



# Comments from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development on the DEval Evaluation Report “Sexual and reproductive health and rights. Evaluation of the development-policy area of intervention”

## Topic and time frame of the evaluation

The BMZ welcomes the report by the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) “Sexual and reproductive health and rights. Evaluation of the development-policy area of intervention” (2025). Especially in view of the increasing global opposition to women’s rights, including their right to bodily autonomy and gender equality, sound analyses and strategic foresight are more important than ever.

Strengthening the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of girls, women and youth in all their diversity is key to developing just societies and to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The BMZ is working worldwide to increase access to education, information and health services that enable bodily autonomy and family planning. Its interventions are aligned with the respective priorities of partner countries and with the BMZ’s Core Area Strategy.

DEval’s evaluation assesses Germany’s bilateral development cooperation activities between 2011 and 2022. However, a large portion of the interventions funded by the BMZ in the area of SRHR are implemented via multilateral actors, such as the United Nations (United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA) and the World Bank (Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents). These are not included in this DEval evaluation.

The evaluation takes a mixed methods approach, which combines data collection from case study

countries (Guinea, Yemen, Cameroon, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Togo), project evaluations, literature analysis, secondary analysis and scenario analysis. The evaluation aims to investigate and assess the implementation of SRHR interventions and provide recommendations in order to enhance the area of SRHR within German development cooperation.

## Findings of the evaluation

The evaluation shows that most interventions between 2011 and 2022 aimed at improving health services – with positive results regarding access to healthcare and contraception and reducing early pregnancies. During the period under review, there was less focus on promoting sexual and reproductive rights, such as the right to sexual and bodily autonomy and bodily integrity. Nevertheless, the projects targeting this area showed largely positive results, such as greater awareness among women and girls of their rights. Far-reaching changes in the social environment, long-term behavioural change and reductions in gender-based violence were less commonly observed during the period under review, however. In practice, members of marginalised groups still faced barriers to access, e.g. to health services or products.

## DEval recommendations and BMZ assessment

DEval makes seven recommendations, including:

- Stronger incorporation of sexual and reproductive rights into targets and

programmes, with context-specific approaches and standardised indicators.

- Promoting particularly marginalised groups and fostering participation.
- Better coordination between technical and financial cooperation.
- Making structured use of available evidence regarding the effectiveness of interventions.
- Applying strategic foresight to recognise dynamic political and social developments in advance.

The BMZ would like to thank DEval for the comprehensive evaluation and the resulting recommendations.

The BMZ would like to emphasise that, as part of a holistic approach and in the context of its feminist development policy, it has, since 2021, significantly increased the number of bilateral and multilateral projects it supports which promote gender equality and prioritise the rights of women and girls. In the context of its bilateral and multilateral activities, the BMZ will focus in future on rights such as the right to sexual and bodily autonomy and bodily integrity. In view of the high levels of maternal and newborn mortality, teenage pregnancies and the lack of sufficient family planning, the need to promote high-quality, affordable and universally accessible SRHR services remains urgent.

The BMZ will also respond to changing political conditions. The Global North and Global South are both equally impacted by growing anti-gender and anti-rights movements – often the result of rises in populism, nationalism and authoritarianism. It is therefore essential to strengthen in a holistic manner the sexual and reproductive

health and rights of women and girls in all their diversity, both in international processes and in specific country contexts.

Going forward, the BMZ will primarily address this issue as a shared global challenge in the context of political dialogue, through international agenda-setting, in the negotiation of international frameworks and via multilateral processes and contributions.

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