We are therefore able to use many innovative tools in our development policy. We coordinate closely with other donor organisations and support the policy of our partner countries. This is what makes our development policy with Latin America so successful and effective.

→ Latin America is our most important partner in the conservation of the tropical rainforest. The continent has the world’s largest expanse of tropical rainforest which is home to over 40 per cent of all biodiversity. Such riches should be preserved. We play an active role in ensuring the protection and sustainable use of the Amazon region and in creating a Mesoamerican Biological Corridor to link areas of protected forest from Mexico to Panama.

→ Together with Latin America we would like to introduce a global energy transition. In the fight against the causes of climate change, major investments will be made here which will shape the climate footprint of the future. We are therefore supporting the restructuring of the Latin America energy sector towards renewable energies and are promoting technology transfer based on market principles. We would like to better harness the enormous potential of geothermal energy. Our approach in dealing with the impacts of climate change takes account of both people and the natural world.

→ Latin America is the continent with the highest levels of social inequality. We are therefore encouraging greater citizen participation in political decisions and are strengthening the capacity of public finance systems so as to enable our partners to finance their social welfare policies on a sustainable basis.

→ Latin America is the most violent region on earth. In addition to focusing on the structural causes of the problem by creating prospects and alternatives for those young people who are willing to resort to violence, we are supporting the peace and reconciliation processes underway in countries that have emerged from civil war.
Map of Latin America with the BMZ’s partner countries

**green** → Development cooperation with partner country in the context of bilateral programmes

**yellow** → Development cooperation with partner country in the context of regional or thematic programmes

The boundaries and names shown on this map do not represent a statement on the legal status of any territories or borders.
Imprint

PUBLISHED BY THE
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ),
Division for public relations, digital communication
and visitors’ service

EDITED BY THE
BMZ, Regional development policy; Central America;
Caribbean; Mexico

DESIGN AND LAYOUT
MediaCompany – Agentur für Kommunikation GmbH

AS AT
July 2015

ADRESSES OF THE BMZ OFFICES
→ BMZ Bonn
Dahlmannstraße 4
53113 Bonn
Germany
Tel. +49 (0) 228 99 535 - 0
Fax +49 (0) 228 99 535 - 3500
→ BMZ Berlin im Europahaus
Stresemannstraße 94
10963 Berlin
Germany
Tel. +49 (0) 30 18 535 - 0
Fax +49 (0) 30 18 535 - 2501

CONTACT
poststelle@bmz.bund.de
www.bmz.de