



SUPPORTING GENDER EQUALITY IN POST-CONFLICT CONTEXTS

2021

German development cooperation has set itself the goal of contributing worldwide to gender equality, the management of conflicts, and peaceful and inclusive societies. This evaluation examines the extent to which the processes of German bilateral official development cooperation are suited to the purpose of supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts. To this end, alongside other types of data collection, case studies were conducted in Colombia, Liberia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The evaluation finds that the procedures for gender mainstreaming are essentially adequate for anchoring the promotion of gender equality in post-conflict contexts. However, in practice the methods and analytical tools are rarely used in a way that systematically anchors the gender-conflict nexus in the projects. This means that some of the potential for generating effects conducive to gender equality is being forfeited. The evaluation therefore develops concrete recommendations on how the BMZ's steering and the work of the state implementing organisations can be improved, how the structures and processes of official development cooperation can be refined, and how the necessary knowledge and the relevant competence can be consolidated and strengthened.

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Authors

Dr Sabine Brüntrup-Seidemann
Verena Gantner
Dr Angela Heucher
Ida Wiborg

Responsible

Dr Martin Bruder

Design

MedienMélange:Kommunikation!, Hamburg
www.medienmelange.de

Translation

Deborah Shannon

Photo credits

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Fritz-Schäffer-Straße 26
53113 Bonn, Germany

Phone: +49 (0)228 33 69 07-0

E-mail: info@DEval.org

www.DEval.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background, objectives, and object of the evaluation

As gender equality (SDG 5) and peacebuilding (SDG 16) are both key aspects of sustainable global development (United Nations, 2015), they are also goals of international and German development cooperation. The achievement of these two goals poses ongoing challenges for the international community: progress is only slowly being made towards the realisation of gender equality, yet at the same time, the number of violent conflicts has risen in recent years. The present evaluation takes up this thematic area and analyses to what extent the gender mainstreaming process used in German bilateral official development cooperation is suited to post-conflict contexts and supports the planning and implementation of activities that contribute to gender equality and the building of peaceful and inclusive societies.

The evaluation devotes particular interest to the intersection of these two goals. The nexus approach calls attention to the fact that all genders¹ experience violent conflict in different ways. While men mostly tend to be involved in conflicts as active combatants, women are more likely to suffer from its indirect consequences. One of these can be poorer health care, with the result that armed conflicts reduce women's life expectancy even more than men's. Moreover, in the context of armed conflicts, even outside of direct combat situations women (more than men) are frequently affected by violence, including sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, other social characteristics such as religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation can contribute to multiple or intersecting experiences of discrimination.

At the same time, women and men are confronted with different and sometimes changing gender roles and norms in the different phases of a conflict. For example, in some conflicts women may be active as combatants. Or they may take charge of managing the family's finances in their husband's absence. Based on this softening of traditional gender roles and norms, it is possible that the post-conflict context – despite the frequent persistence of threats and stresses – may also yield opportunities to redefine gender roles and norms. When societies are coming to terms with their recent conflict-affected past, negotiating how they will live together in future and which ground rules will apply, establishing new institutions and reforming existing ones, it can be possible to strengthen human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion in these processes. Development cooperation can support this.

For development cooperation, there are both normative and instrumental reasons to incorporate the gender-conflict nexus² and the resulting gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests of women and men into the planning and implementation of development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts. On the normative side, firstly, these are UN Security Council resolution 1325 and its follow-up resolutions (United Nations Security Council, 2000, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2013a, 2013b, 2015a, 2019a, 2019b) in which the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda was established, along with other multilateral agreements and national self-commitments on the thematic area of the gender-conflict nexus, which constitute the normative frame of reference for German development cooperation and for the strategies of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Turning to instrumental motivations, secondly, some studies have shown that gender-sensitive approaches in peacebuilding and conflict prevention increase the chances that success will be more sustainable; also that interventions are more effective if – ideally right from the start – they address the different gender-specific needs and interests (Demeritt et al., 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2015; Shair-Rosenfield and Wood, 2017; UN

¹ This evaluation is based on a non-binary understanding of gender; going beyond the masculine and the feminine, gender identities are understood as diverse and fluid. At the same time, within development cooperation practice gender is mostly thought about in terms of the categories “women” and “men” (within which “girls” and “boys” are also subsumed). The present evaluation reflects this practice by focusing on the diverse experiences of women and men. While the evaluation team is conscious of the limitations of this approach, a merely linguistic modification to broaden it beyond “women” and “men” would distort the results of the data collection and not do justice to the theme.

² The term “gender-conflict nexus” refers to the inherent connection between gender and conflict; that is to say, experiences of conflict differ according to gender. This gender-conflict nexus has consequences for German development cooperation, since this should deal sensitively and appropriately with the different needs and interests of the genders that result from their specific experiences of conflict.

Women, 2015). This is particularly evident if, for example, untreated traumas prevent women or men from participating successfully in project activities, or if due to a conflict the target groups include numerous women-headed households and gender-specific barriers prevent them from participating in development cooperation measures.

The German government has anchored the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda in its policy guidelines on “Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace” (Bundesregierung, 2017a) and the joint interministerial strategies that have emerged from them to support (1) security sector reform (Bundesregierung, 2019a), (2) dealing with the past and reconciliation (transitional justice) (Bundesregierung, 2019b) and (3) promoting the rule of law (Bundesregierung, 2019c). In its National Action Plan (NAP II), it has described the realisation of the Agenda in more detail (Bundesregierung, 2017b).³ A study commissioned by the Federal Foreign Office also reveals that Germany’s commitment to the implementation of Resolution 1325 has increased since 2018, but that the international community does not perceive Germany as an active trailblazer. On a similar note, it finds that in comparison to other international actors who have been working on the issue for decades, Germany’s approach does not yet display the same consistency and coherence (Auswärtiges Amt, 2020a).

In its strategy papers on “Development for Peace and Security” (BMZ, 2013a) and “Gender Equality in German Development Policy” (Gender Equality Strategy) (BMZ, 2014a) which are key reference documents, the BMZ emphasises that both policy themes are central overarching goals of German development cooperation. This is supported by the second Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020 (Gender Action Plan, GAP II) (BMZ, 2016a), which implements the standards of the Gender Equality Strategy and defines priority themes and strategic objectives. From this it can be concluded, firstly, that the thematic area should be part of the policy dialogue, and secondly, that projects should be designed and implemented in a gender- and conflict-sensitive manner. If gender equality is a principal or significant objective, then projects in post-conflict countries should be shaped to reflect this in every phase – from conception and early planning, through definition of the target group, to reporting and evaluation.

Even though the gender-conflict nexus is relevant in many development cooperation contexts, there are only a few evaluations which analyse how donors respond to this nexus or address it in their projects. Since many current and future challenges in post-conflict contexts can only be dealt with successfully by German development cooperation if these linkages are taken into consideration, it is relevant and useful to carry out an evaluation of the extent to which the nexus is included in the planning and implementation of projects in post-conflict contexts.

In order to assess whether gender mainstreaming is being translated into practice successfully, two dimensions were examined:

- The first dimension covers whether the process as such allows the actors to identify and integrate women’s and men’s gender- and conflict-specific experiences, needs and interests within the framework of a German development cooperation project (process dimension). This comprises the levels of (a) planning and (b) output (activities).
- The second dimension encompasses whether the intended gender- and conflict-related effects actually occur (outcome dimension).

Both dimensions are indispensable before it is possible to talk about successful gender mainstreaming.

The object of the evaluation is thus the process of gender mainstreaming used by German bilateral official development cooperation in post-conflict contexts. The point of gender mainstreaming is to allow the actors involved (especially the BMZ and the state implementing organisations) to adopt and apply a gender perspective. Bearing in mind the specificities of post-conflict contexts, it is of the utmost importance that the process enables actors to identify and integrate those needs and interests of all genders arising from their

³ NAP II (2017-2020) was valid up to the end of 2020. NAP III (2021-2024) is currently being developed by the ministries involved, under the coordination of the Federal Foreign Office.

experiences of conflict, and to plan and implement projects in a gender- and conflict-sensitive manner. The success of the gender mainstreaming process in German development cooperation is ultimately demonstrated in the form of positive contributions to gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

The process of gender mainstreaming was analysed on the basis of a total of 47 projects in 11 post-conflict contexts. The evaluation focused on projects of German bilateral official development cooperation as well as measures under other budget titles, such as Special Initiatives (title: SI) or Transitional Development Assistance (title: TDA), being implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the development bank of the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), and hence in a broader sense subject to the same steering logic as bilateral official development cooperation. Multilateral or civil society projects were not part of the evaluation; a civil society perspective was included, however, both within the composition of the evaluation's reference group and by means of interviews in Germany and the partner countries. Despite the focus on post-conflict contexts, many of the evaluation findings can also be applied in part at least to gender mainstreaming in other contexts, since the process of planning and implementation of projects for all partner countries follows a similar course.

The findings and recommendations of the evaluation are addressed on the one hand to the BMZ for the steering of projects and the ongoing strategic development of gender mainstreaming, and on the other hand to the implementing organisations GIZ and KfW, which are responsible for practical implementation. They are to be supported in changing structures and processes in such a way that the goals of German development cooperation in post-conflict contexts can better be achieved and that, in the medium term, a greater contribution is made to supporting gender equality. In the course of the "BMZ 2030" reorientation process (Doc. 162),⁴ corresponding reference and anchoring points are being established via the quality criteria "Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion" and "Conflict sensitivity" and via the new strategy on the core area of "Peace and social cohesion".

Methodological approach

The evaluation is based on a gender-sensitive, conflict-sensitive and human-rights-based approach and heeds the do-no-harm principle. Since one of the aims of the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) is to contribute, through its evaluation work, to strengthening evaluation capacities in the partner countries of German development cooperation as well as in Germany itself, two workshops on the evaluation approach known as Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender, Equality, Environment and Marginalised Voices (ISE4GEMS) (Stephens et al., 2018) were organised in Colombia and Germany as part of this evaluation. ISE4GEMS is a human-rights-based and gender-responsive evaluation approach developed by UN Women. It is explicitly underpinned by systemic thinking and, in addition to the gender dimension, also pays particular heed to marginalised groups and environmental aspects.

At the same time, the evaluation follows a theory-based evaluation approach. It centres on a theory of change which charts the assumed process flows and causal pathways that lead to achievement of the expected results. In this case, the theory of change describes how gender mainstreaming is implemented in the process of planning, implementation and post-implementation in the German development cooperation projects carried out in post-conflict contexts and how this is intended to generate effects that promote gender equality. This approach makes it possible to compare the conceptual-theoretical assumptions about effects with the reality of practical implementation in German development cooperation.

⁴ In order to preserve the confidentiality of unpublished documents passed on to the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval), these are cited in the text in the form "Doc." plus a consecutive number and are not listed in the Bibliography.

With regard to post-conflict status,⁵ 11 countries (Burundi, Colombia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Ukraine) were identified as having experienced violent conflicts of high intensity in the period 2000-2015. For seven countries, a desk study (26 projects) was conducted in which project documents and evaluations were analysed to determine whether and to what extent they coherently address the gender-conflict nexus and/or describe the (successful) promotion of gender equality when reporting on project outcomes. In addition, detailed case studies (21 projects) were undertaken in four countries (Colombia, Liberia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). These countries were selected according to the following criteria: (1) relevance of the portfolio with regard to both gender equality and peace and security, (2) volume of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding allocation, (3) existence of different types of cooperation, and (4) each location in a different region. The case studies form the core of the study about the practical implementation of the gender mainstreaming process.

The German bilateral official development cooperation projects we studied had been assigned a policy marker for peace and security (PS) and for gender equality (GE) as a “significant” (i.e. subsidiary) or a “principal” objective (PS1 or PS2 and GE1 or GE2). They were active in the different priority areas applicable in the respective countries, particularly in the sectors of “Peacebuilding and conflict prevention”, “Sustainable economic development”, “Health” and “Vocational education and training” but also in “Energy” and “Infrastructure”, and were delivered by either GIZ or KfW. Due to the focus of the evaluation, projects financed via the Special Initiative on Displacement and via Transitional Development Assistance were also included in the analysis.

A multi-method design was used to perform extensive analyses of primary and secondary data. BMZ strategy papers and procedural documents (such as manuals and guidelines) were analysed to review how they anchored the gender-conflict nexus (65 documents), and a total of 344 project documents (including preliminary appraisals, module proposals and evaluations) were analysed, in order to be able to comment on the quality of implementation of the gender mainstreaming process.

In addition, 302 interviews were conducted, 258 of which related to the case studies and were conducted with the various stakeholders (BMZ, GIZ, KfW, political partners, local implementing partners)⁶ in order to survey their views on the process. The other 44 related to the desk study countries and involved decision-makers in the BMZ and the implementing organisations. Furthermore, 90 representatives of the target groups were invited to contribute their perspective⁷ by means of a storytelling approach. These interviewees identified the greatest perceived change in their personal lives, and how the development cooperation measure in question may have contributed to it.

A portfolio analysis, which was based on the database of the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) supplemented by data from the BMZ’s list of measures, made it possible, firstly, to compare the BMZ’s commitment to gender equality on the global level with that of other international donors; secondly, it served as a basis for assessing the ministry’s efforts on the gender-conflict nexus in the 11 post-conflict countries. Triangulating the findings of the different methods allowed for deeper insights and more valid results than would have been possible if only one method had been adopted.

⁵ For the purposes of delimiting its object of study, the evaluation defines the status of a post-conflict context in terms of two criteria: (a) a country or an area within a country has been affected by a massive outbreak of violence or war (intensity), and (b) the last outbreak of widespread violence occurred (taking 2018 as the baseline year) at least three but no more than 18 years previously (time).

⁶ When considering partners, the evaluation distinguishes between political partners and implementing partners. While the political partners are principally involved in negotiations between governments (and not necessarily in the implementation of projects), the implementing partners deliver projects locally and are supported by German development cooperation in the implementation of programmes and projects. Responsibility for implementation rests with the respective implementing organisation, although in the case of Financial Cooperation, KfW is less intensively involved in implementation.

⁷ “Storytelling” is a survey method in which respondents are asked to give their views (“story”) about an issue, in this case the “changes” that have “occurred in their life situation due to the projects”, within the structure of narrative interviews. The method allows interviewees to decide for themselves which topics they wish to mention (Davies and Dart, 2005).

Overall assessment

The evaluation finds that the procedures currently specified for gender mainstreaming in German bilateral official development cooperation are fundamentally suited to the purpose of supporting gender equality. Studies at the outcome level also show that in areas such as “overcoming trauma” and “increasing income”, individual projects achieve relevant outcomes which, as well as satisfying practical needs, also contribute to empowering women and changing gender roles.

However, in practice the methods and analytical tools are rarely used in a way that systematically anchors the gender-conflict nexus in the projects. As a result, gender mainstreaming in German bilateral official development cooperation in post-conflict contexts is only partially successful. Therefore the potential of the projects is not being maximised in a systematic enough way. A considerable gap exists between the BMZ’s declarations of intent and commitments, on the one hand, and how these are actually put into practice in the given development cooperation projects, on the other.

The following barriers stand in the way of more effective anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus in bilateral development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts:

- The BMZ’s Gender Equality Strategy, with its three-pronged approach consisting of gender mainstreaming, empowerment and development policy dialogue, emphasises that the ministry considers gender equality a goal in its own right and a guiding principle for its work. However, it is one of many cross-cutting themes that must be borne in mind when drafting development project concepts and realising them in practice. A tension exists between the multiplicity of cross-cutting themes and the high workload of staff, with the result that not all themes can be dealt with in equal measure, and priorities have to be set.
- The anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus depends very heavily on the commitment and interest of the responsible staff members in the BMZ divisions running the projects (especially the country officers), and of those in the two implementing organisations. Weighed against a multitude of other themes that have to be dealt with in the course of project conception and implementation, the theme of “gender equality” often ends up as a low priority. The evaluation found that commitment is greater when staff have prior experience and knowledge in the thematic area of “gender and conflict”. Overall, the competence of staff from the BMZ and from implementing organisations with regard to the gender-conflict nexus can be characterised as heterogeneous.
- In the country strategies, the promotion of gender equality or the gender-conflict nexus within priority areas is not usually anchored by means of targets or indicators. As a result, this important steering document does not make explicit the binding requirement to contribute to certain “gender objectives” against the backdrop of the post-conflict context. Consequently, since the objectives from the country strategy are reflected in the wording of programme objectives and these in turn are reflected in the wording of module objectives, when it comes to developing module proposals, there is no clear framework specifying which “gender objectives” a project should contribute to within its priority area.
- Despite the BMZ’s goal, described above, of supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts, there is only one project in the countries we studied and during the time frame of the study in which this theme and peacebuilding are pursued – in a single phase – as joint principal objectives (PS2/GE2 marker). This constitutes a challenge, because PS2/GE2 projects are geared towards working specifically on the gender-conflict nexus with the political partners, the implementing partners, or indeed the target groups.
- Knowledge and practical experience on supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts may be obtainable from German bilateral official development cooperation projects or indeed from other donors. However, staff of the implementing organisations (especially in the partner countries) and the BMZ do not find it easy to access, notwithstanding the approaches to internal knowledge management that exist, within the implementing organisations especially. It follows that those planning and implementing projects are not always able to benefit fully from the body of experience available.

Assessment against OECD-DAC criteria

The findings of the analysis relating to the evaluation questions were assessed using the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria of “relevance”, “coherence”, “effectiveness” and “efficiency”. German development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts frequently concentrate on reconstruction, and therefore activities are often geared more towards immediate needs. Moreover, the present evaluation is first and foremost a process evaluation and did not look at effects occurring beyond the immediate scope of the given project. For these reasons, the criteria of “sustainability” and “impact” were not an explicit part of the analysis.

The evaluation finds the criterion of “relevance”, i.e. the question of whether the procedure and the projects themselves are consistent with normative and strategic frameworks, target group needs and appropriate design, to be “partially fulfilled”. The assessment firstly covers the relevance of the procedure in light of the normative and strategic framework documents as well as the needs of the target groups. This is rated as “mostly fulfilled”. Secondly, and more importantly, it considers the relevance of the projects actually implemented to an improvement in gender equality, which is rated as only “partially fulfilled”.

Coherence, which means that the procedure and the projects are embedded in the context of German development cooperation as a whole (internal coherence) and of the activities of development partners and other donors (external coherence), is rated as “partially fulfilled”, whereas the effectiveness of the procedure and the projects in German development cooperation is rated as “mostly fulfilled”. This assessment is based on examining the extent to which the actual procedure implemented corresponds to the intended process, i.e. the extent to which German bilateral official development cooperation projects achieve the BMZ’s self-set objective of contributing to gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

A further aspect examined for the “efficiency” criterion was the extent to which the procedure for planning and implementing gender-related activities leads to economical and timely outcomes regarding the promotion of gender equality. This criterion is assessed as “partially fulfilled”.

Main findings

Anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus in relevant strategies

In its policy guidelines on “Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace” (Bundesregierung, 2017a) and in the NAP II (Bundesregierung, 2017b), the German government has set itself the goal of implementing the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda. Consequently the themes of “Gender” and “Conflict” are included in the relevant BMZ strategies on “Gender Equality in German Development Policy” (BMZ, 2014a) and on “Development for Peace and Security” (BMZ, 2013a). In the GAP II (BMZ, 2016a), “armed conflict, peacebuilding and displacement” is even treated as a sectoral thematic area in its own right, which underlines its importance.

Even though there are indications in more recent strategies of the German government and the BMZ that progress has been made conceptionally and gender-specific needs are anchored in many thematic areas, the documents currently available still do not make any such linkage between gender and conflict. Thus, in the 2017 Guidelines and in the NAP II, the issues are largely dealt with separately, while in the GAP II, a direct linkage between gender and conflict only occurs in the area of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls in violent conflicts. The gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests in post-conflict contexts go much further, however, and encompass such aspects as (new) income-earning opportunities, access to training, land or factors of production, and co-determination at the municipal level.

In the country strategies, which are binding upon the implementing organisations and indicative for module proposals, support for gender equality is not usually being anchored with targets and indicators in the various priority areas, although this is stipulated in the GAP II, and in the Gender Equality Strategy that has been in effect since 2014. One reason for this might be that the country strategies have not yet been updated since the Gender Action Plan entered into force.

The absence of gender targets and indicators has several consequences:

- Firstly, there is no clear reference framework specifying which gender equality objectives a module should contribute to in its priority area, taking account of the specific challenges of the post-conflict context⁸, because the objectives of a country strategy are supposed to be reflected in the wording of programme objectives, and these in turn in the wording of module objectives. It is rather the case that the “gender objective” is defined from scratch in each new module proposal. For the purposes of a coordinated German development cooperation approach to supporting gender equality in a country, this is inefficient and inhibits any potential synergies between the respective projects.
- Secondly, the lack of gender objectives in the country strategy makes it more difficult to ensure continuity in the work on gender equality in view of the rotation of BMZ country officers.
- Thirdly, it constrains the BMZ’s ability to supply information about the contribution made by German development cooperation to supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts, and hence also on progress in implementing UNSCR 1325 and the corresponding NAP.

The portfolio

The portfolio analysis encompassed projects financed via bilateral Technical and Financial Cooperation, the Special Initiative on Displacement, and Transitional Development Assistance. It shows that in the 11 selected countries, the vast majority of funding went to projects that pursued support for gender equality as a subsidiary objective (GE1 marker). In relation to the total financing in these countries, the share allocated to German bilateral official development cooperation with a GE1 marker has risen since 2008 and remained largely unchanged at that level since 2011. The adoption of the BMZ’s Gender Equality Strategy and Gender Action Plan have not led to any demonstrable increase.

For the BMZ portfolio in the 11 post-conflict countries during the period under review, the share of projects that pursue support for gender equality as their principal objective (GE2 marker) is low. Since 2014, they have constantly received less than 3 per cent of the total disbursements. During the period under review, in the 11 countries there was only one project with the PS2/GE2 marker, indicating joint principal objectives.

The evaluation considers this to be a problem: as gender roles and norms are embedded in society and its institutions, a need is seen in post-conflict contexts to work specifically on the gender-conflict nexus with political partners, local implementing partners and target groups, and to support the implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda, which is also acknowledged by many of the partner countries.

At the same time, it is reasonable to assume that the goals of “peacebuilding” and “gender equality” can mutually reinforce each other. Supporting the latter, overcoming images of masculinity that promote violence and preventing gender-based violence represent a direct contribution to peacebuilding. Establishing dialogue formats and participatory and inclusive processes can, in turn, contribute to supporting gender equality. All of these would be proper fields of action for a PS2/GE2 project.

It must be noted as a caveat, however, that there can be circumstances in which the promotion of a PS2/GE2 project does not seem opportune, be this for political reasons in the partner country, due to the specific orientation of the German portfolio, or because of other donors’ engagement in this area. Therefore, in countries with a post-conflict context, the promotion of such a project should be carefully examined and the resulting decision, including the justification, should be documented.

⁸ GE0 projects, i.e. projects that have no implications for the thematic area of “gender”, must heed the do-no-harm principle; in other words, they must ensure that they do not increase inequality between the genders.

Planning and implementation of projects

The evaluation finds that the formal process of planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation, including its analytical tools, such as peace and conflict assessments, gender analyses and target group and stakeholder analyses, is essentially adequate for anchoring the gender-conflict nexus in the projects. It enables the various stakeholders to come to grips with the thematic area of “gender”, and as a result – to varying degrees – to plan, adequately resource and implement gender-related activities in post-conflict contexts.

Commitment to the theme on the part of all stakeholders (and primarily – because of their role-model function and decision-making powers – the managers or decision-makers in the BMZ and in the implementing organisations) is a necessary prerequisite, but is only present to a limited extent; the same applies to the requisite systems to incentivise such commitment. However, this is not necessarily attributable to a lack of interest but rather, to high workload due to all the themes that need to be taken into account in the planning and implementation of projects. The consequence is that key stakeholders both in the BMZ and in the implementing organisations do not prioritise the thematic area in a form that promotes effective implementation, over and above formal anchoring in projects.

An important gateway point for the anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus in projects is the request for and ensuing discussion of the preliminary appraisal at the beginning of the conception phase of a project. This is because, at this early stage, adjustments are still being made and can be incorporated into the subsequent project appraisal. Once the module proposal has been worked out, the project has been designed in detail and intensive discussions with the partners have taken place, it is very cumbersome to go back and make further substantive changes later on.

The analysis of the anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus in the module proposals of the GE1 and GE2 projects we studied revealed that, in most cases, these only fulfil the minimum standards with regard to gender. This means that gender equality is mentioned in the relevant places, gender- and conflict-specific needs are discussed at least briefly, and gender-related indicators are formulated at the outcome and output levels. Often, however, these mostly quantitative indicators only stipulate that women should participate in defined activities; sometimes they also contain a qualitative reference to gender. Moreover, only a small proportion of projects report data disaggregated by gender, despite the fact that standards specifying this are in place. The BMZ has recognised the problem of defining indicators and commissioned a study in 2019 to develop proposals for making improvements.

Although the recommendations from analytical tools such as gender analysis or peace and conflict assessment are partially incorporated into the module proposal, they rarely elaborate on the linkage between gender and conflict. This means that the specific needs and interests of the different genders in post-conflict contexts are rarely named explicitly, and are not therefore incorporated sufficiently into project planning. The results matrix often proves to be unspecific on the matter of how the project is to make a concrete contribution to gender equality.

It is striking that the potential of projects for the transformation of gender roles and norms seldom comes to bear. Hence, the opportunity to incorporate the gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests of the target groups into the planning of projects, and to resource them appropriately, is not sufficiently utilised. As an additional consequence, some pressing post-conflict problems such as the traumatisation of parts of the target groups go unrecognised, even though dealing with these can be a vital prerequisite that enables the target groups to participate in the project activities successfully, or at all.

Some projects have recognised gender competence and conflict sensitivity as important criteria for their work in post-conflict contexts and have therefore established these as selection criteria for local implementing partners. This is an appropriate procedure to do justice to the specificities of the post-conflict context, provided that suitable implementing partners are available.

In many post-conflict contexts, sexual and gender-based violence is widespread as part of a continuum of violence after the conflict has ended. This is an environment to which development cooperation projects must react, in order to minimise the risk that the projects could leave target groups or staff exposed to sexual violence or exploitation. While prevention measures in the form of awareness-raising workshops are quite

widespread and the majority of staff rate them positively, gaps are found in the provision of complaint mechanisms and in awareness of their existence. Above all, the target groups are not sufficiently well informed about complaint mechanisms. Furthermore, there are instances where the respective responsibilities are unclear. This is not conducive to the timely and consistent institutionalisation of such a system in line with the relevant recommendations of the OECD-DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance (OECD DAC, 2019a).

Knowledge and experience

Knowledge and practical experience on supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts may be obtainable from German bilateral official development cooperation projects or indeed from other donors. However, staff of the implementing organisations (especially in the partner countries) and the BMZ do not find it easy to access. At the same time, however, knowledge and practical experience are found to be key factors for addressing the gender-conflict nexus appropriately within projects. Indeed, the evaluation found that better-informed staff turn out to be better champions of the theme.

The different organisations' offers of further training on gender equality in post-conflict contexts were dissimilar at the time of data collection. At the BMZ, the topic is part of the mandatory preparatory programme for new staff. KfW offers its staff further training courses on gender, which also cover the gender-conflict nexus. These are obligatory for new staff and entrants coming from different careers, but not for individuals who have already been working at the bank for some time and frequently hold decision-making roles or quality assurance responsibilities. Similarly at GIZ, which anchors the thematic area of "gender" comprehensively within its organisation and provides a broad range of training through the Academy for International Cooperation, participation in relevant course offerings is not mandatory. Moreover, these courses are not as yet tailored to the specific challenges of working in post-conflict contexts.

Both intra- and inter-organisational learning pose a challenge. Although the exchange of learning experiences is enshrined in the reporting system, such exchange barely takes place between the BMZ and the implementing organisations regarding their experience with the gender-conflict nexus. As a result, experience and knowledge can only be used unsystematically for the planning and implementation of projects. At the same time, there is nevertheless a great need for the exchange of practical experience on how gender mainstreaming activities can be effectively implemented within development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts.

The new quality criterion "Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion" provides an opportunity for the various organisations to offer a course concept with, ideally, mandatory training for staff with country and thematic responsibilities within those organisations. For example, the BMZ plans to integrate further training on the quality criterion "Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion" into existing offerings such as the mandatory preparatory programme for new staff members. It is crucial that as many decision-makers as possible take part in relevant further training on this thematic area.

Outcomes with regard to gender equality

The evaluation finds that the projects mostly address practical gender- and conflict-specific needs. In doing this – and particularly where it is done by promoting income-generating activities – they also have indirect effects on gender roles and norms. Especially in the narrative interviews with the target groups, a majority of the women reported that their self-esteem had been strengthened by participating in the project, and that having their own income had upgraded their role in the family and community.

Few of the projects under review are carrying out activities which specifically deal with gender relations and gender roles in the post-conflict context, and which sensitise women and men to the possibility of non-violent relations within society. These activities – in the examples that exist – are rated very positively by the target groups. An important topic for post-conflict contexts, trauma work, also shows effects in relation to women's self-esteem. According to the women's own statements, only this work empowered them to regain control of their own lives.

In both areas, however, German development cooperation fell short of its potential in the projects under review, since these thematic areas were not systematically planned for or implemented. It was also rare for projects to deal with the strategic interests of women and men in post-conflict contexts. The evaluation findings therefore suggest that the projects studied might have had more potential for effects with regard to gender equality than were in fact realised.

Recommendations

There follows a summary of the evaluation's recommendations (a) on steering by the BMZ, by means of strategies and portfolio design, (b) on structures and processes for the planning and implementation of projects, and (c) on knowledge and competence. An account of how the recommendations are derived from the findings is given in Chapter 7.

Steering by the BMZ

Recommendation 1:

As part of the “BMZ 2030” reform strategy, the BMZ should anchor the promotion of gender equality in post-conflict contexts and the implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda at the strategic level. To this end,

- the **strategy on the core area of “Peace and social cohesion”** should deal with the issue of “supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts” thematically and, as far as possible, operationalise it with a corresponding indicator, and
- the **performance profiles for the quality criteria “Conflict sensitivity” and “Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion”** should incorporate the gender-conflict nexus as an important theme.

Recommendation 2:

The BMZ should consistently anchor the promotion of gender equality in its country strategies for post-conflict countries. In its priority areas (since “BMZ 2030”: “core areas”) it should define targets and indicators referring to gender equality. These should be suitable for monitoring and assessing the achievement of this objective.

Recommendation 3:

In post-conflict contexts, the BMZ should support the preparation of a countrywide gender analysis as a basis for defining gender targets in the individual priority areas (since “BMZ 2030”: “core areas”) of the country strategy. The countrywide gender analyses should be prepared in coordination with other EU donors where possible and used collectively for a better coordinated approach. They should serve as the starting point for more focused gender analyses at module level in future by reflecting the countrywide framework and addressing specific challenges of post-conflict contexts, such as sexual gender-based violence and traumatisation of the population.

Recommendation 4:

In every post-conflict country the BMZ should examine whether to promote a PS2/GE2 project that pursues peace, security and the promotion of gender equality as its principal objectives and supports the implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda. If the outcome of this examination is negative, this should be documented, including the justification.

Structures and processes for planning and implementation

Recommendation 5:

When a preliminary appraisal is requested for projects in post-conflict contexts with a provisional GE1 or GE2 marker, the BMZ should insist that the implementing organisations clearly articulate the approach whereby a project will respond to the gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests of the target groups and contribute to gender equality.

Recommendation 6:

The implementing organisations should ensure that the promotion of gender equality is coherently anchored in all sections of the module proposal for projects with a GE1 or GE2 marker, and should operationalise these objectives with one or more meaningful gender indicators. In order to allow the BMZ to monitor this anchoring, the two implementing organisations should routinely provide the responsible country officers with outlines of the recommendations from peace and conflict assessments and gender analyses.

Recommendation 7:

The implementing organisations should include gender-and-conflict competence as a selection criterion when choosing local implementing partners for GE1 or GE2 projects in post-conflict contexts. If local implementing partners are suitable in principle but none of them possess such competence, the implementing organisations should raise their awareness of the thematic area and offer them opportunities to build and develop the requisite competence.

Recommendation 8:

German development cooperation (BMZ and the implementing organisations) should implement the OECD-DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance, adopted in 2019, with a view to systematically institutionalising protection and complaint mechanisms against sexual misconduct. The distribution of responsibilities between local implementing partners, implementing organisations and the federal ministries involved in implementing the German government's policy guidelines on "Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace" and the National Action Plan (NAP) should be clearly stated.

Knowledge and competence

Recommendation 9:

Under the further training concept for the quality criterion "Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion", the BMZ and the implementing organisations should offer (ideally) mandatory continuing education courses for those with country, project or thematic responsibilities, which should include application-oriented guidance on supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

Recommendation 10:

The BMZ (possibly in cooperation with the EU Gender Expert Group) should commission a highly application-oriented research project in order to synthesise knowledge and experience on supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts. On the one hand, this knowledge should be incorporated into the BMZ's strategy documents and decisions (strategic orientation/portfolio design/implementation of core and initiative areas); on the other hand, it should be made accessible to implementing organisations, civil society organisations, partners and other donors in a targeted manner, for example in the form of specialist conferences.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFD	<i>Agence Française de Développement</i> (France)
AIZ	<i>Akademie für Internationale Zusammenarbeit – GIZ GmbH</i> (Academy for International Cooperation)
BMZ	<i>Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung</i> (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
DC	Development cooperation
DEval	<i>Deutsches Evaluierungsinstitut der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit</i> (German Institute for Development Evaluation)
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
ECD	Evaluation capacity development
EQ	Evaluation question
EU	European Union
FC	Financial Cooperation
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GCNIs	Gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests
GE	Gender Equality (policy marker)
GIZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</i> (Germany)
GVR	<i>Gemeinsame Verfahrensreform</i> (Joint Procedural Reform)
ISE4GEMs	Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender equality, Environments and Marginalized voices
KfW	KfW Development Bank (subsidiary of Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, Germany)
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bi-, trans- and intersexual
MeMFIS	<i>Modulares Erweiterbares Management-Finanz-Informationen-System</i> (Modular extensible management finance information system)
NAP	National Action Plan
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
PBS	<i>Projektbearbeitungssystem</i> (Project Processing System)
PCA	Peace and conflict assessment
PS	Peace and Security (policy marker)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SI	Special Initiative
SP	Sector Programme
TC	Technical Cooperation
TDA	Transitional Development Assistance
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution

UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VSLA	Village savings and loans association
ZGBA	<i>Zielgruppen- und Betroffenanalyse</i> (target group and stakeholder analysis)

GLOSSARY

Gender-conflict nexus	<p>The term “gender-conflict nexus” refers to the inherent connection between gender and conflict. Experiences of conflict differ according to gender. This nexus of gender and conflict has consequences for German bilateral development cooperation, since it should deal with the different needs and interests of the genders resulting from their specific experiences of conflict in a sensitive and appropriate manner.</p>
Gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests	<p>Women and men experience conflict situations differently and have to cope with the consequences of these different experiences. Moreover, they are confronted with different gender roles and norms in the different phases of a conflict. As a result of these gender- and conflict-specific experiences, women and men have different gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests. In addition, there may be some needs and interests that are shared by women and men alike. Gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests have an enduring effect during the phases of conflict transformation or in the post-conflict situation, and should be addressed by German development cooperation projects accordingly.</p>
(Successful) gender mainstreaming	<p>Gender mainstreaming is a process in German development cooperation which formalises the adoption of a gender perspective throughout the steps in the process: strategy, planning, implementation and post-implementation. The core idea is to make the experiences, needs and interests of women and men an integral component of German development cooperation, so as to achieve the overarching goal of contributing to the promotion of gender equality.</p> <p>To assess whether this process is successful, the evaluation refers to two dimensions. The first of these concentrates on the question of whether the process as such allows the actors involved to identify women’s and men’s gender- and conflict-specific experiences, needs and interests and integrate them in projects (the process dimension). This comprises (a) the planning of projects and (b) the output level (activities). The second question concerns whether the intended gender- and conflict-related effects actually occur (the outcome level). Both dimensions are essential before it is possible to talk about successful gender mainstreaming.</p>
Political partners and implementing partners	<p>Regarding the partners of German development cooperation, the evaluation distinguishes between political partners and local implementing partners. While political partners are primarily involved in the intergovernmental negotiations (and not necessarily in the implementation of projects), local implementing partners are charged with project delivery and are supported by German development cooperation in their implementation of programmes and projects. For example, in Financial Cooperation (FC), a finance ministry may be the political partner and a sectoral ministry the implementing partner; In Technical Cooperation (TC), the political partner may be the planning ministry,</p>

	<p>and the implementing partner, a municipal administration at district level. Responsibility for implementation rests with the respective implementing organisation, although in the case of Financial Cooperation, KfW is less intensively involved in implementation.</p>
<p>Post-conflict context</p>	<p>According to the definition used in this evaluation, a post-conflict context is a situation in which (a) a country (or a region within a country) has been affected by a large-scale violent conflict or a war, and (b) the last outbreak of violence occurred between three and 18 years previously. The first part of this definition encompasses three elements: (a) a subnational perspective (“a region within a country”), (b) a relative perspective that takes population size into account and calculates conflict intensity (at the subnational level) as the ratio of combat deaths to the number of inhabitants, and (c) a categorical perspective in which regions are subdivided into conflict and non-conflict regions along a threshold value for conflict intensity. The second part of the definition states the specific time frame.</p> <p>While the terms “conflict” and “post-conflict” suggest a clear conceptual division, the reality is more nuanced and the dividing lines between the two are not so clearly drawn in reality. Nevertheless, these terms are used to identify which aspects are prevalent in a specific context at a given time.</p>
<p>United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325)</p>	<p>In 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on women, peace and security. UNSCR 1325, in conjunction with its follow-up resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, 2467 and 2493, calls for the strengthening of women’s participation in all peace and security processes and for comprehensive measures to protect them from sexual and gender-based violence during conflicts. Thus, UNSCR 1325 directly addresses the gender-conflict nexus. Germany is committed to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and has produced two National Action Plans (NAPs) for this purpose: NAP I for the period 2012–2016 and NAP II for 2017–2020. The third NAP 2021–2024 is currently being finalised. The National Action Plan prescribes the framework for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 by the German government, and hence also for German development cooperation and the work of the BMZ.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Gender and conflict: historic opportunity, strategic goal

Conflicts have gender dimensions.⁹ This encompasses such aspects as dissimilar kinds of involvement in the immediate hostilities. While men are more likely to be caught up in fighting as active combatants – and more often die in the process – women tend to suffer more from the indirect effects of conflict. One of these can be poorer health care, with the result that armed conflicts reduce women’s life expectancy even more than men’s. (Plümper and Neumayer, 2006). In the context of armed conflicts, women are also frequently affected (more than men) by violence outside of direct combat situations, including sexual and gender-based violence.

In the different phases of a conflict, women and men are also confronted with different and sometimes changing gender roles and norms. Women may be active as combatants in some conflicts, for example, or in their husband’s absence they may take charge of managing the family’s finances, a task traditionally reserved to the man of the household. Thus, as a general rule, even if some experiences are shared, women and men experience conflict situations differently in many respects, and must cope accordingly. This inherent connection between gender and conflict is spelt out in the term “gender-conflict nexus”.

The effects of the gender-conflict nexus persist in the fragile transition or post-conflict phase. The end of a conflict is a time of great danger, but also a time when immense opportunities can open up. This is true for society as a whole, and for gender roles and how women and men relate to each other. In part, the dangers stem from the potential for ongoing violence and human rights violations, i.e. if there is a continuum of violence, if the security situation is fragile, and if individuals and society are affected by acute and debilitating traumas. But equally, the end of a conflict can be a historic window of opportunity (Ní Aoláin et al., 2018; Bouta et al., 2005; Moser and Clark, 2005; Duriesmith, 2016; Eifler and Seifert, 2009). This is because conflicts can disrupt existing gender orders, roles and norms, thus creating opportunities to promote gender equality and peace.

In many respects, it is only conceivable to realise the two goals – gender equality and peacebuilding – in conjunction with each other. When societies are coming to terms with their recent conflict-affected past, negotiating how they will live together in future and which ground rules will apply, establishing new institutions or reforming existing ones, it can be possible to strengthen human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion within these processes. Conflicts can bring about profound changes in gender roles and norms in societies. Accordingly, when development cooperation actors operate in post-conflict contexts, they can be confronted with a specific context of upheaval and change.

Supporting gender equality and peace in post-conflict contexts is advisable on both normative and instrumental grounds. From a normative viewpoint, the two goals enshrined at the international and national levels represent an ongoing challenge for sustainable global development: progress with regard to gender equality has been exceedingly slow – yet in recent years the number of conflicts has increased (Pettersson et al., 2019; UN Women, 2018). The intersection of these two goals – known as the gender-conflict nexus – therefore merits special attention.

In response, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and its follow-up resolutions along with other multilateral agreements have established the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda on the international level as a strategic goal and a normative frame of reference (United Nations, 2015; United Nations Security Council, 2000, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2013a, 2013b, 2015a, 2019a, 2019b).¹⁰

⁹ This evaluation is based on a non-binary understanding of gender; going beyond the masculine and the feminine, gender identities are understood as diverse and fluid. At the same time, within development cooperation practice gender is mostly thought about in terms of the categories “women” and “men” (within which “girls” and “boys” are also subsumed). The present evaluation reflects this practice by focusing on the diverse experiences of women and men. While the evaluation team is conscious of the limitations of this approach, a merely linguistic modification to broaden it beyond “women” and “men” would distort the results of the data collection and not do justice to the theme.

¹⁰ In addition, the CEDAW Committee that oversees compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has elaborated a General Recommendation on Women in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations, creating another frame of reference for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 that is of central importance for countries that have ratified CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 2013).

Furthermore, the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specify gender equality (SDG 5) and the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16) as yardsticks of sustainability (United Nations, 2015).

Germany is committed to achieving these international goals and has pledged in its National Action Plan (NAP) 2017-2020 to “integrate a gender perspective systematically into all relevant areas” and “by strengthening women’s participation, to help prevent crises and armed conflicts from arising in the first place and to prevent conflicts that have ended from flaring up again” (Bundesregierung, 2017b, p. 5). The third National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 is currently being developed. Ending sexual violence in conflicts was also a priority issue for Germany’s membership of the United Nations Security Council in 2019 and 2020.

Resolutions adopted by the United Nations and multilateral agreements on the gender-conflict nexus also serve as a normative frame of reference for German development cooperation, and for the strategies of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The most relevant of the latter documents are the 2013 strategy paper on “Development for Peace and Security” (BMZ, 2013a) and the strategy paper “Gender Equality in German Development Policy” (BMZ, 2014a) with the associated “Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020” (BMZ, 2016a), referred to hereafter as the Gender Action Plan II (GAP II). These make it clear that both support for gender equality and the promotion of peace and security are central, overarching goals of German development cooperation. Both strategy papers also refer to UNSCR 1325 and – albeit to different extents – address the linkages between gender and conflict.

Another key policy document is the German government’s NAP on the implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda (Bundesregierung, 2017b), which guides the activities of the BMZ. Additionally, the “Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance” (BMZ, 2013b, 2020a) covers Transitional Development Assistance projects, which frequently operate in post-conflict contexts, are covered by the additional “Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance” (BMZ, 2013b, 2020a). Last but not least, the German government’s policy guidelines on “Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace” (Bundesregierung, 2017a) and the accompanying Operations Manual (Bundesregierung, 2019d) set out a definitive framework. The above framework has subsequently given rise to joint interdepartmental strategies to support reform of the security sector (Bundesregierung, 2019a), dealing with the past and reconciliation (transitional justice; Bundesregierung, 2019b), and promoting the rule of law (Bundesregierung, 2019c).

Box 1 The BMZ’s three-pronged approach to gender equality

In its cross-sectoral strategy “Gender Equality in German Development Policy” from 2014, the BMZ sets out its three-pronged approach consisting of gender mainstreaming, empowerment and policy dialogue. Gender mainstreaming refers to the aspiration to “tak[e] account of the different life situations and interests of women and men [...] throughout all political programmes and decisions”, which is of central importance because “no measure has a gender-neutral result” (BMZ, 2014a, p. 8). The effective consequence is that under the strategy, all actors involved are mandated to incorporate gender equality as a cross-cutting theme throughout the project process – from planning to evaluation. The goal of empowerment is “to strengthen women as rights-holders primarily through awareness-raising on all levels of society and to enhance their agency”; in other words, it is a socio-political process (BMZ, 2014a, p. 8). Finally, policy dialogue encompasses the “task of embedding equality issues within political dialogue and policy advice” (BMZ, 2014a, p. 7).

Likewise, there are arguments from an instrumental perspective for anchoring gender equality in development cooperation jointly with other objectives. The literature suggests that gender-sensitive approaches open up particular opportunities in the areas of peacebuilding and conflict prevention (Caprioli, 2005; Gizelis, 2009; Melander, 2005; O’Reilly et al., 2015; UN Women, 2015). For example, peace in a country is more lasting when women are actively involved in politics after a civil war (Demeritt et al., 2014; Shair-Rosenfield and Wood, 2017). By the same token, it is evident that disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes can have a negative impact on women in the post-conflict phase if their role during the hostilities is not given due consideration (MacKenzie, 2009). Particularly in fragile contexts – which

is true of many post-conflict countries – it is important to take account of gender-based discrimination in order to understand how target groups respond to interventions (Kiss et al., 2020; Sonnenfeld et al., 2020).

However, there are also countervailing arguments to the effect that linking the two goals of “gender equality” and “peacebuilding” is unhelpful. Zürcher (2018), for example, argues that there is limited evidence that empowerment has any side effect on other development objectives, and that any explicitly feminist development and foreign policy entails risks, such as political backlash or a lack of buy-in from partner countries. In taking this line, he does not fundamentally oppose the promotion of gender equality but warns against seeing it as a “shortcut” that can be taken to achieve other development goals. Instead, he makes the case for a context-adapted approach that relies on local knowledge and pragmatism. It follows that in terms of the instrumental perspective, what matters is *how* the two goals are combined with each other.

Both from a normative and an instrumental perspective, then, overall there are good reasons for incorporating the gender-conflict nexus and the resulting gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests into the planning and implementation of development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts. The shaping of projects should be gender- and conflict-sensitive in every phase,¹¹ from preliminary planning, through defining the target group, to reporting, evaluation and learning. The approach that will enable this is gender mainstreaming, understood here as a process in German development cooperation which formalises the adoption of a systematic gender perspective throughout a project (see Chapter 2).

Even projects that do not have gender equality and peacebuilding either as a principal or a significant objective¹² must heed certain standards, such as the do-no-harm principle, with regard to both. In the context of the “BMZ 2030” reform strategy, mainstreaming is also the intention behind quality criterion 1 “Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion”. Importantly, this emphasis on gender mainstreaming does not exclude the other two dimensions of the BMZ’s three-pronged approach to supporting gender equality, namely empowerment and development policy dialogue. For example, gender mainstreaming as a formalised process of German development cooperation can mean that projects must carry out their own “targeted measures against gender-based discrimination and disadvantages, and specific activities to strengthen women’s rights” (BMZ, 2014a, p. 3).

Box 2 Gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests: Definition

Drawing on Molyneux (1985) and Moser (1989), the evaluation develops the concept of gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests, which result from women’s and men’s different experiences of conflict (for a detailed account of how these are derived, see Section 2.1). In basic terms, practical needs relate to immediate, conflict-related concerns, and to coping within the existing conditions and gender relations. In contrast, strategic interests are more long-term and structural in nature; they relate to changing the prevailing conditions and gender relations.

Women may have a practical need for psychosocial support, for example, to enable them to overcome the effects of sexual and gender-based violence such as rape. In principle, the same practical need applies to men, who may also experience sexual violence in the course of conflict, albeit to a different extent. The difference is that stigmatisation happens to different degrees based on the underlying gender norms. One strategic interest of women may therefore be to change the norms that lead to stigmatisation. Another may be to participate in and contribute to peace processes, since questions about the (new) societal order are also negotiated in this setting. In addition, there may be some needs and interests that women and

¹¹ On the process of gender mainstreaming, see also United Nations Economic and Social Council (1997), and on conflict sensitivity, see also Kompetenzzentrum Friedensförderung (2012).

¹² “Gender equality” and “peacebuilding” can be either principal or significant objectives or not included as objectives of a development cooperation project. In Box 6 in Chapter 4, the assignment of the respective development policy markers is explained at greater length.

men share, from rebuilding infrastructure destroyed in the conflict (a practical need) to overcoming concepts of masculinity rooted in conflict (a strategic interest).

Gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests can have a general and persistent effect during the phases of conflict transformation or in the post-conflict situation. They linger on afterwards and can continue to influence the lives of conflict-affected women and men.

As a first step, the process of gender mainstreaming should generally enable the actors involved – in particular, the BMZ and the implementing organisations Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the development bank of the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) – to identify the specific experiences, needs and interests of women and men, not least in sectors in which more precise analysis is needed. As a second step, the process should then make it possible to take explicit account of these sometimes very different needs of women and men, and to incorporate them in the planning and implementation of projects and address them.

It must be borne in mind that women and men are not homogeneous groups. Instead, people may have very different experiences of discrimination and in some cases be affected by multiple discrimination. For example, women living in rural areas in a post-conflict context and belonging to an ethnic minority may have very different experiences of exclusion and stigmatisation than men living in the same context who belong to a religious minority and have a disability.¹³ These different and overlapping dimensions of discrimination are expressed in the concept of intersectionality. In this regard, the focus of the evaluation is on the linkages between gender and other dimensions relevant in conflicts, such as religion and ethnicity.¹⁴ Ideally, the process makes it possible both to *identify* different gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests in the given context and to *address* them in German development cooperation projects, to ensure that these promote gender equality.

Although the gender-conflict nexus is relevant in many development cooperation contexts, there are only a few evaluations looking at how donors address this nexus in their projects. Notable exceptions are a study by the British Department for International Development (DFID) dating from 2005, and a multi-donor study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published in 2017. A systematic evaluation of how the gender-conflict nexus is taken into account in the gender mainstreaming process of German development cooperation is thus relevant and serves a useful purpose. This is especially true because – for the normative and instrumental reasons outlined above – it is only by taking these linkages into account that German development cooperation can successfully address many current and future challenges in post-conflict contexts and thus contribute to supporting gender equality in these contexts.

1.2 Aim of the evaluation: to support gender- and conflict-sensitive approaches

The evaluation's core question is aimed at finding out to what extent the gender mainstreaming process used in German bilateral official development cooperation is suited to post-conflict contexts and supports the planning and implementation of activities that contribute to gender equality. Its intention is to better identify and utilise the potential offered by bilateral official development projects to contribute to gender equality.

The findings and recommendations of the evaluation are addressed, on the one hand, to the BMZ to inform the steering of projects and the ongoing strategic development of gender mainstreaming in official development cooperation. Specific addressees within the ministry are the divisions working for gender equality and peace and security and the budget-holding divisions of projects in post-conflict contexts, including the regional and country divisions. Other addressees on this level are the Special Initiative "Tackling the root causes of displacement, reintegrating refugees" (Special Initiative "Displacement") and the activities in the area of "Crisis management, reconstruction, infrastructure in crisis contexts" ("*Krisenbewältigung*,"

¹³ On the inclusion of people with disabilities, see also Schwedersky et al. (2017).

¹⁴ While it will not be possible within the scope of this evaluation to take systematic and comprehensive account of all aspects of intersectionality, instances of critical overlaps in discrimination (for example between gender and ethnicity) are included and addressed where the data permits.

Wiederaufbau, Infrastruktur im Krisenkontext”), also known as “Transitional Development Assistance” (TDA). Reference and anchoring points on gender and conflict are being established in the course of the “BMZ 2030” process, via the quality criteria “Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion” and “Conflict sensitivity” and via the new strategy on the core area of “Peaceful and inclusive societies”. This presents an opportunity to feed in the evaluation findings when elaborating the quality criteria and drafting the strategy for the core area. On the other hand, the findings are addressed to the implementing organisations, particularly to the departments within GIZ and KfW that are responsible for the planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation of German development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts, and to the units that provide technical expertise on gender and conflict issues, collate knowledge on the issues and disseminate it within the organisation.

The findings and recommendations of the evaluation are intended to support the BMZ and the implementing organisations in changing structures and processes in such a way that the goals of German development cooperation in post-conflict contexts can be better achieved. In the medium term, the aim is to strengthen the contribution of German development cooperation to supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts. Beyond this, the evaluation findings are intended to provide impulses for civil society organisations. Within the civil society sector there are already various initiatives and extensive knowledge on the thematic area. The evaluation should prompt organisations to reflect and, if necessary, improve on their own gender mainstreaming processes with regard to the anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus.

1.3 Object of the evaluation: structures and processes of German development cooperation

The object of the evaluation is the process of gender mainstreaming within official bilateral development cooperation in post-conflict contexts. It also encompasses projects under the auspices of Transitional Development Assistance and Special Initiatives (in particular the Special Initiative “Displacement”). Although these go beyond classic bilateral development cooperation in the strict sense, they are subject to similar procedures and steering principles, and were included because of their significance in post-conflict contexts. The point of gender mainstreaming is to allow the actors involved (especially the BMZ and the state implementing organisations) to adopt and apply a gender perspective. With regard to the specificities of post-conflict contexts, it is most important that the process enables the actors to identify and integrate the needs and interests of women and men arising from their experiences of conflict *and* to plan and implement projects in a gender- and conflict-sensitive manner. Ultimately, the success of the gender mainstreaming process in German development cooperation is demonstrated in the form of positive contributions to gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

In order to assess whether gender mainstreaming is being translated into practice successfully, two dimensions were examined. The first dimension covers whether the process as such allows the actors to identify and integrate the gender- and conflict-specific experiences, needs and interests of women and men within the framework of a German development cooperation project (process dimension). This comprises the levels of (a) planning and (b) output (activities). The second dimension encompasses whether the intended gender and conflict-related effects actually occur (outcome dimension). Both dimensions are indispensable before it is possible to talk about successful gender mainstreaming.

The process of gender mainstreaming was analysed on the basis of a total of 47 projects in 11 post-conflict contexts. The evaluation concentrates on projects of German bilateral official development cooperation which have been or are currently being implemented by GIZ and KfW. Its focus was on official development cooperation because the BMZ is more closely involved in the steering and, especially, the planning of such projects than of those delivered by multilateral or civil society organisations. However, the civil society perspective was taken into account in selecting the panel of participants for the evaluation’s reference group and by means of interviews conducted in Germany and the partner countries. Given the evaluation’s main emphasis, projects under the Special Initiative “Displacement” and the Transitional Development Assistance programme were also taken into account. Despite this focus, many of the findings turn out to be transferable – at least in part – to gender mainstreaming in other contexts, because ever since the Joint Procedural Reform

(*Gemeinsame Verfahrensreform*, GVR) the planning and implementation process for bilateral projects has followed a similar course in all countries, whether or not they are affected by violent conflict.

In order to cover more than one planning cycle of German development cooperation, projects were selected from the years 2013–2018. The method of determining post-conflict status was to identify countries (or regions within a country) affected by widespread violence, i.e. high intensity of conflict, in the period 2000–2015, where such violence had subsided for at least three years by 2018 when the selection of countries took place (see Chapter 3 and Section 9.2 for a detailed explanation of the methodological procedure). To make a further selection of countries for the purpose of conducting case studies, four additional criteria were applied:

1. Relevance of the portfolio with regard to both gender equality and peace and security
2. Volume of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding allocation
3. Coverage of different types of cooperation
4. Regional coverage on the level of continents

On the basis of these criteria, Colombia, Liberia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were identified as case study countries.

Finally, in terms of its main emphasis, the present evaluation is a process evaluation. Nevertheless, in a smaller way it also adopts an impact evaluation approach by considering the outcomes of project activities in order to assess the contribution made by gender mainstreaming to gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

1.4 Overarching evaluation questions

The evaluation is guided by three overarching evaluation questions (EQ)¹⁵:

Evaluation question 1: To what extent do the strategies, planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation of German development cooperation result in successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

Evaluation question 2: To what extent do organisational and contextual factors influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

Evaluation question 3: To what extent do the stakeholders involved (BMZ, implementing organisations, political partners and local implementing partners) influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

The first question aims to establish to what extent the various steps in the process lead to successful gender mainstreaming (**process**). The second question deals with organisational factors and contextual factors, i.e. the specificities of the post-conflict context (**influencing factors**). Finally, the third question has two parts. On the one hand, it concerns the options for influencing the process of gender mainstreaming that are *theoretically* available to the stakeholders involved. On the other hand, it analyses how the stakeholders make *practical* use of these options (**actors**).

The evaluation report is structured as follows: the report begins with a detailed presentation of the conceptual framework of the evaluation (Chapter 2), starting with an explanation of the causal logic on which it is based and the key concepts. Next, we break down each overarching evaluation question into more detailed questions and also cross-reference them with the criteria of “relevance”, “coherence”, “effectiveness” and “efficiency” as defined by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC), which are also the reference standards for

¹⁵ The detailed evaluation questions along with the associated assessment criteria, methods and focuses of analysis are listed in the Evaluation Matrix in the Annex (Section 9.1).

evaluations. We then present the evaluation's methodological approach in Chapter 3. This comprises the evaluation design, the structure of the evaluation, methods of data collection and analysis, and discussion of the limitations of the methodological approach.

With the above foundations in place, the findings part of the report begins with Chapter 4 (on portfolio analysis), which provides an initial overview of the German development cooperation portfolio in post-conflict contexts. This is followed in Chapter 5 by the results of the analysis of the gender mainstreaming process in German development cooperation. The structure of the chapter follows the stages of the project cycle: from the relevant strategies (Section 5.1), through the planning and implementation process, to reporting and evaluation (Section 5.2). We were interested in two key questions: firstly, to what extent the process is theoretically suited to the purpose of contributing to gender equality in post-conflict contexts, and secondly, how the people involved "live out" the process in reality. Section 5.2 also contains excursions on the anchoring of the human rights principles of "participation", "nondiscrimination" and "do no harm", and on safeguards against sexual misconduct, due to the special relevance of this issue in post-conflict contexts. After an analysis of the project outcomes (Section 5.3), the chapter concludes with an assessment of the gender mainstreaming process in German development cooperation with reference to the OECD-DAC criteria (Section 5.4).

Chapter 6 then presents the findings of the evaluation on two essential influencing factors: on the one hand, the organisational factors (Section 6.1) and on the other, the contextual factors – that is to say, the specificities of the post-conflict context (Section 6.2). Rounding off the report, Chapter 7 presents the key conclusions of the evaluation and the ensuing recommendations to the BMZ and the implementing organisations GIZ and KfW.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Theory of change

To answer the central question of this evaluation – namely, to what extent gender mainstreaming is being translated into practice successfully in German development cooperation in post-conflict contexts – this evaluation follows a theory-based approach (Astbury and Leeuw, 2010; Chen et al., 2015; Funnell and Rogers, 2011). A theory of change, developed for this purpose, charts the assumed process flows and causal pathways that lead to achievement of the expected results. In this case, it describes how gender mainstreaming is to be translated into practice in the process of planning, implementation and post-implementation of German development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts, and how it is expected to generate effects conducive to gender equality. The theory-based approach is useful for making comparisons between theory and practice.

The theory of change was developed on the basis of a document analysis, which took in strategy papers and planning documents published by the BMZ, GIZ and KfW. It was then validated with staff of the BMZ and the implementing organisations. The process it refers to was introduced as part of the Joint Procedural Reform of 2017; only then were some of the steps in the process established.

Note that the theory of change does not map out the BMZ standard procedure in full; rather, it looks at selected steps in the process and shows which reference points they contain pertaining to gender and/or the gender-conflict nexus. While the focus of the theory of change is on the process level, the evaluation concurrently takes account of the effects of gender mainstreaming – i.e. the effects of the projects on gender equality in the respective post-conflict contexts. This section lays out some explanatory information about the theory of change, establishing the basis for the elaboration of the evaluation questions in Section 2.2. Section 2.3 then explains which of the OECD-DAC criteria are relevant for the evaluation.

The theory of change will be explained in three stages. The first stage is to present selected process steps, with due regard to the evaluation’s core question, including the relevant analytical tools¹⁶ for the planning and implementation of projects (**process**, see Section 2.1.1). For projects in post-conflict contexts, the core objective of gender mainstreaming is to (a) ensure that gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests are given due consideration throughout the chain of procedures, and (b) achieve positive outcomes in relation to gender. Figure 1 presents the process diagrammatically, showing its four steps: strategy, planning, implementation and post-implementation. These are visualised as dark downward arrows. The diagram brings into focus the entry points for gender-related work that exist at each step in the process. In part, these explanatory notes on the integration of the gender perspective in German development cooperation have been laid down by the BMZ (Doc. 10), and in part they were elaborated in the course of developing the theory of change. Elements of the generic results chain¹⁷ are shown diagrammatically by the white, downward arrows in Figure 1 but cannot be inserted into a seamless processual and/or chronological logic at this point. Rather than mapping the overall process to its full extent, the diagram accentuates the elements that are relevant to the scope of this evaluation’s inquiry (the findings concerning the process can be found in Chapter 5).

Moving on to the second stage, the task is to specify the influencing factors, consisting of organisational factors and contextual factors (**factors**, see Section 2.1.2). The “slices of pie” within the circles on the right-hand side of the diagram indicate the organisational factors (for the relevant findings, see Section 6.1) that are assumed to have an influence on the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, all factors (i.e. both the steps in the process and organisational influencing factors) are embedded in and influenced by a post-conflict context symbolised by a black frame (for the relevant findings, see Section 6.2). Another influencing factor is the post-conflict context. It makes its mark on gender-specific norms and roles,

¹⁶ The main analytical tools consist of “Gender analyses” and “Peace and conflict assessments” (both GIZ), as well as “Target group and affected person analyses” and “Peace and conflict analysis” (both KfW).

¹⁷ The diagram charts outputs (activities) and outcomes; impacts are no longer part of the theory of change.

among other things, and is the setting for gender-specific experiences of conflict, thus resulting in gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests.

The third stage is to describe the interplay between the actors. The four coloured circles stand for the individual actors and, at the same time, symbolise that the relevance of the influencing organisational factors and opportunities along the process chain can vary for the different actors involved (**actors**, see Section 2.1.3; for the relevant findings, see Chapter 5).

Box 3 Introduction to the concept: Gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests

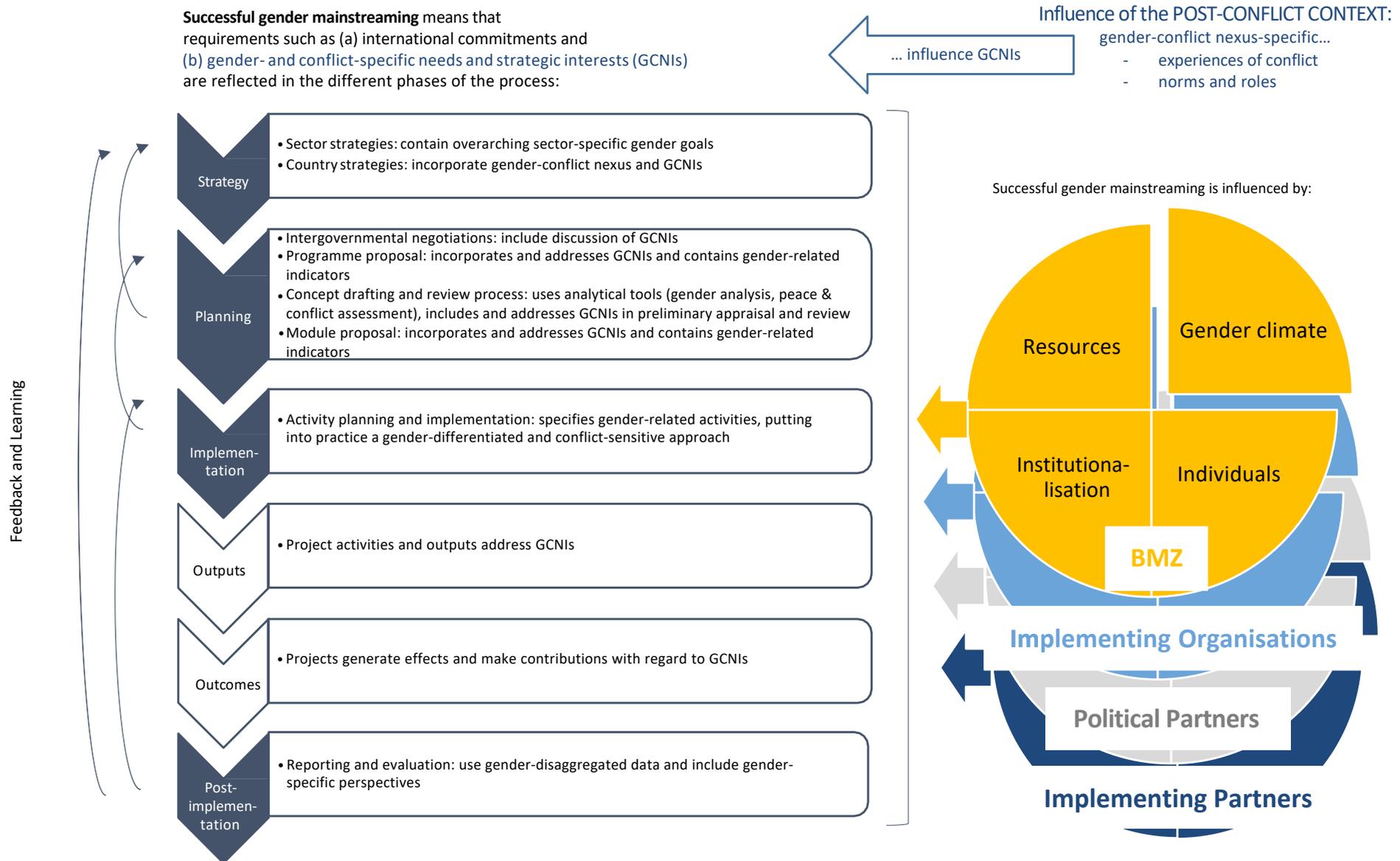
The concept of gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests is based on the conceptual work of Molyneux (1985), who makes a distinction between the concepts of women's interests, strategic gender interests and practical gender interests. Molyneux is critical of the term "women's interests" since it implies that women's interests are homogeneous, thereby neglecting relevant differences such as the social class they belong to or their specific ethnicity. Moser (1989, p. 1803) also argues that the concept of women's interests assumes "compatibility of interests based on biological similarities" but fails to do justice to the more complex social reality in which women's diverse and intersecting attributes can give rise to highly divergent needs. Moser points out the relevance of this for the planning of concrete interventions.

In contrast, gender interests refer to the interests of women and men that develop due to their social positioning based on gender attributes (Molyneux, 1985). A distinction can be made here between strategic gender interests and practical gender needs (Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989). Strategic gender interests emerge from the analysis of existing gender relations and from the vision of an alternative societal order based on equality. Practical gender needs are rooted in women's concrete experiences within the existing gender order and division of labour, and the needs derived from such experiences. These are not necessarily framed in terms of emancipation, empowerment, transformation or the realisation of gender equality, but tend to revolve around immediate needs such as security or health.

On this basis, the concept of gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests can be understood as follows:

1. Gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests follow the distinction between practical gender needs and strategic gender interests. To make the distinction conceptually and linguistically intuitive, the terms "practical needs" and "strategic interests" are used. According to Molyneux's definition, practical needs are the immediate and direct concerns that arise from the realities of women's and men's lives. Practical needs are not necessarily understood as transformative in terms of envisaging a change the existing gender relations, but rather as a kind of "coping" within the given realities. Conversely, "strategic interests" are aimed at some sort of change in the prevailing relations, rules and norms. They tend to be long-term and structural in nature; for instance, the interest in political equality (Molyneux, 1985).
2. Practical needs and strategic interests may equally well be situated in different societal spheres (the economic, social, psychological or political sphere) and on different levels of society (e.g. on the individual or the community level).
3. Whereas Molyneux's concept of "practical gender needs and strategic gender interests" is generally broad in scope, the evaluation's use of the term "gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests" is honed down conceptually to practical needs and strategic interests that are specific to gender and conflict. Our particular concern is therefore with needs and interests of women and men which can be traced back to dissimilar experiences of conflict due to their different role understandings, and which can be enduring in effect. Women's and men's practical needs and strategic interests may be different in some cases and shared in others. Practical needs are found in areas such as "security", "health" or "food security", where conflicts often inflict major adversities on both women and men. Strategic interests encompass women's participation and active involvement in peace and reconciliation processes, for example.

Figure 1 Theory of change



Source: own presentation.

2.1.1 Processual steps in gender mainstreaming

The theory of change (see Figure 1) shows the key steps in the process, which are (in sequence) strategy, planning, implementation and post-implementation, as dark arrows running from top to bottom. Furthermore, it indicates how a gender or a gender-conflict nexus perspective must be integrated into each step in compliance with BMZ standards, or can be integrated to exceed the standards. These steps in the process refer to the totality of projects in German development cooperation with a GE1 or GE2 and/or a PS1 or PS2 marker¹⁸ – the object of this evaluation. To some extent, these process steps are also relevant for projects in post-conflict contexts with a GE0 or PS0 marker; e.g. for conducting a peace and conflict assessment (PCA) or complying with the do-no-harm principle in relation to gender aspects.

Strategy

BMZ strategy documents are partly informed by international agreements such as the 2030 Agenda (United Nations, 2015), the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda established in UN Resolution 1325 and its follow-up resolutions (United Nations Security Council, 2000) and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (OECD, 2010).¹⁹ These provide an orientation or framework for German development cooperation and set priorities for the rest of the process, and hence also for the country strategy.

The country strategy defines the priority areas (since “BMZ 2030”: “core areas”) in which the BMZ intends to carry out German development cooperation activities. Ideally, the country strategy anchors gender aspects as a cross-cutting theme, points out gender dimensions specific to the country and provides a gender-differentiated description of target groups affected by conflict. It may take gender aspects into account by selecting particular sectors and fields of action or by formulating gender-specific objectives (Doc. 1). The objectives from country strategies must be reflected in the wording of the programme objectives, and these in turn must be reflected in the wording of the module objectives. The standards further state that when country strategies are being developed, sector strategies as well as guidelines for cross-cutting themes like human rights and gender are to be kept in mind (Doc. 2).

Planning

At the project planning stage, alongside the regular ongoing dialogue with partners, intergovernmental negotiations and consultations are a relevant step. They can be understood as part of a high-level bilateral development policy dialogue in accordance with the BMZ Gender Equality Strategy (BMZ, 2014a). Seen in that way, it is not only feasible but also a requirement to integrate gender equality issues in intergovernmental negotiations and consultations.

At the same time, the BMZ’s supplementary guidelines (which are geared more towards procedural and formal questions) do not contain any formal standards for intergovernmental negotiations relating to gender or the gender-conflict nexus. Rather, they state in general terms that these serve the dialogue with the government of the partner country and also promote dialogue between the various ministries involved within the German government (Doc. 3). This means that apart from a general, rather implicit aspiration to make use of intergovernmental negotiations and consultations, which are components of the bilateral policy dialogue, as an opportunity to bring up the topic of gender equality, there are no formal standards on what the detailed content of such talks should include.

An important step in the project conception process is the preliminary appraisal (Doc. 6), a key document which the division running the project takes as the starting point for work on the conception phase of the project. As a general rule, the BMZ division running the project requests the preliminary appraisal from the implementing organisations. The document gives a preliminary outline of approaches and ideas for projects within the priority areas defined during the intergovernmental negotiations.

¹⁸ GE stands for “gender equality”, PS for “peace and security”, see also Box 4 and Box 6.

¹⁹ The two themes – gender equality and peacebuilding – are only rarely treated as interdependent, as a study by the OECD (2017) observes.

Essentially, there are numerous standards governing the objectives, the content and the structure of the preliminary appraisal (BMZ, 2008; Docs. 5, 6). These also contain various entry points and space for addressing gender equality and the gender-conflict nexus. More explicit guidance on how to incorporate these can be found in the standards for describing the target group and potential project outcomes and in those concerning the indicators (BMZ, 2008). Furthermore, the preliminary appraisal also proposes policy markers derived from the preliminary gender analysis.

Box 4 Assignment of the GE marker

Policy markers indicate where projects make a contribution in respect of various cross-cutting themes (Doc. 5). The “gender equality” marker (GE marker), for example, indicates whether gender equality is a principal objective (GE2 marker), a significant objective (GE1 marker) or not an objective (GE0 marker) of the planned project (Doc. 9). However, the standards for the assignment of the GE marker make no reference to conflict factors. Similarly, the standards for assigning the “Peace and security” marker (PS marker) contain no guidance on acknowledging gender and/or the gender-conflict nexus (Doc. 2, 7).

No matter which of the three categories of marker is assigned, it is mandatory in all cases to carry out a gender analysis and take it into account in project conception, to ensure a do-no-harm approach, and to provide a justification for the assignment of the given marker. Projects classified as GE1 must have at least one gender-related indicator at module-objective level and one indicator at output level. GE2 projects must demonstrate the plausibility of gender objectives by means of gender-related results chains and a reference to gender in the indicators. Where possible, GE1 and GE2 projects should collect data and indicators disaggregated by gender (Doc. 9).

The BMZ then orders a further appraisal of the project by the responsible implementing organisation. Among a whole range of other aspects, this involves a review of the gender-specific implications of projects (BMZ, 2008) and preparation of the PCA (Doc. 11). During the appraisal it is usual to carry out an in-country appraisal mission as well (BMZ, 2008). There is also an expectation that target groups and stakeholders will be involved in the planning, e.g. by means of needs assessments (BMZ, 2008). Exceptions to the required assessments and process steps are made for certain projects, e.g. those planned by the rapid response procedure in the event of natural disasters or crises.

Building on the findings of the appraisal, the responsible implementing organisations draft the module proposal and submit it to the BMZ (Doc. 12). There is room to address gender equality and the gender-conflict nexus at various places in the module proposal. For instance, the module proposal on integrating gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests is expected to justify the assignment of the markers, and to cite supporting evidence from the (updated) gender analysis. At the point when the module proposal is commissioned, its policy markers (e.g. GE and PS) are definitively finalised. The proposal is also required to include a gender-differentiated description of the potential target groups and of the project’s possible effects. Moreover, in the case of GE1 and GE2 projects, gender aspects have to be integrated into the system of indicators²⁰ and hence into the results matrix.

The module proposal also has to show the extent to which thematic standards have been adhered to. Cross-cutting themes such as human rights, including matters relating to gender, fall under this heading (Doc. 13). The results of the gender analysis and the PCA are therefore expected to inform the module proposal, but there is no firm procedure for systematically reviewing the extent to which this actually happens (Doc. 11).

Especially in conflict-affected and fragile states, the module proposal has to discuss possible impacts on human rights plus other aspects such as discrimination or the curtailment of participation rights. Once again, the whole topic of gender could be integrated here. A discussion of social sustainability and unintended negative effects offers a further means of creating implicit links to gender equality and peacebuilding. Once

²⁰ The principles governing the formulation of indicators are the OECD-DAC and SMART criteria. According the SMART criteria, indicators need to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

the BMZ has approved it, the module proposal forms the binding framework for the activities that the implementing organisation will carry out within a project on behalf of the BMZ.

To assist with this step in the process, KfW has internal guidelines as well as interpretation and guidance notes. Staff who design projects can refer to these for guidance on assigning GE or PS markers to projects in different sectors or on conducting target group and stakeholder analyses (*Zielgruppen- und Betroffenenanalysen*, ZGBAs) or gender analyses (Doc. 14, 15).

GIZ has established a formalised process called the Safeguards+Gender management system, within which various matters including gender-related questions are reviewed. It is not concerned solely with possible negative impacts but also explicitly seeks to identify potential for making a positive contribution to gender equality. In the context of the present evaluation, the relevant areas under that system are “gender” and “conflict and context”. In relation to the area of “gender”, the Safeguards + Gender Desk provides guidelines and checklists for the preparation of gender analyses (Doc. 16, 17). There are also standards stating when, in the offer-preparation process, the preliminary and final gender analysis and project documents are to be submitted to the desk for plausibility checking. Finally, there are rules about when internal GIZ stakeholders, such as contact persons for gender in the operational units, are to be included in the consultation process (Doc. 18). Thus, the GIZ Safeguards+Gender management system provides a clear breakdown of who is to be involved in each step of the process and how, and who bears the responsibility for ensuring that projects appropriately reflect gender aspects (Doc. 19).

Anchored in the same management system is the “Conflict and context sensitivity” safeguard. Its function is to ensure that negative unintended effects of development cooperation projects are either minimised or, if possible, avoided altogether (Doc. 20). In compliance with the do-no-harm principle, the aim is to avoid exacerbating negative dynamics in fragile or conflict-affected contexts (Doc. 21).

Although there is a general factsheet to assist with the preparation of the PCA, it makes no reference to women, gender or gender- and conflict-specific needs (Doc. 21). Nor indeed is there any obligation to take account of the guiding questions set out in the Annex on the consideration of gender aspects (Doc. 22).

Implementation

As a general rule, the BMZ adheres to the standard of “quality at entry” in relation to the planning and implementation of development cooperation projects. That is to say, steering by the BMZ is very prominent in the conception and appraisal phase, whereas the implementing organisations take on greater responsibility during the project implementation phase. On the basis of the approaches, indicators and outputs described in the module proposal, the implementing organisations in the partner country work jointly with their partners to develop a plan for the implementation of concrete activities.

Within KfW, more of the planning and implementation is handed over to the local implementing partners, which means signing contracts with project partners and/or executing agencies. Despite being less directly involved, KfW nevertheless continues to bear the responsibility for implementation.

In contrast, GIZ is considerably more involved in the implementation of projects (BMZ, 2008). Guidance and orientation is provided within GIZ on how gender is to be incorporated into project management. According to the relevant provisions, a concrete plan of activities for the duration of the project should be drawn up jointly with the partners (GIZ, 2018a). Project planners, stakeholders and target groups should be involved in the preparatory work (GIZ, 2018a). This planning should be based on the results matrix and include gender-related targets and indicators. To this end, it is also important to allocate financial and personnel resources and to define responsibilities (GIZ, 2018a). Last but not least, this plan is to be used as an instrument of long-term project management and constantly adapted to changing demands (GIZ, 2018a).

GIZ policy emphasises that gender equality and the principle of non-discrimination must be mainstreamed and reviewed throughout all activities, and urges conscious efforts to ensure that women and men have equal opportunities to participate in activities. While it puts an emphasis on gender mainstreaming being everyone’s responsibility, GIZ also draws attention to the importance of designating “gender contact

persons” or “gender focal points” within the projects. These bear a special responsibility for seeing that the activities planned and implemented are indeed gender-sensitive (GIZ, 2018a).

If the process of gender mainstreaming has been translated into practice successfully up to this point, the projects generate outputs that address gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests. In keeping with the causal logic of the projects, as documented in the module proposal and operationalised with indicators, this is expected to result in positive gender-related project results on the outcome level (visualised in Figure 1 by a white downward arrow). Reporting and evaluation (dark downward arrow) are carried out to check whether and to what extent this is the case. These mechanisms record the project results and the extent to which the indicators have been met, information that the implementing organisations communicate to the BMZ.

Post-implementation

The BMZ uses reporting as the basis for its steering of projects and with a view to facilitating joint learning with the implementing organisations (Doc. 23). There are various guidelines and action plans in which the BMZ and the German government commit to high-quality reporting and evaluation that includes a gender perspective (BMZ, 2016a; Bundesregierung, 2017a, 2017b). For example, the BMZ’s 2014 strategy paper on Gender Equality states that in order to be able to record impacts on gender equality, a gender-sensitive form of monitoring including gender-sensitive indicators is necessary (BMZ, 2014a). In addition, the Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality states: “There are still very considerable gaps in the available data [...]. We need more gender-disaggregated and quality-assured data to gain a more accurate picture of the instances of disadvantage and discrimination”, and adds: “By 2020 we will [...] improve the availability and use of gender-disaggregated data that are up-to-date, reliable and of high quality” (BMZ, 2016a, p. 23).

In terms of reporting, the following content is specified: (a) fulfilment of the specified success indicators, (b) a risk assessment – in which gender-related questions are either part of the specified catalogue of questions or, “if applicable”, cross-cutting issues including gender-related matters need to be assessed – and (c) recommendations for subsequent action (Doc. 23, 25).

Furthermore the BMZ specifies various core aspects for evaluations. It requires the implementing organisations to take ownership of carrying out evaluations in different formats, the content of which is to be guided by the OECD-DAC criteria and standards. Care should be taken to ensure the broadest possible participation of different project stakeholders including the target group (BMZ, 2008); so this presents an opportunity for embedding gender-related questions. The standards on reporting and evaluation thus make provision for all projects to address gender-related questions, for example if a risk assessment deems them relevant to the given project. From the above it can be inferred that whenever projects have gender equality and/or peace building as an objective, the procedural logic dictates that gender or the gender-conflict nexus should be automatically anchored in this step in the process as well.

Feedback and learning throughout the process as a whole

The BMZ sees joint learning²¹ between the implementing organisations and itself as one of the key objectives pursued in the course of reporting (learning is visualised by the upward arrows on the far left in Figure 1). With this in mind, the reporting system allows room for learning experiences. Projects located in post-conflict contexts and working on gender equality or specifically on the gender-conflict nexus therefore have a learning opportunity here or a chance to document findings and reflect them back. Within the implementing organisations, there are no detailed standards on learning; they focus mainly on the voluntary take-up of formal and informal learning opportunities.

²¹ The focus here is on learning in the sense of adaptive processes based on feedback. For details on the provision of information within organisations and their internal knowledge management systems, see Section 6.1.2.

Human rights principles and safeguards against sexual misconduct (cross-cutting)

Important cross-cutting elements of the gender mainstreaming process are adherence to human rights principles and the establishment of mechanisms for dealing with sexual misconduct. Being cross-cutting in character, these are not integrated into the causal logic diagram but are briefly explained below.

Firstly, with regard to human rights principles, German development cooperation is embedded in the normative framework of international human rights obligations and other standards (United Nations Evaluation Group, 2014). The BMZ strategy pursues a dual approach consisting of mainstreaming human rights on the one hand and supporting specific projects with a human rights focus on the other. On the basis of a strategy paper from 2011 (BMZ, 2011), the BMZ has developed concrete requirements which development measures have to fulfil (BMZ, 2013c). These are focused on the appraisal of the human rights principles of “participation”, “non-discrimination” and “do no harm”. This means determining the extent to which (a) representatives of the target groups are involved in decision-making (principle of participation), (b) members of the target groups are enabled to participate in activities without suffering disadvantage on the basis of irrelevant characteristics (principle of non-discrimination), and (c) the planning and implementation process gives due consideration to potential negative consequences for people affected by the project (do-no-harm principle).

Secondly, in their capacity as service providers and employers working abroad, the organisations of German development cooperation operate in settings fraught with power asymmetries, where constant tensions give rise to risks. In post-conflict contexts more than others, any potential sexual misconduct, such as sexual harassment, violence and exploitation by staff of development organisations or partners, poses a serious threat to vulnerable demographic groups (Oxfam, 2018). Incidents of sexual misconduct directly harm the victims but can also be damaging for the particular organisations and – should they be German organisations – detrimental to the reputation, credibility and legitimacy of German development cooperation as a whole. Organisations have a duty to protect their staff and target groups from sexual misconduct by instituting appropriate structures and processes. Guidance to this end is provided by the OECD-DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance, adopted in 2019 (OECD DAC, 2019a). Even if these are not legally binding, they set out a relevant frame of reference for Germany as an OECD member country.

In response to a parliamentary question, the German government pledged to boost efforts to establish protection mechanisms and to see that the same is done in partner organisations (Bundesregierung, 2018). The current debate in Germany underscores the relevance of institutionalisation, e.g. by means of accountability and complaint mechanisms (OECD DAC, 2019a; Verband Entwicklungspolitik und Humanitäre Hilfe deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen, 2019). For this reason, the present evaluation also examines safeguards against sexual misconduct.

Evaluation question 1

The above considerations result in evaluation question 1: **To what extent do the strategies, planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation of German development cooperation result in successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?** This question is aimed at establishing to what extent gender- and conflict-sensitive steps in the process are being translated into practice successfully. Furthermore, evaluation question 1 analyses the extent to which the process leads to positive outcomes in terms of the target group’s gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests whilst adhering to human rights principles and providing safeguards against sexual misconduct.

2.1.2 Role of influencing factors

A variety of influencing factors have a bearing on the process of gender mainstreaming. In the following section, influencing factors on two different dimensions are considered: organisational factors and contextual factors. Beginning with the organisational factors, it can be assumed that in practice these may either support or impede the implementation of the process steps, and hence their outcome, which is successful gender mainstreaming. On the right-hand side of the theory of change in Figure 1, the segments

within the circles visualise these four factors.²² In specific terms these represent **individuals**, **institutionalisation**, the **gender climate** and **resources**.

The first factor, **individuals**, centres on the role of individual staff members and is targeted both at their gender competence and their commitment to gender issues. Various studies have drawn attention to the significance of individual gender competence as a factor supporting successful gender mainstreaming (BMZ, 2005; GIZ, 2017; OECD, 2017; Doc. 161). This is particularly important due to the criticism levelled at gender mainstreaming for causing confusion and resistance when it is either perceived as an alien, donor-imposed concept (Al-Ali, 2005; Silfver, 2010; Zürcher, 2018) or viewed purely as a women's issue (Jukarainen, 2012). Consequently, gender-related cooperation often calls for high levels of gender competence.

Institutionalisation, the second factor, encompasses binding standards, contact points, and knowledge management provision of various kinds. A lack of institutionalisation, including between different actors, can hinder successful gender mainstreaming (BMZ, 2005; Johnston, 2005; OECD, 2017). Internal monitoring and knowledge management are key to the successful implementation of projects (GIZ, 2017; Doc. 161).

Gender climate refers to cultural values, organisational incentives and leadership in an organisation. Generally speaking, the organisational climate and the values of an organisation are thought to play an important role in its conduct (Charlesworth, 2005). This is backed up by corporate strategic evaluations of GIZ, which point to the importance of the gender climate – including at management level – and the corporate culture regarding gender (GIZ, 2017; Doc 161).

Finally, **resources** – which may refer to financial or temporal resources – are another important factor. Just as the OECD study identifies resources in general as a potential challenge for gender mainstreaming (OECD, 2017), the BMZ evaluation on gender mainstreaming emphasises both a lack of human and financial resources within projects as unfavourable factors (BMZ, 2005).

Alongside organisational factors, importance also attaches to contextual factors. Development projects in post-conflict contexts must give thought to multiple opportunities and challenges with regard to the gender-conflict nexus. These include the **gender- and conflict-specific experiences** of the population and the different resulting needs and interests of women and men, as well as conflict-induced **changes to gender roles and norms**, to which development cooperation projects should respond using **gender- and conflict-specific approaches**.

Experiences and consequences of conflict are gender-specific (see Section 1.1). For example, **gender- and conflict-specific experiences** are illustrated by the fact that, on the one hand, it tends to be men who are recruited into armed groups, which exposes them to more combat-related violence. But joining armed groups may entail ongoing consequences such as exclusion of the men from their home communities, resulting in social and economic vulnerability (Bannon and Correia, 2006). Women, on the other hand, account for the majority of victims and survivors of gender-based and sexual violence, human trafficking, sexual slavery and forced marriage, all of which tend to increase during and after conflicts (UN Women, 2015; United Nations Security Council, 2015b; World Bank, 2018). Apart from exposing them to sexual violence, conflict has gender-specific implications for women's life expectancy (Plümper and Neumayer, 2006) health (Urdal and Che, 2013) and risk of social exclusion, for example if a woman's pregnancy is not in conformity with cultural norms. It is also more frequently women who suffer from a poor food supply and inadequate health care.

Nevertheless, these are only trends, whereas experiences of conflict are more multifaceted and defy simple perpetrator-victim attributions. Research on female combatants and their specific roles in combat (Bouta et al., 2005) and the reported experience of male survivors of sexual violence (Touquet and Gorris, 2016) shows that there is a constant need to challenge any assumed knowledge about the extent of the differing effects of conflict on women and men.

²² An analysis of the BMZ Action Plan for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities has identified several of these concepts – institutionalisation, competence building and knowledge management – as crucial for successful inclusion (Schwedersky et al., 2017).

Consideration must be given not only to the broad spectrum of specific experiences of conflict but also to the diversity of **gender- and conflict-specific gender norms and roles** and how these coexist and change. Conflicts may equally involve changes in the women's and men's social roles. During a conflict women often have the experience of empowerment when they take on responsibilities within the family and society in place of men who are currently absent (Hoduck et al., 2016; Horn et al., 2014; Pant and Standing, 2011; Webster et al., 2019). However, this tends to happen in the informal sphere rather than in any formal way such as being enshrined in legislation. The empowerment that women experience due to conflict often coincides closely with the duration of that conflict (Alison, 2004): once hostilities cease, any empowerment women have gained usually backslides when men returning from combat claim their traditional positions.

Consequently, German development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts should develop gender- and conflict-specific approaches. For instance, Al-Ali (2005) points out the symbolic value of women's empowerment and recommends that ideas about gender equality should only be communicated to societies during and after conflicts with very great caution. It is important to avoid it being perceived as a Western concept since that, too, could spark a backlash in gender relations, she argues. This is underscored by the fact that the security situation of women often deteriorates when they step out of their traditional gender roles (Alison, 2004), which potentially results in lasting gender-based violence even after the conflict has ended (Al-Ali, 2005). Moreover, not only are women often confronted with traumatic situations and left to deal with these experiences alone afterwards, but they must also cope with being stigmatised in some circumstances. It is therefore important to adopt trauma-sensitive approaches and to step up efforts in programmes to make women feel safe, and to ensure that they are indeed protected (GIZ, 2018a, 2018b; Horn et al., 2014; MacKenzie, 2009; McKay, 1998; Medica Mondiale, 2019). It is equally vital to apply transformative approaches such as working with men and boys on themes like gender roles. When looking at "transformative gender approaches" (BMZ, 2016a), an especially important consideration is the avoidance of stereotypes. Otherwise opportunities that might arise from such approaches, such as women's active participation in peace processes, might be overlooked.

Evaluation question 2

These considerations lead to evaluation question 2: **To what extent do organisational and contextual factors influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?** The purpose of this question is to interrogate the influence of both organisational factors and context-specific aspects. It also requires an analysis of potential conflicts and synergies between the goals of gender equality and peacebuilding.

2.1.3 Interplay between the actors

The success of gender mainstreaming hinges on the ways in which the actors involved can provide their input to the various steps of the process, and the extent to which they actually do so. Aside from the BMZ and its two implementing organisations, when it comes to the actors in the partner country the evaluation makes a distinction between political partners and implementing partners.²³ While the political partners are primarily involved in the intergovernmental negotiations (and not necessarily in the implementation of projects), the local implementing partners are charged with the delivery of projects and are supported by German development cooperation in their implementation of programmes and projects.

The interplay between the actors is essential for success. In light of these actors' different perspectives and interests, coordination is identified as one of the key challenges. To give an example, unless the roles of different stakeholders are defined clearly enough, they cannot be held accountable for the success (or failure) of gender mainstreaming (Moser, 2005; Sandler, 1997). On a similar note, studies by the OECD and the DFID identify cooperation and coordination as relevant success factors for gender mainstreaming but observe that they are often not found in practice (Johnston, 2005; OECD, 2017). Other aspects that are criticised as

²³ The extent to which the target group is involved in the planning and implementation process is analysed as part of evaluation question 1.5 on human rights principles.

unfavourable to success are the lack of coordination between international donors as well as a decoupling of the strategic and implementation levels within organisations (OECD, 2017). These findings are in keeping with the BMZ evaluation on gender equality (2005), which notices gaps in responsibility between the BMZ and the two implementing organisations that are counterproductive to gender mainstreaming in different phases of the project management cycle.

These findings raise questions concerning both the BMZ's "steering responsibility" and its interplay with the implementing organisations and other actors. One focus of the analysis is therefore the extent to which the BMZ exercises its steering capabilities; in other words, that it not only prescribes standards but also takes steps to ensure that they are followed. To what extent other actors make use of their options to exert an influence is another question of interest. The evaluation therefore analyses how much latitude each stakeholder has for exerting influence at each step of the process.

Evaluation question 3

These considerations lead to evaluation question 3: **To what extent do the stakeholders involved (BMZ, implementing organisations, political partners and local implementing partners) influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?** The evaluation question is intended to shed light on the options and approaches available to the various actors, and extends across all the process steps analysed in evaluation question 1. It differentiates according to the theoretical starting points available to the different stakeholders, and how far they actually utilise them in practice.

2.2 Evaluation questions and readers' guide

Having shown in the previous section how the three main evaluation questions have been derived from the theory of change, we present the resulting subsidiary questions for each part of the evaluation below. In addition, we provide a "readers' guide" to give readers a quick overview of whereabouts in the present report the answers to each evaluation question can be found.

Evaluation question 1 is broken down into various subsidiary questions: evaluation questions 1.1 and 1.7 inquire into whether the practice of gender mainstreaming and the portfolio do indeed reflect the requirements and the strategies. Evaluation questions 1.2–1.4 investigate the extent to which gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests are taken into account during planning, implementation and post-implementation. This also encompasses an analysis focusing on human rights principles (evaluation question 1.5) and another on safeguards against sexual misconduct (evaluation question 1.6).

Evaluation question 1: To what extent do the strategies, planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation of German development cooperation result in successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

- 1.1 To what extent do BMZ strategies on gender equality and peace and security reflect the requirements that ensue from the gender-conflict nexus?
- 1.2 To what extent do gender mainstreaming strategies, planning processes, guidelines and analytical tools lead to specific gender-related activities in post-conflict contexts?
- 1.3 To what extent do the projects have effects with regard to gender equality in post-conflict contexts?
- 1.4 To what extent do processes of gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts facilitate learning?
- 1.5 To what extent are the human rights principles of "participation", "non-discrimination" and "do no harm" taken into account in the implementation of projects in post-conflict contexts?
- 1.6 To what extent are there safeguards against sexual misconduct in German development cooperation projects?
- 1.7 To what extent does the BMZ portfolio reflect the gender-conflict nexus?

Evaluation question 2 focuses on different factors that can have an influence on the success of gender mainstreaming. While evaluation question 2.1 analyses how different organisational factors can have an effect on gender mainstreaming, evaluation question 2.2 concentrates on the influence of the post-conflict context. Evaluation question 2.3 analyses the relationship between the two goals of “gender equality” and “peacebuilding” and its effect on gender mainstreaming in the post-conflict context.

Evaluation question 2: To what extent do organisational and contextual factors influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

- 2.1 To what extent do the organisational factors “individuals”, “institutionalisation”, “gender climate” and “resources” influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?
- 2.2 To what extent does the post-conflict context influence successful gender mainstreaming?
- 2.3 To what extent are there potential trade-offs or synergies between “supporting gender equality” and “peacebuilding”, which influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

Evaluation question 3 on the interplay between the actors concentrates on the options and approaches available to the different actors. While evaluation question 3.1 analyses the theoretical options and starting points at each actor’s disposal throughout the process, evaluation question 3.2 seeks to assess how fully they utilise their potential in reality.

Evaluation question 3: To what extent do the stakeholders involved (BMZ, implementing organisations, political partners and local implementing partners) influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

- 3.1 To what extent do the processes *theoretically* allow the stakeholders involved to influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?
- 3.2 To what extent do the stakeholders involved *actually* influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

Table 1 Readers’ guide: Evaluation questions and chapters of the report

Evaluation question (EQ)	Chapter/Sections
EQ 1 Process To what extent do the strategies, planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation of German development cooperation result in successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?	Chapter 4 Section 5.1–5.3
EQ 1.1 The gender-conflict nexus in BMZ strategies To what extent do BMZ strategies on gender equality and peace and security reflect the requirements that ensue from the gender-conflict nexus?	Section 5.1
EQ 1.2 Strategies and planning: reflected in activities To what extent do gender mainstreaming strategies, planning processes, guidelines and analytical tools lead to specific gender-related activities in post-conflict contexts?	Section 5.2.2
EQ 1.3 Activities: effect on outcomes To what extent do the projects have effects with regard to gender equality in post-conflict contexts?	Section 5.3
EQ 1.4 Intra- and interorganisational learning	Section 5.2.3

Evaluation question (EQ)	Chapter/Sections
<p>To what extent do processes of gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts facilitate learning?</p>	
<p>EQ 1.5 Human rights principles</p> <p>To what extent are the human rights principles of “participation”, “non-discrimination” and “do no harm” taken into account in the implementation of projects in post-conflict contexts?</p>	<p>Section 5.2.1 (Human rights principles)</p>
<p>EQ 1.6 Safeguards against sexual misconduct</p> <p>To what extent are there safeguards against sexual misconduct in German development cooperation projects?</p>	<p>Section 5.2.2 (Safeguards)</p>
<p>EQ 1.7 Portfolio analysis</p> <p>To what extent does the BMZ portfolio reflect the gender-conflict nexus?</p>	<p>Chapter 4</p>
<p>EQ 2 Influencing factors</p> <p>To what extent do organisational and contextual factors influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?</p>	<p>Chapter 6</p>
<p>EQ 2.1 Organisational factors</p> <p>To what extent do the organisational factors “individuals”, “institutionalisation”, “gender climate” and “resources” influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?</p>	<p>Section 6.1</p>
<p>EQ 2.2 Post-conflict context</p> <p>To what extent does the post-conflict context influence successful gender mainstreaming?</p>	<p>Section 6.2</p>
<p>EQ 2.3 Synergies and trade-offs between gender and peace objectives</p> <p>To what extent are there potential trade-offs or synergies between “supporting gender equality” and “peacebuilding”, which influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?</p>	<p>Section 6.2</p>
<p>EQ 3 Interplay between the actors</p> <p>To what extent do the stakeholders involved (BMZ, implementing organisations, political partners and local implementing partners) influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?</p>	<p>Section 5.1–5.3</p>
<p>EQ 3.1 Theoretical opportunities to exert influence</p> <p>To what extent do the processes <i>theoretically</i> allow the stakeholders involved to influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?</p>	<p>Section 5.1–5.3</p>
<p>EQ 3.2 Use of options to exert influence in practice</p> <p>To what extent do the stakeholders involved <i>actually</i> influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?</p>	<p>Section 5.1–5.3</p>

2.3 OECD-DAC criteria

The evaluation findings are organised under the headings of the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria “relevance”, “coherence”, “effectiveness” and “efficiency” (see Section 5.4; also see Section 9.1 in the Annex). The criteria of “sustainability” and “impact” are not part of this assessment, for two reasons: one is that German development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts are often geared more towards immediate needs rather than the long term; the other is that the focus of this evaluation is on the gender mainstreaming process. Effects are only considered on the outcome level. The evaluation was conducted using the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria as revised in 2019 (OECD, 2019) as well as the BMZ guidelines of 2006 (BMZ, 2006), which were revised and adopted in 2020 (BMZ, in press).

The criterion of “**relevance**” asks whether the measure is well designed. In terms of the evaluation, this means whether the procedure and the projects themselves are relevant with regard to normative and strategic frameworks, target group needs, and appropriateness of the concept as drafted.

The criterion of “**coherence**” inquires how well the measure fits into the context. This involves analysing the extent to which the German development cooperation procedure and the concrete gender mainstreaming activities of the projects are embedded in the context of German development cooperation as a whole (internal coherence) and in the context of the activities of development partners and other donors (external coherence).

The criterion of “**effectiveness**” focuses on whether German development cooperation activities achieve the self-set objective of contributing to gender equality in post-conflict contexts. By the very nature of a process evaluation, the question of foremost interest is how successfully the process of gender mainstreaming has been put into practice. It also sets out to look at the project level in terms of gender-related objectives and assess the extent to which these have been achieved. Other aspects covered by this criterion are the quality of implementation and the avoidance of unintended effects.

The criterion of “**efficiency**” centres on the extent to which the procedure for planning and implementing gender-related activities leads to economical and timely outcomes regarding the promotion of gender equality.

3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

3.1 Evaluation design

Theory-based approach

The evaluation follows a theory-based evaluation approach, which is centred upon a theory of change (see Section 2.1). This explicitly states the evaluation's assumptions about which causal pathways are seen as the operative means of achieving the intended effects with regard to gender equality in post-conflict contexts. It thus describes how – theoretically – gender mainstreaming is to be translated into practice successfully in the process of planning, implementation and post-implementation of German development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts, and generate effects favourable to gender equality. In the course of the evaluation, we empirically review the said assumptions about these causal pathways and about factors that influence them. This theory-based approach is useful for making comparisons between theory and practice (Weiss, 1997), and hence for highlighting inconsistencies in the process and/or challenges affecting implementation.

Gender-responsive and human-rights-based evaluation approach

Due to its thematic content, the evaluation called for a gender-responsive and human-rights-based approach as described in the guidelines of the United Nations Evaluation Group (United Nations Evaluation Group, 2014), among other sources. On the thematic side, the evaluation analyses how German development cooperation projects take account of the gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests of women and men in post-conflict contexts. On the evaluative side, it examines the anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus in the evaluation process.

One example of these approaches is our use of storytelling as a method of collecting data, which proved an effective way of giving women and men from the target group a voice and making their perspectives and opinions visible. At the same time, this method allowed the interviewees to decide for themselves which particular issues they wished to bring up. The point of this was to avoid any re-traumatisation as a result of the evaluation. Another challenge, that of how to reflect local gender roles and norms in any given location, was solved by involving local consultants. Furthermore, cooperating with local consultants whose skill-sets included gender-and-conflict competence made it easier for the evaluation team to make contact with the interviewees and to interpret the content of the interviews. The composition of the teams ensured that the requirements of the local context could be met. In Pakistan, for example, having all-female interview teams was an indispensable prerequisite for making contact with the female target group.

Conflict-sensitive evaluation approach

Conflict has lasting effects in the post-conflict context, including effects on the power relations within society, so these still hold the potential to disadvantage and endanger individuals or specific groups and communities. Our evaluation therefore placed value on a conflict-sensitive evaluation approach, and the evaluation team heeded the do-no-harm principle accordingly. During the field visits in particular, the team took care to exchange information both with the local consultants and with representatives of the development cooperation institutions in situ to ensure that team members had a sound understanding of the context. The overriding aim was to understand what part is played or could be played by development cooperation generally, and evaluation specifically, amid these lines of conflict within society. Accordingly, we engaged in critical reflection on aspects such as power relations and took them into account in the data collection guidelines. For the same reason, we made efforts to use conflict-sensitive terminology. When conducting the interviews, we attached special importance to confidentiality and data protection and ensured that all social groups with which the evaluation team came into contact were treated with respect.

Multi-method design

The evaluation uses a multi-method design. This type of design is characterised by the targeted and criteria-based employment of complementary methods towards a common research goal (Anguera et al., 2018). It may make use of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The focus of this evaluation was on a variety of qualitative methods. To collect the data, we conducted qualitative interviews, including as part of case studies. The analytical method adopted for these and for project and process documents was content analysis. There was also a place for quantitative methods, for the analysis of the portfolio in particular. The aim of employing these different methods was to produce findings of higher reliability and validity by triangulating different data sources to answer each evaluation question.

Validation by an international group of experts

In order to increase the validity of the results and to critically reflect on the findings from the perspective of the Global South, the evaluation team organised a dialogue with and between the consultants who were providing expert backup to the case studies in Colombia, Liberia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This international group of experts discussed the findings, conclusions and preliminary recommendations of the evaluation so as to form a view on their validity across different country contexts, among other points.

Evaluation Capacity Development

Another aim of the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) is to contribute, through its evaluation work, to strengthening evaluation capacities in the partner countries of German development cooperation as well as in Germany itself. For that reason, we organised two workshops in Colombia and Germany as part of this evaluation, focusing on the evaluation approach known as Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender, Equality, Environment and Marginalized Voices (ISE4GEMs) (Stephens et al., 2018), which has been developed by the United Nations Organization for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). ISE4GEMs is a human-rights-based and gender-responsive evaluation approach that is explicitly underpinned by systemic thinking and, in addition to the gender dimension, also pays particular attention to marginalised groups and environmental aspects.

Pilot evaluation for ISE4GEMs

Furthermore, the ISE4GEMs evaluation approach was also trialled in a pilot evaluation in Colombia. The evaluators responsible for doing so are writing up the experience gained during that pilot evaluation in a separate discussion paper, which was not yet available by the publication date of the present evaluation. We will not therefore discuss the pilot evaluation any further in the present evaluation report.

3.2 Structure of the evaluation

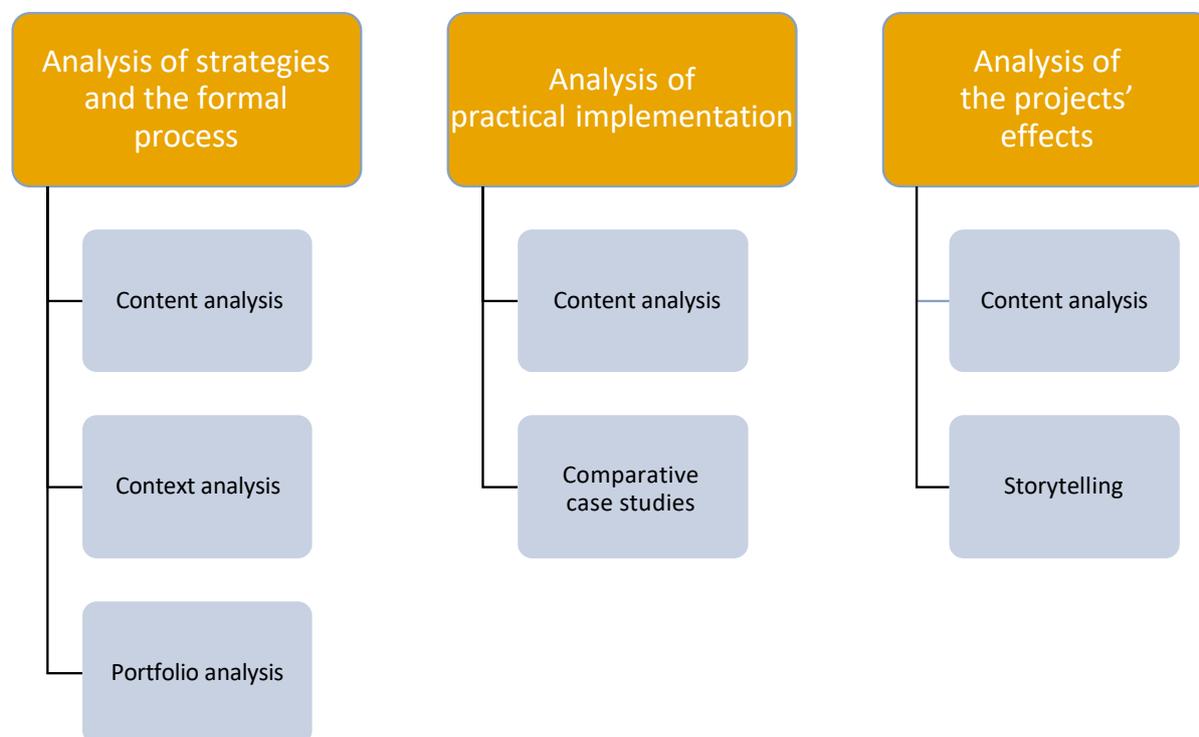
Taking the theory of change as the basis, the structure of the evaluation can be divided into three major parts:

1. an analysis of the strategies, formal standards, guidelines and instruments of the planning and commissioning process in official bilateral cooperation with regard to their suitability for integrating gender mainstreaming in the post-conflict context (analysis of the strategies and the formal process)
2. an analysis of the detailed shaping of these processes in practice (analysis of the practical implementation)
3. an analysis of the extent to which the projects achieve their objectives (outcomes) and thus contribute to gender equality in each particular post-conflict context (analysis of the effects of the projects)

The first two steps can be understood as part of a process evaluation. The focus is on the process of planning, the implementation itself, and the post-implementation phase. The third step analyses the effects of the projects at the target group level and focuses on the extent to which the processes we analysed in steps 1

and 2 actually achieve the intended objectives or outcomes – especially from the perspective of the target groups. Figure 2 shows the central elements of the evaluation and the methods of analysis employed, which are explained in more detail below.

Figure 2 Methods of analysis used in the evaluation



Source: own presentation.

Analysis of strategies and the formal process

In order to ascertain the extent to which BMZ strategies and the formal process reflect the gender-conflict nexus in post-conflict contexts, a content analysis of relevant documents (see Section 3.2) was carried out. An additional context analysis was undertaken to analyse the engagement of other external actors and donors in post-conflict contexts, with particular reference to their strategies and practical implementation of activities. These findings are featured in the form of “In context” boxes at appropriate places in the evaluation report. A quantitative analysis of the German bilateral development cooperation portfolio yields information on where the gender-conflict nexus is acknowledged in the official bilateral BMZ-financed portfolio and in the geographical allocation of projects as a result of steering by the BMZ.

Analysis of the practical implementation of gender mainstreaming within the process

For our analysis of how the planning and implementation processes are being “lived out” in practice, the data basis we drew on consisted of project documents for a total of 47 projects in the 11 post-conflict countries as well as interviews with decision-makers at the BMZ, KfW and GIZ in Germany. We analysed these for all 11 countries using the content analysis method. In four countries (Colombia, Liberia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), the evaluation carried out in-depth case studies, which involved conducting additional interviews with the various stakeholders and the target groups. These, too, were subjected to content analysis.

Data collection on the effects of projects with regard to gender equality in post-conflict contexts (project outcomes)

Several methods were aimed at recording the effect of gender mainstreaming on gender equality at outcome level. For example, as part of the content analysis of project documents (especially project progress reports), we examined whether these reported on the effects of gender mainstreaming. Meanwhile, we used the case studies, including the case-study interviews conducted, to identify effects on the level of the target groups. Finally, as a follow-up to each field visit, the local consultants surveyed selected women and men who had participated in activities of the projects under review, employing the Most Significant Change/Storytelling method developed by Davies and Dart (2005) to find out whether the intervention had had effects relevant to their personal situations.

Box 5 Introduction to the concept: Most Significant Change/Storytelling

The Most Significant Change technique is used as part of a storytelling approach within the framework of narrative interviews. It is a qualitative, participatory survey method for capturing recent changes in the interviewees' biographies – in other words, their stories. The content of the stories themselves consists of an assessment of how the development cooperation measure has contributed to these changes, and hence to the outcomes.

The first step is to identify areas in which the development cooperation measure is intended to bring about a change that falls within the scope of the evaluation. It is desirable to leave these areas fairly open so that the interviewees have the opportunity to mention the effects that they perceive to be the most crucial. In the narrative interviews, the focus is on the greatest change perceived by the interviewee, who will have been directly involved in the project (Most Significant Change). Relationships are defined and a sequence of experiences, causes and effects is described and prioritised. The person's story also reflects what part the project played in bringing about the perceived change. It is a way of gaining an improved understanding of the outcomes of a project from the perspective of the target group (Davies and Dart, 2005; McDonald et al., 2019).

These perceived changes can then be analysed and presented in a visual format. This evaluation employed the online tool Sprockler for this task. Each dot in Figure 3 stands for an individual story; the different colours indicate different age groups. When an online user clicks on a single dot, the full text of the corresponding story can be opened. This adheres to the principle of protecting each interviewee's identity as the contents are anonymised. In this way, the method allows evaluators to individualise abstract effects.

Figure 3 Changes from the viewpoint of the target groups, by topic

What were the most significant changes this project has brought for you?



Note: Each dot stands for the story of one person from the target group. Different coloured dots indicate different age groups.
Source: own analysis with the online tool Sprockler (<https://sprockler.com>).

3.3 Operationalisation of the object of the evaluation

Selection of the population of interest: post-conflict countries

For the purpose of delimiting its object of study, the evaluation defines the status of a post-conflict context in terms of two criteria: (a) a country or an area within a country has been affected by a massive outbreak of violence or war (intensity), and (b) the last outbreak of widespread violence occurred (taking 2018 as the baseline year) at least three but no more than 18 years previously (time).

The logic of this operationalisation is that due to their disruptive nature, high-intensity conflicts are more likely to pose lasting challenges to social structures and norms – including gender roles and norms – than low-intensity conflicts. Defining the intensity of conflict is a demanding exercise that is not resolved with absolute clarity in the literature. One reason for this, in particular, is that intensity can vary to an enormous extent across different regions of a country on the subnational level. For example, one common definition of a war chooses an operationalisation of 1,000 combat deaths per country per year (Pettersson and Wallensteen, 2015). This is insufficiently differentiated for this evaluation due to the fact that (a) the size of the country and (b) the distribution on the subnational level are not taken into account. The starting point here is therefore the number of combat deaths per 100,000 inhabitants on the subnational level. A detailed definition can be found in the Annex (Section 9.2).

With regard to the temporal definition of the post-conflict context, the expectation is that an intense conflict will not come to an abrupt end, but rather that violence will continue to occur for a few years in the immediate aftermath of the peak intensity. The risk of the conflict reigniting is also highest in these years. The evaluation is therefore based on the assumption that peacebuilding is particularly important during this period.

However, absorption and reception capacity is low in the period immediately after the conflict. It normally takes two or three years before development cooperation can resume its activities in a locality. Consequently, for the purposes of this evaluation, the post-conflict phase begins three years after the intense phase of conflict. At the same time, the repercussions of the conflict on social structures and norms diminish over time. In recognition of this fact, countries are only considered to meet the definition of a post-conflict context up to a maximum of 18 years after the intense conflict.

Based on the definition chosen, a total of 11 BMZ cooperation partners were defined as post-conflict countries: Burundi, Colombia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Ukraine. Four were selected for comparative case studies (Colombia, Liberia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka). The remaining seven countries (Burundi, Ethiopia, Georgia, Nepal, Rwanda, Uganda and Ukraine) were included in the evaluation as part of a desk study, for which we analysed documents and interviewed country officers within the BMZ and in the implementing organisations.

Georgia is a special case in the selection of countries: its classification as a post-conflict context goes back to the territorial conflict over Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which culminated in war in 2008. However, the interviews with the implementing organisations (Int. 1, 2)²⁴ revealed that although official German development cooperation was engaged in regional cooperation, it had not placed a focus on the thematic area of “peace/conflict prevention” during the reference period of the evaluation. Therefore, Georgia was not included in the document analysis.

Selection of case study countries

From the statistical population of 11 post-conflict countries, four case study countries were chosen on the basis of three criteria:

1. Relevance of the portfolio at the interface with “peace and security” and “gender equality”: In order to ensure that the portfolio gives due regard to the objectives of both thematic areas, the analysis examined the proportion of projects in the 11 countries in which both themes appear in the module proposal as at least a significant project objective. This was operationalised through the overlap between the policy markers for “peace and security” (PS marker) and “gender equality” (GE marker). The analysis revealed that in Colombia in particular, a very high number of projects incorporate both gender equality and peace and security as at least “significant” (i.e. subsidiary) objectives. By the same token, Georgia and Rwanda could be excluded as case study countries because the portfolios for these countries either do not cover the themes at all or only have a tiny proportion of relevant projects.
2. Level of development expenditure measured by the BMZ’s ODA expenditure:²⁵ High ministry expenditure in a country reflects the importance attached to it in the BMZ portfolio. For this analysis a period of 11 years (2006-2016) was selected. During this period, Pakistan received the highest volume of ODA expenditure and was therefore selected as a case study country based on its importance as a cooperation partner of the BMZ.
3. Type of cooperation with the partner country: The BMZ works with its cooperation countries in a variety of ways. Cooperation can take place within the framework of a bilateral, thematic or regional partnership. The regional programme “Fragile States of West Africa”²⁶ directly addresses conflicts in the West African region, and hence, Liberia was included. Sri Lanka was selected as a pilot study because of its longstanding bilateral cooperation with Germany on the thematic priority of peacebuilding/conflict prevention.

²⁴ To preserve the confidentiality of the interviews, these are cited in the report in the form “Int.” plus a sequential number.

²⁵ The figures shown for ODA expenditures were the actual outflows of funds from the BMZ (referred to as “disbursements” in the CRS database) to the recipient countries. Since the evaluation considered ODA expenditures over a lengthy period of time, it referred to inflation-adjusted disbursements in constant US dollars.

²⁶ The group of “fragile states of West Africa” includes Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. This is one of 3 groups of countries addressed by the BMZ within the framework of regional cooperation.

4. **Geographical representation:** To ensure that the selection of cases is as heterogeneous as possible in order to increase external validity (Patton, 1990), the case study countries were selected with due regard to achieving broad geographical coverage across continents. By including Colombia, Pakistan and Liberia in the final selection, this has been accomplished.

Project selection for the document analysis and the in-depth case studies

To identify potential projects for the document analysis and the in-depth case studies, the evaluation team obtained lists of measures from the Modular Extensible Management Financial Information System (MeMFIS) of official development cooperation and data from the Project Processing System (*Projektbearbeitungssystem*, PBS) and narrowed them down by applying restrictions according to the following criteria:

- **Budget title:** bilateral Technical and Financial Cooperation, Special Initiatives on “Displacement” and “One World – No Hunger”, and Transitional Development Assistance. To take account of thematic and regional cooperation in Georgia and Liberia, measures from the “Caucasus Initiative” and the regional project “Fragile States of West Africa” were also included.
- **Implementing organisation:** GIZ or KfW
- **Volume:** project volume of at least 600,000 euros
- **Government commitment period:** 2013–2018
- **Development policy marker:** PS and GE marker is assigned, numbered at least 1 (at least a “significant objective”) in each case

When selecting the projects, the team took care – wherever possible – to include the various development cooperation instruments (Technical and Financial Cooperation, Special Initiatives and Transitional Development Assistance) and to select projects from the different priority areas of the countries concerned. However, because the countries differ greatly in the content of their portfolios and the types of cooperation taking place, it was not always possible to reflect every development cooperation instrument or sector.

Another limitation of criteria-based project selection relates to the assignment of the PS and GE marker. In some countries (Georgia, Nepal), the PS marker was not assigned or did not meet the required criteria (at least PS1 and GE1 marker), which considerably narrowed the project selection, especially for Financial Cooperation projects. In comparison with KfW, GIZ has a significantly higher proportion of projects in its portfolio which fulfil the criterion that peace and security and gender equality must be at least “significant” objectives.

After narrowing the lists of measures in the 11 post-conflict countries by applying the restrictive criteria above, the number of projects remaining was 110 (121 including projects from the regional programmes). These constituted the potential projects qualifying for selection. For the purposes of the document analysis, the team requested information about a total of 32 projects from the implementing organisations, which in turn were able to supply documentation for 26 projects. There were 6 projects that could not be included in the analysis for various reasons, such as not having reached the stage of operational implementation. Also, the “Special Initiative” and “Transitional Development Assistance” budget titles have their own specific planning criteria, which mean that certain parts of the documentation need not necessarily exist.

The team used the same criteria to select the projects in the case study countries. A total of 21 projects in the four case study countries were analysed for the detailed case studies. Table 2 presents an overview of the projects analysed either in the document analysis or in the case study countries, broken down by implementing organisation.²⁷

²⁷ For Liberia, one further project, which had been assigned a GE2/PS0 marker, was included in addition to those on the list of measures. This was done because there were no ongoing GE2 projects in the case study countries which met the above criteria (peace and security as a significant objective [PS1 marker] or principal objective [PS2 marker]) and hence, the only way to include a GE2 project in the analysis was in combination with a PS0 marker. An additional project in Sri Lanka was also included, for which the data made no reference to the PS marker but which does in fact have a PS2 marker.

Table 2 Projects analysed in the document analysis and the in-depth case studies, by implementing organisation

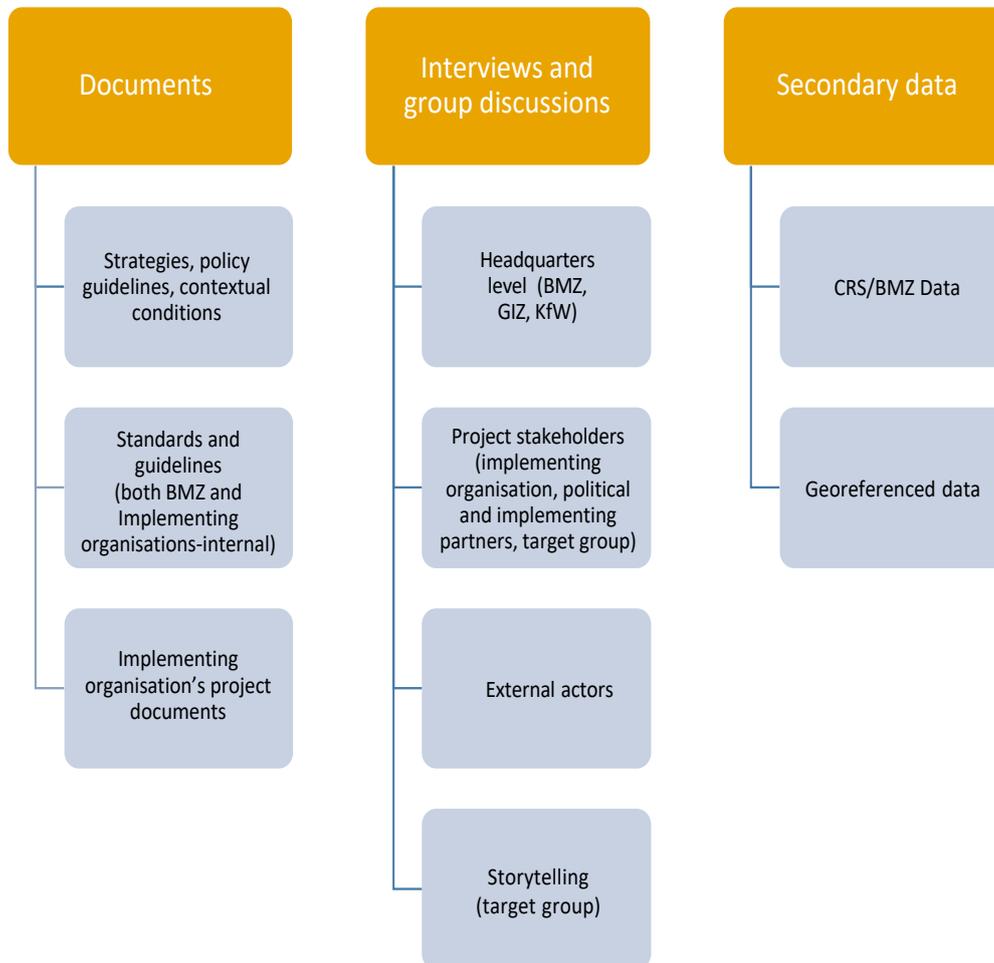
Country	Number of GIZ projects analysed (column 1)	Total number of GIZ projects in implementation or with a pledge of support (column 2)	Number of KfW projects analysed (column 3)	Total number of KfW projects in implementation or with a pledge of support (column 4)	Total of all projects analysed (columns 1 + 3)
Document analysis					
Burundi	3	5	1	2	4
Ethiopia	2	3	2	13	4
Nepal	3	7	-	2	3
Rwanda	4	4	-	-	4
Uganda	2	3	1	5	3
Ukraine	6	10	2	6	8
Total projects in document analysis	20	32	6	28	26
Detailed case studies					
Colombia	5	14	1	10	6
Liberia	4	5	2	4	6
Pakistan	2	4	3	5	5
Sri Lanka	4	7	-	1	4
Total projects in case studies	15	30	6	20	21

Source: own presentation.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

The evaluation is based on large amounts of primary and secondary data. The sources as well as the methods used for data collection, presented in overview form in Figure 4, are described below.

Figure 4 Sources and data collection methods for the evaluation



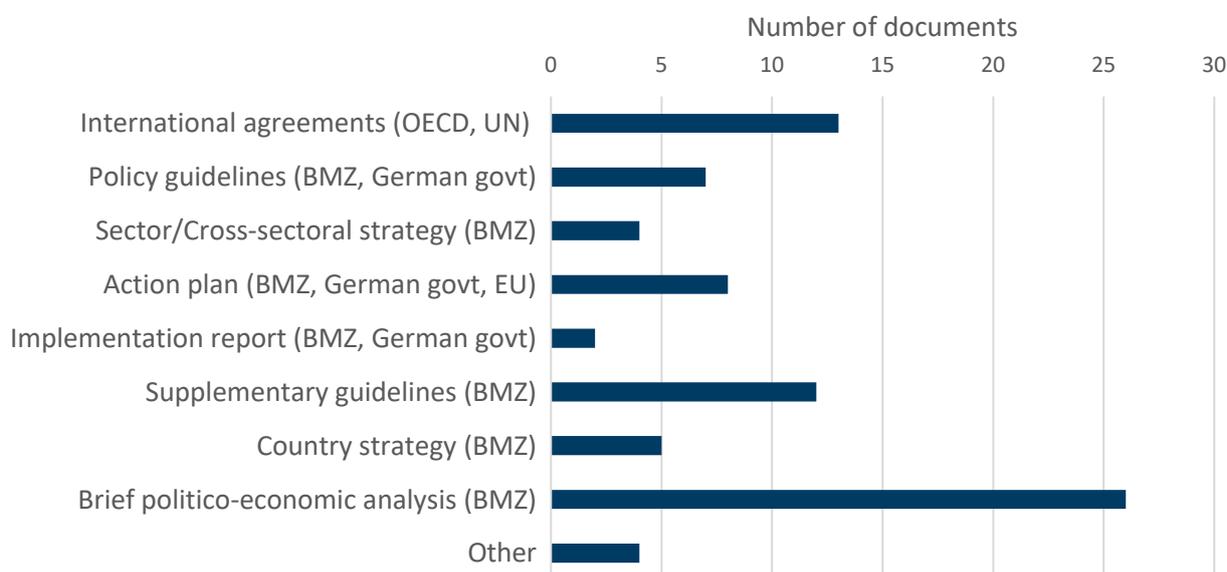
Source: own presentation.

Strategy documents and process and project documentation

In a desk study, we analysed a wide range of strategy documents as well as process and project documentation. The assessment concerned whether and to what extent documents deal with the gender-conflict nexus coherently. For our analysis of the strategy documents and the formal processes set down in the process documentation, we examined international conventions, national guidelines, strategy papers, country strategies, supplementary guidelines, brief politico-economic analyses, and action plans²⁸ and implementation reports.

²⁸ This category encompasses National Action Plans, implementation plans, and reports on strategies.

Figure 5 Number of German government and BMZ strategy papers and process documents analysed, by type

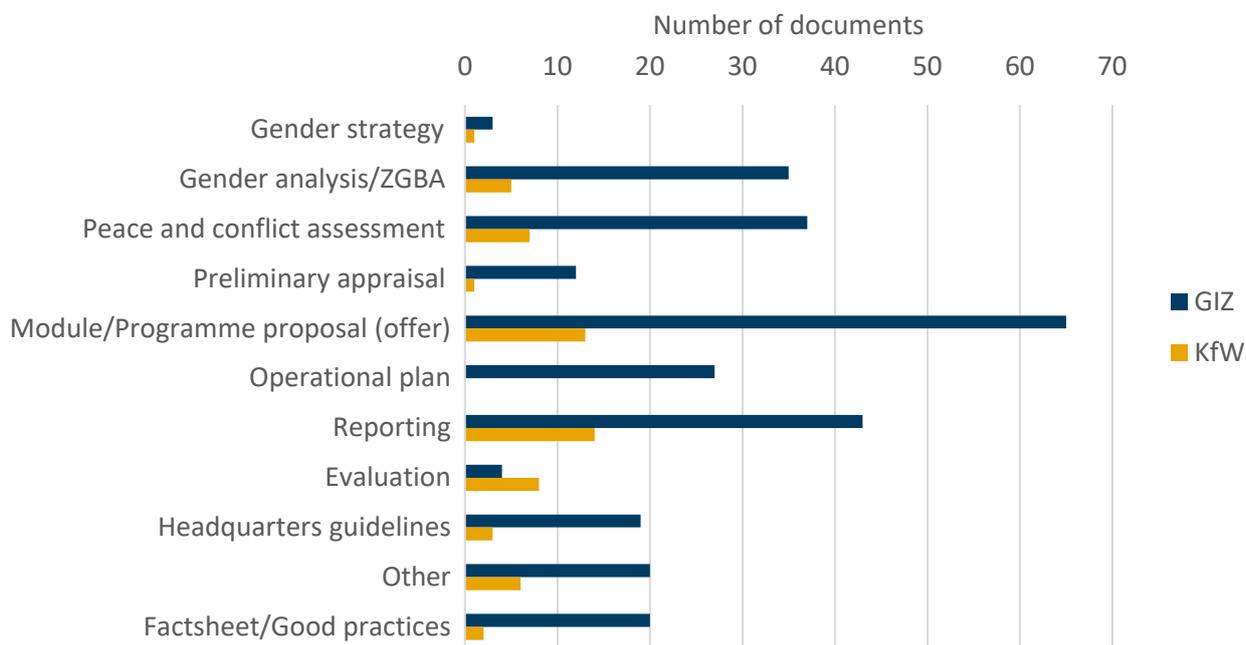


Source: own presentation.

In order to analyse the practical implementation of the process, the team examined procedural documents – such as gender strategies or procedural instructions from the implementing organisations – along with the project documentation of the 47 selected projects. This included consulting the standards specified by BMZ for the implementing organisations and – as far as possible – these organisations’ internal standards on the thematic areas of “gender equality” and “peace and conflict”. For example, in 2016, GIZ established its internal Safeguards+Gender management system, designed to review how gender is anchored in preliminary appraisals and module proposals (GIZ, 2017).

A total of 344 documents from the 11 post-conflict countries included in the study were analysed as part of the evaluation. The evaluation team requested the following documentation for all projects: the module²⁹ and programme proposals, with the two accompanying analyses (gender analysis at GIZ, ZGBA at KfW) and the peace and conflict assessment (PCA). If the implementing organisations were in possession of reports (project progress report, joint reports, final report) and any previous evaluations, these were also requested. Additionally, the team requested the preliminary appraisals for projects commissioned after the Joint Procedural Reform of 2017, the plans of operations in the four case study countries, and any other project documents relevant to the gender-conflict nexus.

²⁹ Or the equivalent predecessor documents: offer or appraisal report and modification offer.

Figure 6 Number of documents analysed, by type and implementing organisation³⁰

Note: ZGBA = Zielgruppen- und Betroffenenanalyse (Target group and stakeholder analysis).

Source: own presentation.

Figure 6 shows the documents we analysed, broken down by type and implementing organisation. It was not possible to analyse the same number of documents for all projects, for several reasons:

1. Among the selected cases were projects for which a government commitment had been received by 2018 and, at the time of the study, module proposals (or equivalent predecessor documents – offer or appraisal report and modification offer) were available, but no reporting documentation as yet;
2. For reasons such as urgency or cooperation with a UN agency, the planning process for some projects deviated from the normal procedure, which meant that certain analyses were not (yet) available;
3. Under the procedural standards for KfW projects administered through a UN executing agency, KfW is not obliged to prepare certain analyses.

Interviews and focus group discussions

While information made explicit in documents is sufficient to assess formal structures of German development cooperation, sensitive techniques for the collection of qualitative data are necessary when it comes to analysing actual practice, including more informal structures and processes (such as the influence of organisational factors; compare Section 6.1). Data of this kind may relate to institutional power relations, values (in terms of what people deem worthwhile or important), the incentives or barriers that exist, or the challenges and opportunities presented by the gender mainstreaming process in post-conflict contexts.

In comparison with document analyses and more standardised data collection methods, interviews and focus group discussions allow interviewees to share their **subjective perceptions and assessments**. Whereas interviews concentrate on obtaining information from people as individuals, **group-based data collection instruments** are useful for investigating collective orientations as well as underlying norms in a specific

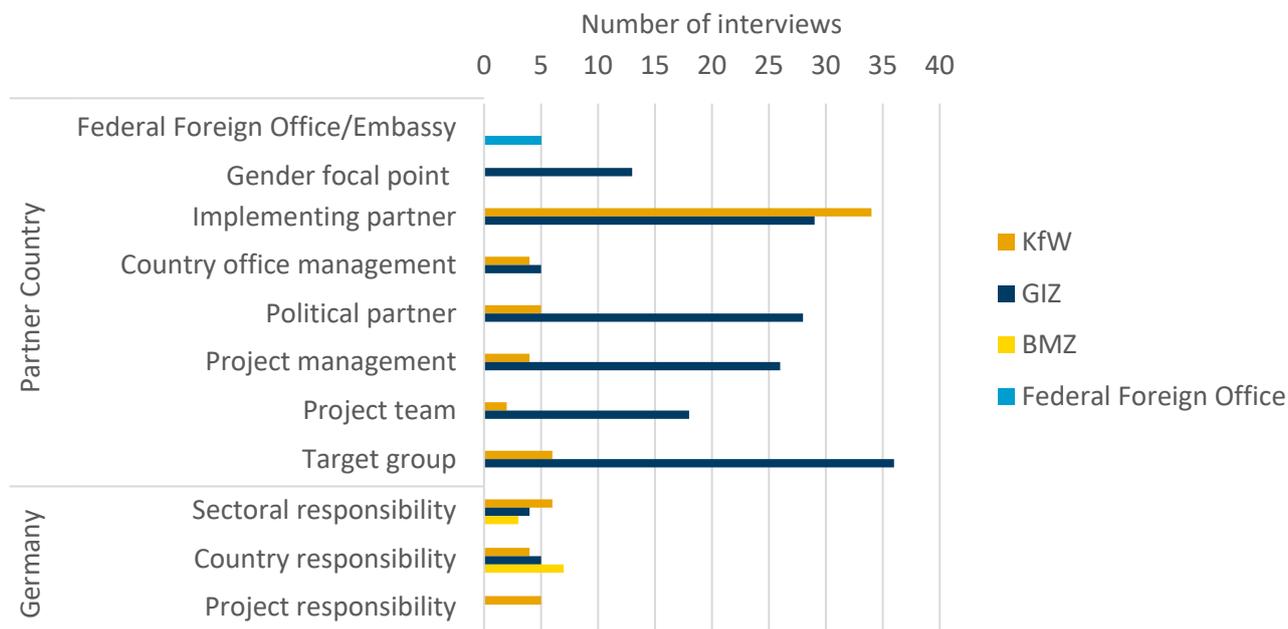
³⁰ The term “operational planning” denotes the corresponding plans of the implementing organisation, specifying how the project will be implemented.

collective context (Mäder, 2013). In this evaluation, for example, gender stereotypes within the community of “German development cooperation professionals” or “within the community of gender and peace activists” in a particular country were of interest. This results in both challenges (for example, in terms of bias and thus the generalisability of conclusions) and opportunities (for example, in terms of greater acceptance of evaluation findings; Flick, 2006) with regard to the analysis of the data.

Less standardised data collection methods such as **storytelling** are also favourable in that they give interviewees greater autonomy over the extent and subject matter of the information conveyed. This degree of autonomy is extremely important in a context where it is essential to adopt a gender- and conflict-sensitive approach. From a human rights perspective, this approach allows the interviewees to comment in their own way on how the project was run and the results it achieved. All in all, the storytelling approach contributes to preventing re-traumatisation and discrimination and enabling participation – and there are some instances where it can even bring about empowering effects.

For the evaluation, we conducted interviews in the following forms: **(a) as guideline-based interviews with individuals, (b) as group discussions and (c) as part of a storytelling approach, with an initial prompt question.** We conducted a total of **302 guideline-based interviews with individuals**, some in the four case study countries and some in Germany. The guideline-based interviews conducted during the country case studies included **all relevant stakeholders**: staff of the BMZ country desks for the post-conflict countries, representatives for economic cooperation in the respective embassies, staff of the **implementing organisations**, the national **political partners**, the **local implementing partners**, and **individuals from the target groups** of the projects. We also convened debriefings with representatives of the different stakeholder groups in the four case study countries, in which the provisional findings of the case studies were discussed. The interview guidelines were piloted during the first case study in Sri Lanka and then adapted to suit the specific contexts of the other case studies.

For the interviews in Germany, staff from the relevant technical and sectoral divisions of the BMZ were also interviewed, as were the country managers or officers of the 11 post-conflict countries as well as the project managers from the implementing organisations. Figure 7 provides an overview of all the interviews, broken down by the different stakeholders.

Figure 7 Interviews, by stakeholder

Source: own presentation.

Apart from interviewing the staff directly responsible for the given project or the people directly involved in it, we conducted further interviews with experts from think tanks and academia (8 interviews), civil society (7 interviews) and other donors (30 interviews) in Germany and the case study countries. These additional interviews supply an international perspective on the nexus and supplement the examples of good practice drawn from other donors or from non-governmental development cooperation.

In order to capture the results of the projects in the case study countries from the perspective of the target groups, we made use of the Most Significant Change approach (Davies and Dart, 2005). The aim of this is to “generate and analyse personal accounts of change” (McDonald et al., 2019). As part of the evaluation, we conducted 90 narrative interviews with target groups of the projects under review, and analysed them in terms of the perceived changes in their personal life situations (Davies and Dart, 2005; McDonald et al., 2019)

The **analysis of the documents and the interviews took the form of a qualitative content analysis**, carried out using the software MAXQDA. Taking the theory of change as the foundation, we worked deductively to build a category system, which was then further refined by adding inductive categories. To ensure that the coding was reliable, several trial codings took place at the beginning of the coding phase. This involved having different team members code different document types and comparing the results with each other, before proceeding to sharpen the definitions of the different categories. The documents and the interviews were then coded with reference to the consolidated scheme. For each of the evaluation questions, the results from the different countries, different organisations and different levels (headquarters and country level) were subsequently triangulated and combined in an overall synthesis.

Analysis of secondary data

For the selection of the case study countries and for the portfolio analysis, the evaluation used ODA expenditure data from the database of the OECD Credit Reporting System (CRS). The CRS data is project based and holds multi-donor harmonised information on the ODA provided by the BMZ. In addition, secondary data on official and non-governmental development cooperation provided by the BMZ was collated and analysed.

For the purposes of analysing the geographical allocation of projects in post-conflict areas, we applied georeferencing to the project documents from one selected example country, Colombia. To record the project locations, 17 project progress reports and final reports were searched for any place identifiers, and then georeferenced. The place identifiers and georeferencing were coded in compliance with the AidData standards (Strandow, 2011), using both manual and machine-based coding.

3.5 Limitations

Personal assumptions and possible prejudices about gender roles, gender norms and gender relations influence everyone's perceptions and interpretations, and the evaluators' perceptions of the object of the evaluation are no exception. The evaluation team countered the biases that this might cause by engaging in dialogue with experts with different cultural perspectives, adopting a self-critical and self-reflective approach, and regularly checking their own interpretations with local experts in situ. The evaluation followed the recommendations of the United Nations Evaluation Group on human-rights-based and gender-responsive evaluations (United Nations Evaluation Group, 2014).

This evaluation is based on a non-binary understanding of gender; going beyond the masculine and the feminine, gender identities are understood as diverse and fluid. In practice, however, development cooperation tends to work with the categories "women" and "men". Furthermore, there are countries in which behaviour that deviates from this norm is punishable. The evaluation reflects this development cooperation practice by focusing on the diverse experiences of women and men.

The evaluation team were aware of the resulting limitations as they went about their work. They therefore tried to interview members of the LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans- and intersexual) community. However, these arbitrary impressions do not do justice to the complexity of this issue; to do so, it would be necessary to conduct a separate evaluation focusing on the – frequently very difficult – situation of the LGBTI community.

Ethical issues pertaining to the contexts in which data is collected need to be considered with a high degree of sensitivity. For example, it is especially important to be mindful when talking to people who may have experienced or still are experiencing human rights violations, people affected by traumas, or people who would be at put at risk if their views were to become public. The evaluation team therefore adhered to the do-no-harm principle while collecting the primary data. The storytelling method proved very apt from this point of view, because it let the interviewees decide for themselves which issues they wished to bring up and in how much depth.

While conducting the interviews, the evaluation team was conscious of the challenges arising from the tensions between the methodological aspiration and the reality on the ground (Heucher et al., 2018). Some of the interview partners (political partners, local implementing partners and target groups) mistook the evaluation team for members of GIZ or KfW staff. This came to light due to a growing impression that the interview partners were not expressing themselves as freely as they otherwise might have done. It became clear from individual interviews that the desire to continue working with a German development cooperation project was causing a positive bias among the interviewees. The evaluation team countered this situation by motivating the local consultants to explain the interview situation and the aims and consequences of the evaluation to the interviewees as clearly as possible. Furthermore, the evaluation team engaged in regular reflection on the interview situation and possible biases, making particular efforts to involve the local consultants.

Another challenge concerned the definition of a post-conflict context, since several very heterogeneous countries were to be grouped into one population of interest with reference to a common attribute. Since the experience of a massive outbreak of violence or war is known to influence gender roles and norms (Hughes and Tripp, 2015), the evaluation team chose to base this on the number of fatalities in combat. The evaluation is quite aware that this is only a proxy for the intensity of a conflict and, by definition, expresses no more than the minimum number of lives lost (Pettersson and Wallenstein, 2015). Moreover, this indicator does not reflect the repercussions of the conflict in social and economic terms. Neither, due to its focus on combat, does it reflect the specific situation of women to the same extent as that of men. For example, in

conditions of conflict, women's life expectancy is more severely affected than men's (Plümper and Neumayer, 2006). Given the data to hand and the necessity for comparability across many countries, however, for now this indicator remains the best available proxy for identifying a massive outbreak of violence (Hughes and Tripp; Pettersson and Wallensteen, 2015; Plümper and Neumayer, 2006).

One limitation affecting our study of the subject matter was that not all the internal standards for project implementation were available for every project we analysed for the evaluation. While the BMZ and GIZ made their internal standards and directives available for analysis, KfW did so in extract form or not at all. This meant that even though its staff members were available for interviews, it was only possible to analyse the process at KfW in a more limited way.

As in any empirical study, the external validity of this evaluation – meaning whether it can be generalised to other temporal or geographical contexts – is not a foregone conclusion. Post-conflict contexts are notable for their extreme volatility over time, and each of these contexts is characterised by its own specific influencing factors and trajectories which differentiate it from other post-conflict contexts. Our sampling therefore aimed to cover a broad range of contexts by including four case study countries (21 projects) along with 26 projects analysed by means of a desk study. The collection and analysis of data was designed with a view to analysing the general planning and implementation processes rather than the specific situation in the case study country. The evaluation is therefore in a position to make categorical recommendations on development cooperation processes in post-conflict contexts with a reasonable degree of external validity. This does not imply that the observations made by the evaluation could fully describe particular contexts encountered in future or the practices that would then be appropriate.

4. PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS

The portfolio analysis presents the BMZ portfolio in the 11 post-conflict countries and, referring to three criteria, analyses the extent to which it is suited to the purpose of supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts (EQ 1.7). The chapter begins with a brief overview of the data used and how it was processed. Next, we introduce the criteria for the evaluation of the portfolio. The chapter concludes with an overall assessment of evaluation question 1.7.

Data basis for the portfolio analysis

The portfolio analysis used several types of data:

1. *The OECD's CRS database.* The CRS data is reported by member countries to the OECD-DAC and allows international comparisons between donors, sectors, thematic areas or instruments. The CRS database collects information on the activities that donors have pledged to undertake (their commitments) and the volume of their actual cash outflows (their disbursements). Our analysis makes use of the disbursements to express how much money was actually spent. The CRS dataset we used covers the years 2008-2018 and contains all measures having the German government as the "donor", the BMZ as the state "agency", and KfW and GIZ as the primary delivery "channels" in the 11 post-conflict contexts, which are coded as "recipients".³¹ However, the CRS database is subject to some limitations: firstly, it only contains information on projects currently in progress. Secondly, there is no means of recording the different BMZ budget titles in the database, which means that the different BMZ instruments cannot be differentiated in the analysis. On that basis it is not possible to delineate the object of the evaluation (bilateral official German development cooperation, the Special Initiative "Displacement" and Transitional Development Assistance) with complete precision.
2. *Extracts from the BMZ's MeMFIS database.* The data was supplied by the BMZ and encompasses its commitments and commissions for the 11 post-conflict countries for the budget years 2013-2018. The portfolio analysis makes supplementary use of this data for two reasons: (1) unlike the CRS data, it makes it possible to differentiate the BMZ instruments and budget titles more precisely; and (2) it contains the national "peace and security" marker, which is an important factor for the evaluation's selection of cases (Section 3.4). The portfolio analysis only took account of projects for which a commitment had been given in the period 2013-2018 and which had already been commissioned. The markers quoted reflect the markers assigned at the time of commissioning.
3. *Georeferenced data.* This was extracted from the project documentation obtained. Additional sources used were the georeferenced dataset on conflicts from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (Högbladh, 2019; Sundberg and Melander, 2013) and other secondary data.³²

The BMZ portfolio in the 11 post-conflict countries

The evaluation team assessed the BMZ portfolio with reference to three criteria. The first criterion was whether the portfolio is geared towards addressing gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests. To answer this question, we analysed (a) the extent to which there were projects pursuing gender equality as a principal or significant objective and (b) the sectors in which the BMZ was engaged in the 11 post-conflict countries. Based on the data to hand, the first criterion could only take account of the promotion of gender equality. The second criterion was the degree to which the gender-conflict nexus is taken up in the portfolio. To establish this, we looked into (a) the extent to which projects had both "gender equality" and "peace and security" as principal or significant objectives concurrently, and (b) in which sectors this occurred. The third criterion for the portfolio analysis was whether projects with the objectives of "gender equality" and "peace and security" were active in the former conflict zones. The portfolio analysis concentrated on the instruments

³¹ The search to identify the measures employed the following codes from the CRS database: DonorName: Germany; AgencyName: Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung [Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development]; recipientname: the 11 post-conflict countries; bimulti: 1 (bilateral); aid_t: C01; channelreportedname: GIZ, KfW, GTZ (before 2012).

³² See Box 7.

of bilateral Technical Cooperation (TC) and Financial Cooperation (FC), Transitional Development Assistance (TDA) and Special Initiatives (SIs), delimiting these with as much precision as the datasets allowed.

Criterion 1: To what extent is the portfolio geared towards addressing gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests?

The promotion of gender equality is a declared objective and quality criterion of German development cooperation. Since 2000, the BMZ has actively pursued the two approaches of empowerment and gender mainstreaming (BMZ, 2014a). Meanwhile, gender equality has been integrated into German development cooperation as a cross-cutting task.³³ The OECD's "GE marker"³⁴ provides an important means of verifying the commitment to gender equality (see Box 6).

Box 6 Introduction to the concept: Development policy markers in development cooperation

The OECD-DAC system of policy markers is important as a systematic and comparable means of recording the engagement and resources contributed by OECD member states in specific thematic areas. The OECD established the DAC identification system in 1997, initially with four markers, among them the GE ("gender equality") marker. All markers follow a three-level rating system: (0) project has no effects on the thematic area, (1) thematic area is a "significant objective" of the project, and (2) thematic area is the "principal objective" of the project. The function of the GE marker within this system is to help assess the extent to which measures contribute to supporting gender equality and women's rights (OECD, 2020a). It has been obligatory since 2000 for German development cooperation to report in accordance with the standards/criteria of the DAC marker system (BMZ, 2014a).

In addition to the DAC markers, German development cooperation also uses three national markers, one of which is the PS ("peace and security") marker (GIZ, 2014). The national markers are subject to assessment following the logic of the DAC system. It has been mandatory since 2013 to apply the PS marker to all German development cooperation projects.

Marker	0	1	2
Peace and security (PS)	The project is not geared towards peace and security.	Peace and security are an important subsidiary objective (sub-aspect of the programme or module objective, output), but not one of the essential reasons for implementing the project.	Peace and security are the project objective (expected long-term impact, programme and/or module level); that is to say, they are crucial reasons for implementing the project. This can be checked by asking: would the project still have been implemented even without this development policy objective?

³³ The Gender Equality Strategy (BMZ, 2014a) added a third pillar, policy dialogue, to the BMZ gender approach; the complete approach is based on 3 pillars: gender mainstreaming, empowerment and policy dialogue. Because the work on policy dialogue cannot be reflected by the portfolio data used, the present evaluation does not mention this pillar here.

³⁴ "Gender equality policy marker" (see OECD, 2016).

Marker	0	1	2
Gender equality (GE)	The project was checked to see how it contributed to supporting gender equality, and it was found that gender equality was not an explicit objective of the project.	Gender equality is a significant objective, i.e. an objective that is important and anchored in the logic of the project, but not a critical reason to implement the development cooperation measure.	Gender equality is the principal objective of the development cooperation measure, which means that, but for this objective, the measure would not be implemented.

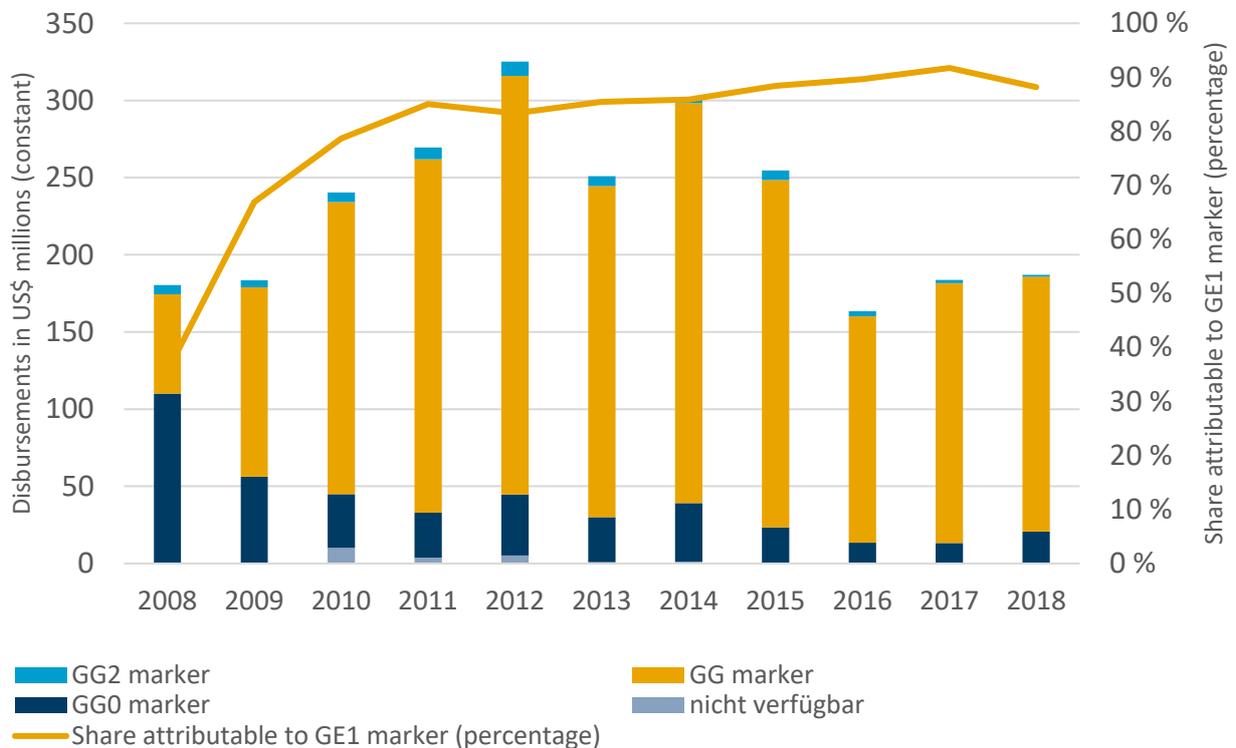
However, the assignment of markers does not always match the ambition of the assignment criteria. In the first few years after the introduction of the GE marker, it became apparent that the assignment criteria were not clearly defined. This was giving rise to divergent interpretations, resulting in imprecise classification of projects (GTZ, 2006). The assignment criteria were revised, one of the aims being to frame them in more results-oriented language. The GE marker should be defined in the early stages of programme conception and development, and should be derived from the results of the gender analysis. However, the conceptional ambition expressed in the gender marker is often at variance with the actual content of projects. Internal studies by the implementing organisations confirm this (Doc. 26, 27).

The majority of BMZ-financed engagement in the 11 countries pursues gender equality as a significant objective. At the same time, the share of BMZ projects with a GE2 marker is very low in relation to total volume (see Figure 8 for the period 2008–2018, grouped according to GE marker ratings). Since 2014, spending on projects with a GE2 marker has consistently remained below 3 per cent of total disbursements. The line traces the proportion of projects with GE1 markers in relation to the total volume of BMZ disbursements. The BMZ has chiefly anchored the theme of “gender equality” in the portfolio by integrating it as a significant objective.

Between 2008 and 2011, the BMZ recorded a steep rise in the percentage of GE1 markers, which remained at a consistently high level after 2011. Both the steep rise in GE1 markers and steep decline in GE0 markers after 2008 might be attributable to the revision of the criteria for assigning the markers. The revised wording stated that a GE0 rating was to be assigned “only in exceptional cases, for which the special reasons must be stated” (“*nur in besonders zu begründenden Ausnahmefällen*”, GTZ, 2006: 10). At the same time, the BMZ devotes only a relatively low share of financial resources to GE2 projects. This observation is inconsistent with the gender strategy and especially with the GAP, which envisages an increase in GE2 measures (BMZ, 2014a, 2016a).

In summary, it can be said that the vast majority of projects in the 11 countries pursue gender equality as a significant objective, which is a basic precondition for being able to identify and address gender-specific needs in post-conflict contexts. Nevertheless, only a minority of projects in the period under review were geared specifically towards gender equality. This represents a level of significance that is comparatively low and, moreover, stagnating when viewed as a share of development cooperation in post-conflict contexts as a whole.

Figure 8 Total volume of BMZ disbursements via GIZ and KfW in the 11 post-conflict countries, by GE marker, with percentage share attributable to GE1 marker, 2008–2018



Source: OECD (2020b). Legend – Left axis: beige = not assigned, blue = GE0 marker; orange = GE1 marker; turquoise = GE2 marker. Right axis: continuous line = share of total disbursements attributable to GE1 marker. GTZ included prior to 2013 as the implementing organisation for Technical Cooperation.

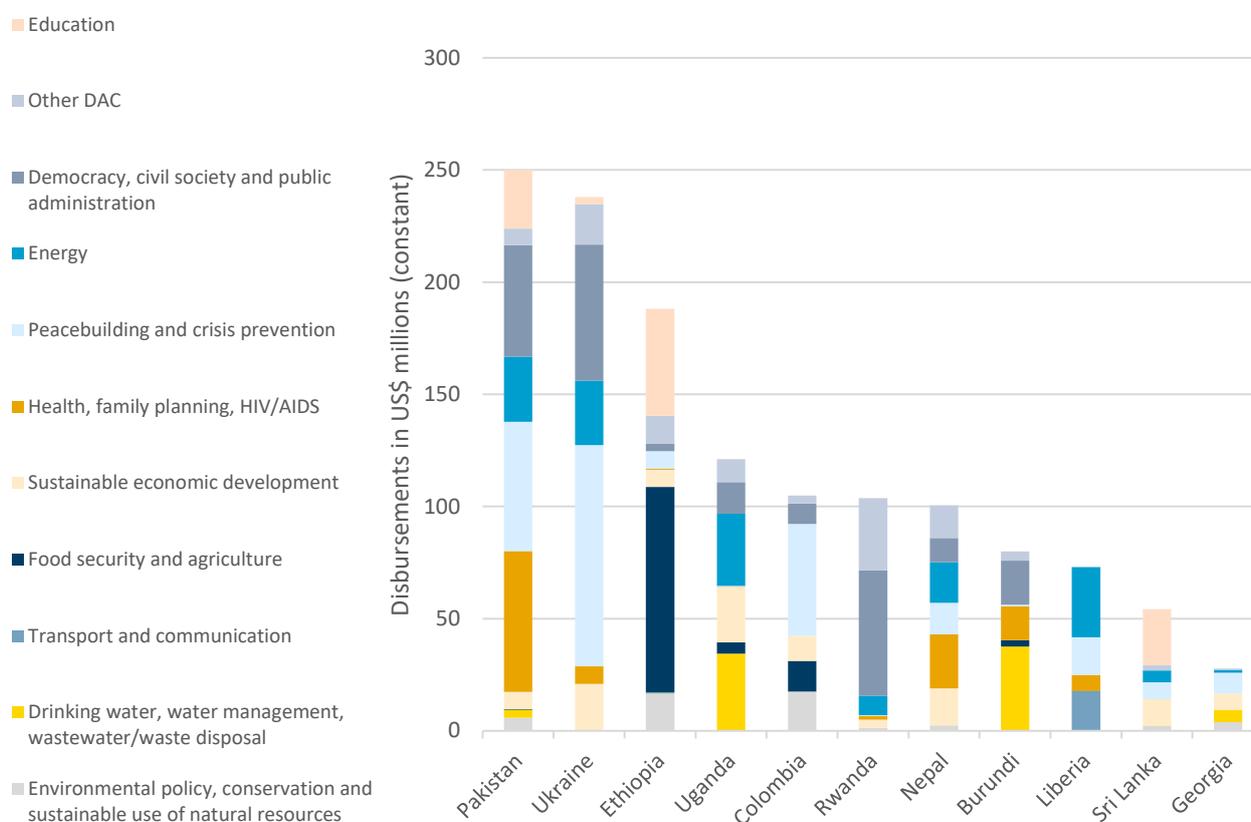
The second question contributing to the assessment of this criterion concerns the sectors in which the BMZ is engaged in the 11 post-conflict countries. The term “sector” refers to the sectors that the BMZ has defined for thematic cooperation.³⁵ The CRS database does not record the BMZ sectors but does collect purpose codes identifying the sector in which an intervention will deliver its outputs (OECD, 2020c). The evaluation team matched these purpose codes to the BMZ sectors.³⁶

There are obvious linkages between gender equality and certain sectors such as “health” or “education”. But the potential for supporting gender equality in other sectors, such as “energy” or “transport and communication”, is not apparent at first glance. Nevertheless, the evaluation shows (Chapter 5) that gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests have multiple dimensions and range across all sectors. This creates possible entry points for working on the gender-conflict nexus in all sectors.

³⁵ The BMZ subdivides its thematic work into the following sectors: education; democracy, civil society and public administration; energy; peacebuilding and crisis prevention; health, family planning, HIV/AIDS; sustainable economic development; food security, agriculture; transport and communication; drinking water, water management; environmental policy, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources (BMZ, 2008).

³⁶ The principal sectors from the CRS database were mapped to the BMZ sectors as follows: education: 110-114; democracy, civil society and public administration: 151; energy: 231-234, 236; peacebuilding and crisis prevention: 152, 700-740; health: 120-130; family planning, HIV/AIDS; sustainable economic development: 240-250, 321, 331; food security, agriculture: 311-313; transport and communication: 210; drinking water: 140, water management; environmental policy, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources: 400-410; DAC-other: 160, 235, 322-323, 430, 500, 510, 600, 910, 930, 998 (BMZ, 2020b).

Figure 9 BMZ disbursements delivered by GIZ and KfW in the 11 post-conflict countries, by sector, 2013-2018



Source: OECD (2020b); own mapping of purpose codes to equivalent BMZ sectors (OECD, 2020b).

The largest share of BMZ spending in the 11 post-conflict countries flows into the sectors “peacebuilding and crisis prevention” and “democracy, civil society and public administration”. Figure 9 shows that financial resources are made available in all 11 countries to tackle peace and conflict issues directly via work in the “peacebuilding and crisis prevention” sector. Particularly in the case study countries Pakistan and Colombia, a high proportion of the total expenditure is committed to work in this sector.

At the same time, activities are taking place in many other sectors which have potential for addressing gender- and conflict-specific needs, for example in the sectors of “health”, “food security”, “drinking water and water management” and “sustainable economic development”. The example of Sri Lanka makes this clear: cooperation is focused and thematic, concentrated on the priority area of peacebuilding and crisis prevention. However, the implemented activities that contribute to this priority area are found in many different sectors, for example “education and sustainable economic development”.

To sum up on this question, the BMZ portfolio accords great financial importance to the “peacebuilding and crisis prevention” sector in all countries. However, a large proportion of the disbursements are directed to other sectors which are fundamentally just as suitable for addressing gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests.

Criterion 2: To what extent do the projects contribute to both “gender equality” and “peace and security” concurrently?

The second criterion deals with the question of to what extent the projects contribute to both gender equality and peace and security concurrently. The underlying assumption here is that the markers assigned to projects at the time of commissioning enable us to gather information about the degree to which the gender-conflict nexus is addressed. Since the PS marker is only available in the BMZ list of measures, we use the ministry’s data for the following analysis. In contrast to the previous analysis, this time the analytical focus is no longer on the financial volume but on the number of projects. From this we obtain an impression of what percentage of projects take account of the gender-conflict nexus. The analysis only included projects that had been assigned GE and PS markers.³⁷

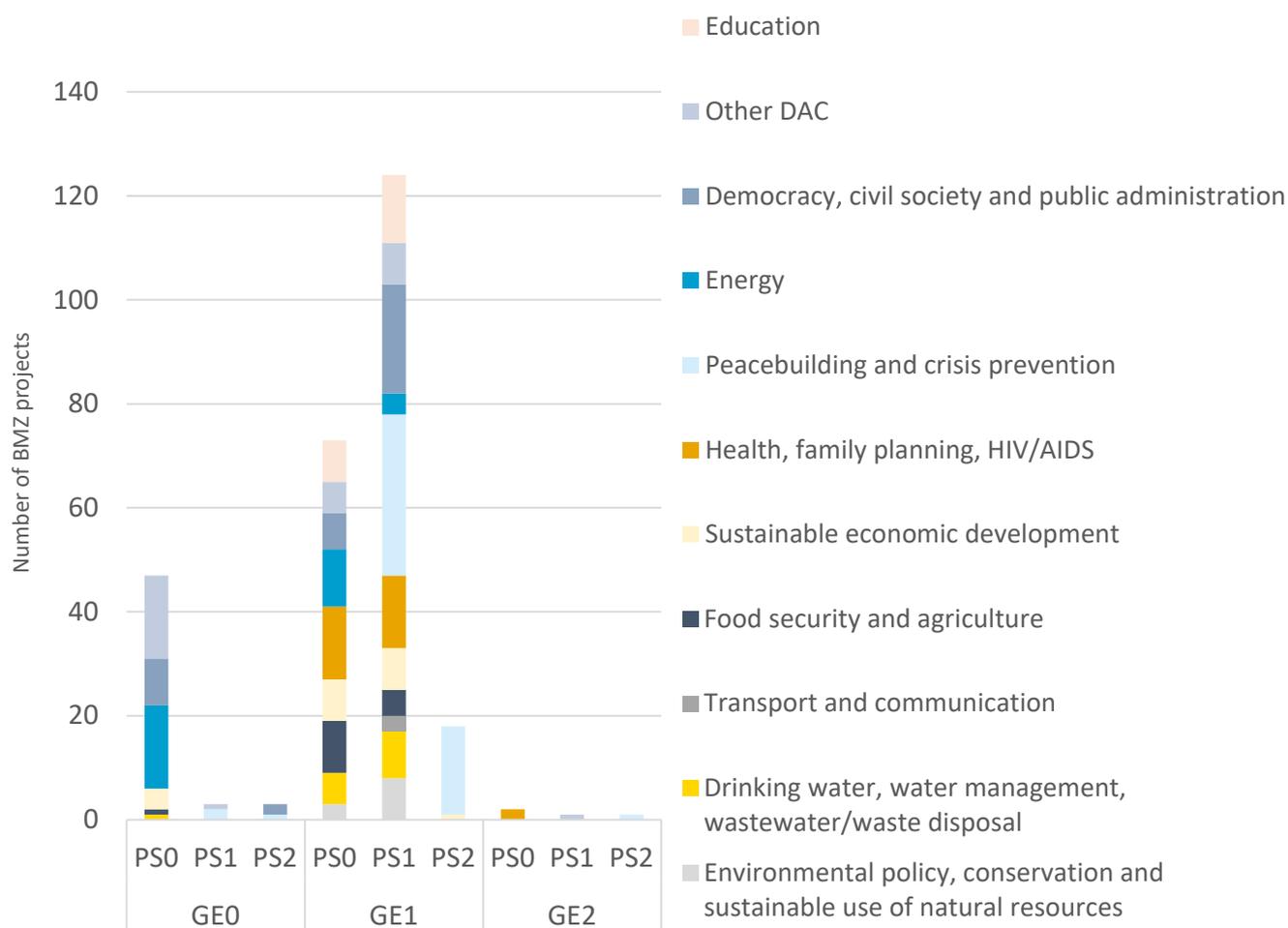
In the 11 post-conflict countries, projects most frequently dealt with the two thematic areas as concurrent subsidiary objectives (46 per cent). Just under half of projects (45 per cent) were not involved in the peace and security sector. Only one project was tackling the two themes as joint principal objectives in the period under review.³⁸ Figure 10 shows the different combinations of GE and PS markers and their sectoral overlaps. The left-hand side of the figure charts projects that do not contribute to gender equality. From this it is apparent that no involvement in gender equality usually coincides with no contribution to peace and security, and the markers assigned are PS0 and GE0 (column furthest to the left, 19 per cent). 34 per cent of these projects are situated in the energy sector, where it is considered difficult to show evidence of effects on gender equality because of the long results chains (Doc. 9). The middle section of the figure shows projects in which effects on gender equality were identified. It is evident here that the largest number of projects (46 per cent) address the two thematic areas as significant objectives. However, a sizeable share (27 per cent) of this group identify effects on gender equality but not on peace and security. The sectoral view reveals that tackling the two themes as concurrent subsidiary objectives is fundamentally possible, and is indeed being practised, in all sectors. What is surprising, in view of the post-conflict contexts in these countries, is the large proportion of projects that have no designated orientation towards peace and security (45 per cent in total).

The right-hand side of Figure 10 charts the number of projects in which work on gender equality is defined as the principal objective (GE2 marker). As discussed in the previous section, the proportion of GE2 projects in the BMZ portfolio is very low. The same is seen in Figure 10: in the overall portfolio, only 1 per cent of projects include gender equality as the principal objective of the development cooperation measure, and only 8 per cent have defined peace and security as their principal objective. There was just one project which, for one phase, included both themes as principal objectives; that is, it had the combination of a PS2 and a GE2 marker. This direct linkage of the markers reflects an important sectoral interface, however, and shows that the two thematic areas are being tackled in an integrated manner.

³⁷ PS and GE markers were not available in certain instances, according to BMZ databases. These projects are not included in the analysis.

³⁸ During the period 2013-2018, the GE2/PS2 marker was only assigned to one Financial Cooperation module of one programme. It should be noted in this regard that both the predecessor and the successor module had GE1 markers (Doc. 170).

Figure 10 GE and PS markers and their sectoral overlaps in the 11 post-conflict countries, by number of projects, 2013 – 2018



Source: own presentation based on BMZ databases. BMZ sector classifications reconstructed from CRS purpose codes.

Within the individual sectors, purpose codes are assigned in order to define the activities more precisely. For example, purpose code 15170 within the “peacebuilding and crisis prevention” sector registers measures aimed at supporting gender equality, while purpose code 15180, which has been in use since 2015, records measures to overcome violence against women. In the period under analysis (2013-2018), there were no projects working in these two areas in the 11 post-conflict countries.

To sum up on criterion 2, the vast majority of projects address the theme of “gender equality” as a significant objective, and the objectives of “gender equality” and “peace and conflict” are tackled together in all sectors in just under half of the projects. Only a small proportion of projects specifically address one or other of the themes as a principal objective. The intersection of the two themes within a project is extremely rare in the post-conflict countries we analysed.

Criterion 3: Does the portfolio address the gender-conflict nexus in the post-conflict zones?

The third criterion concerns the subnational level and considers the extent to which German development cooperation targets post-conflict zones on a subnational level for its work on gender equality. By way of acknowledgement that conflicts are often regionally restricted, the evaluation uses

a definition of post-conflict contexts that delimits conflict zones on a subnational level. In keeping with this approach, the evaluation therefore assesses the allocation of German development cooperation at the subnational level in terms of the following question: in which regions of post-conflict countries are there BMZ projects that have the promotion of gender equality as an objective?

The evaluation's working hypothesis is that in areas where people have lived through a severe conflict, the conflict can give rise to changes in social structures. These areas should therefore provide donors with entry points for addressing the gender-conflict nexus. As preconditions for this, donors must be active in the former conflict zones, and the projects being implemented there must have gender equality and peace and security as (at least) significant objectives.

During pre-clarification talks for the evaluation, it emerged that German development cooperation is not active in the former conflict areas of Ethiopia, for example. In other countries such as Colombia, Pakistan or Sri Lanka, the focus of German development cooperation is on the former conflict areas. Nevertheless, the project documents and analytical tools we studied reveal numerous programmatic, institutional and contextual risks associated with working in former conflict zones.

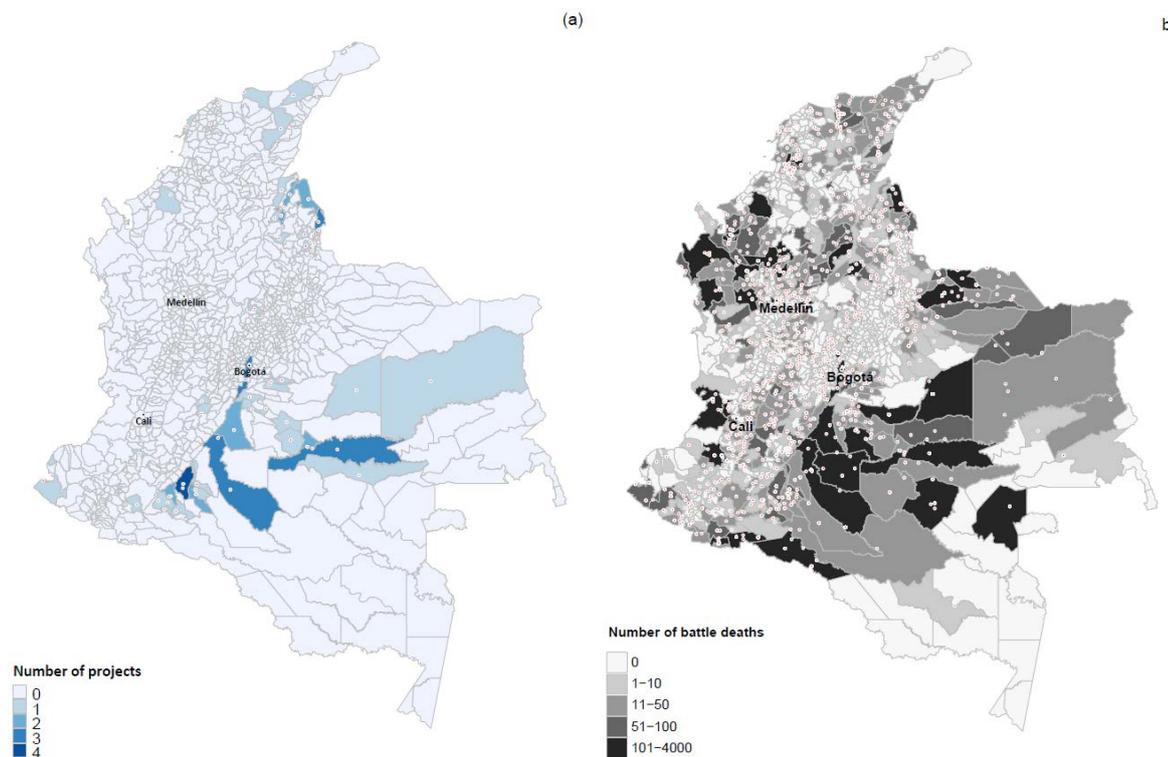
As yet, very little is known about the subnational allocation factors of German development cooperation or about the influence of conflict on the allocation of development cooperation. One reason for this is the lack of any systematic recording of data containing place identifiers or information on project locations. As part of the evaluation of development cooperation in fragile contexts (Wencker and Verspohl, 2020), linguistic data-processing methods were used to extract location identifiers from evaluation reports. These were then georeferenced by assigning GPS coordinates to the locations identified in the evaluation reports. Building on this work, we used Colombia as a case study to analyse whether the German development cooperation projects having gender equality and peace and security as objectives are placed strategically in post-conflict zones.

In order to extract data on the locations of German development cooperation, project documents for 17 governmental and non-governmental development cooperation projects in Colombia were georeferenced. The projects were selected on the basis of the underlying data and the criteria described in Section 3.3.³⁹ Due to the evaluation's focus on gender mainstreaming activities, all the projects we analysed have gender equality and peace and security as at least significant objectives. The place identifiers were extracted and matched to locations both manually and using machine-assisted techniques based on linguistic data processing. The chosen procedure adhered to the AidData standards for the georeferencing of data (Strandow, 2011).

The geo-referenced place identifiers were then subjected to statistical analysis. Allowing for various control variables, this confirms that a previous occurrence of conflict in a location is associated with an increased probability of projects in that location with gender equality as a significant objective (see Box 7). This permits the interpretation that in Colombia, particularly in its former conflict zones, there are active projects with precisely this significant objective, so that the BMZ is addressing gender-specific needs. Figure 11 shows the two main variables of the analysis and charts the distribution of the 17 projects within Colombia as well as the distribution of combat deaths for the period 1994-2004.

³⁹ In order to be able to include more project documentation, the period was extended to 2012-2018.

Figure 11 Colombia: a) georeferenced project locations (2012–2018) and b) number of combat deaths (1994–2004).



Source: own presentation based on georeferenced project documents from 17 governmental and non-governmental development cooperation projects in Colombia (Figure a) and data on the number of combat deaths from Sundberg and Melander (2013) (Figure b). The shading in Figure a) indicates the number of projects in the respective municipalities; the dots represent the project locations. The shading in Figure b) represents the aggregated number of “battle deaths”, and the dots, the “battle sites”.

Box 7 Excursus: Geographical allocation of projects with gender equality as a significant objective

The evaluation carried out a detailed analysis to gain a more precise picture of the geographical allocation of international cooperation measures, including those financed by the BMZ, in post-conflict zones. There has been little previous research into this correlation, particularly for projects having gender equality as at least a significant objective. Building on existing research into gender, development and vulnerability, we investigated with reference to the example of Colombia whether donors implement projects in former conflict zones or prefer to work in safer areas. For this purpose, data on the number of combat deaths from 1994 to 2004 (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Sundberg and Melander, 2013) was linked with georeferenced information on the locations of international development cooperation measures in Colombia (2006-2013) (AidData, 2016). The analysis also made use of manually geocoded information on BMZ measures (2012-2018). In order to review relevant administrative, environmental, socio-economic and demographic factors, various kinds of publicly available geodata (satellite-based data, census data, official statistics) were added to the analysis as control variables.

Taking municipalities as the units of analysis, the evaluation used negative binominal counts and logit models to estimate the correlation between the number of combat deaths and the strategic allocation of development cooperation measures. The analysis shows a positive and statistically significant correlation: an increase in the number of combat deaths increases the number of measures in a municipality by 1.3 log units. The same positive correlation occurs when the analysis is carried out for a subset of gender projects. Furthermore, interaction models show that the correlation between the number of projects and the number of combat deaths is stronger for regions with a high proportion of women-headed households and a high number of employed and educated women.

A context-sensitive interpretation of the findings suggests that (1) development projects in general, and BMZ-financed projects with gender as a significant objective in particular, are braving the risks of implementation in post-conflict contexts, and that (2) women can play an active role as community leaders and socially influential agents in order to influence the allocation of development programmes to specific regions (Nawrotzki et al., publication in preparation).

Since the georeferencing of project documentation, and particularly the manual quality assurance of georeferencing data, is highly time-consuming and demanding in terms of personnel resources, initially the correlation between the two variables was investigated for one example country only, namely Colombia. We did not carry out systematic empirical verification of this correlation in the remaining case study countries (Liberia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka). In Sri Lanka, because of the focused thematic cooperation in the priority area of peacebuilding and crisis prevention, the BMZ is active in the former conflict zones only. The experience of the evaluation team in situ confirmed this. In Pakistan, the BMZ is active in several regions but the geographical concentration of Germany's engagement is in the former conflict zones in the north-west (BMZ, 2020c). For Liberia, there is no evidence of a correlation between German development cooperation's engagement and the former conflict areas.

Overall assessment of EQ 1.7: To what extent does the BMZ portfolio reflect the gender-conflict nexus?

The BMZ portfolio reflects the gender-conflict nexus to some extent and is suitable in some respects for supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

The portfolio analysis shows that in the selected post-conflict countries, the vast majority of funding goes to projects that pursue the promotion of gender equality as a "significant" objective (GE1 marker). The promotion of gender equality as a cross-cutting theme is thus anchored in the portfolio. The BMZ portfolio in the 11 post-conflict countries attaches great significance to the "peacebuilding and crisis prevention" sector, and also backs this up with financial resources. Moreover, the portfolio includes many other sectors which are fundamentally just as suitable for addressing gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests. Regarding the question of whether German development cooperation strategically allocates projects relating to gender and conflict to post-conflict zones, a study based on the georeferencing of project documents suggests that at least in the example country, Colombia, this is the case.

Nevertheless, the evaluation question is only assessed as "partially fulfilled". Overall, only a very low percentage of the available financial resources are allocated to projects with gender as the principal objective (a GE2 marker), and only a low percentage of projects deal with gender or peace and security as principal objectives. The intersection of the two themes is extremely rare: overall, in the 11 post-conflict countries in the period under review, there was just one project which, for one phase, tackled both themes as "principal" objectives (a PS2/GE2 marker). While the promotion of gender equality is anchored in the portfolio as a cross-cutting theme, almost half of the projects in the 11 post-conflict countries have no orientation towards the thematic area of "peace and security" (a PSO marker), which is surprising in view of the post-conflict context.

5. FINDINGS 1: GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE PROJECT CYCLE

5.1 The gender-conflict nexus in BMZ strategies

BMZ performs its steering function in two ways: firstly, through its strategies, which are binding for the institutions of official development cooperation and serve as guidance for civil society organisations; and secondly, through the specified procedures for the planning and implementation of development projects. As outlined in Section 2.1, BMZ strategies and the standards they contain on procedures are pivotal reference points for the strategic anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus so that it informs the subsequent drafting and implementation of development projects.

This section sets out to answer EQ 1.1, namely to what extent BMZ strategies on both gender equality and peace and security reflect the requirements that ensue from the gender-conflict nexus. We aim to establish this with reference to two evaluation criteria. The first criterion relates to the German government's goals and strategies as well as the international and European agreements that Germany recognises. It examines to what extent the ensuing requirements are reflected in the current National Action Plan (NAP II) for the implementation of the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda (Bundesregierung, 2017b) and in BMZ strategies (cross-sectoral strategies and country strategies). The second criterion assesses the extent to which BMZ strategies and associated action plans, as well as the NAP II for the implementation of the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda, make reference to the key areas of importance for supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts and address gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests.

Overview of BMZ strategies and agreements at national, European and international level

The evaluation identified the following BMZ strategy papers as central to supporting gender equality in the post-conflict context during the evaluation period⁴⁰: the cross-sectoral strategy "Gender Equality in German Development Policy" (BMZ, 2014a, hereafter: Gender Equality Strategy) and the associated "Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020" (BMZ, 2016a, hereafter: Gender Action Plan II [GAP II]) and the strategy paper "Development for Peace and Security" (BMZ, 2013a). Although the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda (Bundesregierung, 2017b) is not a BMZ strategy, it guides the ministry's activities, and is therefore included in the analysis.

In addition, Transitional Development Assistance projects are covered by the "Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance" (BMZ, 2013b, 2020a), which was most recently updated in 2020. Furthermore, the BMZ country strategies – insofar as these exist for the countries in question⁴¹ – contain standards for steering the portfolio and planning the procedures in the respective cooperation countries. The BMZ made the "prevention of violence against women" a theme of special importance in the 5-point plan entitled "Stopping violence against women" (BMZ, 2017a), adopted in 2017. This plan operationalised objectives from the GAP II, making progress on such issues as the protection and safety of women and girls affected by forced displacement. The paper also reaffirms the BMZ's contribution to implementing international agreements such as the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda.

In addition to the above, the German government's policy guidelines on "Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace" (Bundesregierung, 2017a) and its accompanying Operations Manual (Bundesregierung, 2019d), and the joint interdepartmental strategies that have emerged from these to support security sector reform (Bundesregierung, 2019a), dealing with the past and reconciliation (transitional justice) (Bundesregierung, 2019b) and promoting the rule of law (Bundesregierung, 2019c) constitute the relevant frame of reference at national level.

The recommendations of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC, 2019a) are another important basis for the BMZ's work, and in this regard, the OECD-DAC published two recommendations of

⁴⁰ As an outcome of the BMZ 2030 reform process, successor strategies are being drafted at the time of writing of this report. In future, the strategy paper on the core area of "Peaceful and inclusive societies" along with performance profiles on the quality criteria of "Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion" and "Conflict sensitivity" will be the key references.

⁴¹ Country strategies are not available for all 11 of the post-conflict countries. They are drawn up as a rule for countries with a bilateral country programme, but only in special cases for cooperation countries working on a regional or thematic basis (Doc. 2).

pivotal importance in 2019: one concerning work on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (OECD DAC, 2019b); the other on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance (OECD DAC, 2019a).

International agreements entered into by the German government also set out key frameworks for the BMZ. In particular, the BMZ's alignment of its work with the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) and the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda (United Nations Security Council, 2000) is noteworthy in this regard.

Table 3 shows a selection of the most important agreements on the gender-conflict nexus at international, European and national level.

Table 3 International, European and national agreements on the gender-conflict nexus

Level of the agreement	Actor	Year	Agreement
International agreements	United Nations	2000	Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and its nine follow-up resolutions
		2015	Sustainable Development Goals
	OECD	2011	New Deal on International Engagement in Fragile States
		2019	Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (5019) Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance (5020)
European agreements	European Union	2008	Lisbon Treaty
		2010	Gender Action Plan I (GAP I) 2010-2015
		2016	Gender Action Plan II (GAP II) 2016-2020
		2019	EU Action Plan on the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda
		2020	Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) 2021-2025
National agreements	German Federal Government	2012	Implementation of the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda: National Action Plan I (NAP I) 2012-2016
		2016	National Action Plan II (NAP II) 2017-2020
		2017	Policy guidelines on "Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace"
		2019	Supporting Security Sector Reform
		2019	Supporting Dealing with the Past and Reconciliation (Transitional Justice)
		2019	Promoting the Rule of Law
		2020	<i>National Action Plan III 2021-2024*</i>
BMZ strategies	BMZ	2011	Human Rights in German Development Policy
		2013	Development for Peace and Security – Development Policy in the Context of Conflict, Fragility and Violence
		2013	Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance

Level of the agreement	Actor	Year	Agreement
		2014	Gender Equality in German Development Policy – cross-sectoral strategy
		2016	Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016–2020 (GAP II)
		2017	5-Point Plan – “Stopping Violence against Women”
		2020	Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance

Source: BMZ (2011, 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2016a, 2017a, 2020a); Bundesregierung [German Federal Government] (2012, 2017a, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2019d); Council of the European Union (2019); European Commission (2010, 2015, 2020); European Union (2007); OECD (2010); OECD DAC (2019a, 2019b); United Nations (2015); United Nations Security Council (2000). * NAP III is currently (early 2021) being prepared for publication.

Consistency with international agreements

The first criterion relates to international and European agreements that Germany has entered into as well as national plans that Germany has adopted. It examines to what extent the ensuing requirements are reflected in the National Action Plan (NAP II) for the implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda and the key BMZ strategies for supporting gender equality in the post-conflict context. The crucial aspects here are the requirements resulting from the implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda (United Nations Security Council, 2000), which takes up the issue of special protection for women in war and conflict zones. In the past few years it has undergone further development in the form of nine follow-up resolutions (United Nations Security Council, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2013a, 2013b, 2015a, 2019a, 2019b). Under Germany’s recent presidency, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2467 (United Nations Security Council, 2019a) which is concerned with protecting people from sexual violence in conflicts and also identifies men as victims of sexual violence. Internationally, there is evident progress towards a transformative approach which systematically addresses underlying societal values and norms and, in addition to the situation of women, takes up the situation of all genders as an issue.

The implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda is supported worldwide by NAPs. The German government adopted the first NAP in 2012 (Bundesregierung, 2012) and the second NAP in 2017 (Bundesregierung, 2017b), setting out how the various ministries would realise the aims of UNSCR 1325. At the time of writing (early 2021), the third NAP for the years 2021-2024 and an implementation report on NAP II are being drafted.

The great importance that the German government attaches to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 was underscored by its decision to declare the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda a priority issue during its membership of the UN Security Council in 2019 and 2020 and its presidency in 2020 (Auswärtiges Amt, 2020b). The German government’s human rights report also highlights the German government’s contribution to the ongoing development of the Agenda (Bundesregierung, 2020a). According to a study commissioned by the Federal Foreign Office, the international community perceives Germany’s commitment to the implementation of Resolution 1325 to have increased since 2018. However, Germany is not seen as one of its active trailblazers. Moreover, in comparison with other international actors who have been working on the issue for decades, Germany’s engagement does not yet evidence the same consistency and coherence (Auswärtiges Amt, 2020a).

The BMZ strategies we analysed take up the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda to varying degrees; more recent strategies do so more vigorously but do not yet fully incorporate all the conceptual refinements that have taken place. For example, the text of the strategy paper “Development for Peace and Security” (BMZ, 2013a) does not directly mention the Agenda, whereas the NAP II lists interactions between the strategy paper and the NAP II (Bundesregierung, 2017b, p. 10). Meanwhile, both the Gender Equality Strategy and the GAP II contain a thematic area (“Armed Conflicts, Peacekeeping and Displacement”) dedicated to it. In

these, however, the lack of indicators, time frames or standards for direct implementation leaves the operationalisation of the listed measures incomplete.

The GAP II monitoring reports, known as “Road Maps” (BMZ, 2016b, 2017b, 2018, 2019) highlight beacon projects around the world that contribute to the implementation of its strategic goals, one of which is the realisation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda and its follow-up resolutions. However, no systematic reporting takes place which would give an assessment of progress towards achievement of the stated objectives or implementation of the various measures under the BMZ’s three-pronged approach.

In their current form, the strategies have not yet taken up conceptual refinements of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda such as the acknowledgement of a transformative understanding of gender or the inclusion of all genders. Reference is made to these at various points in the German government’s joint interdepartmental guidelines. The Agenda is anchored in the objectives and action areas of the strategies to support security sector reform, transitional justice and promotion of the rule of law, all three of which emerged from the guidelines on “Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace”.

Key areas for the promotion of gender equality in the post-conflict context

For the assessment of the second evaluation criterion, the following questions arise: what are the key areas for the promotion of gender equality in the post-conflict context? To what extent are these taken up in the BMZ strategies mentioned above? Section 2.1.2 described ways in which organisational and contextual factors influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts, and identified areas of particular importance in this regard. In the following section, we now take a closer look at these key areas.

In post-conflict societies, the existing gender orders, roles and norms often undergo change or reform. Among other things, this opens up the possibility of working in a “gender transformative” way. This means working in ways which support changes in norms and values that lead to more gender equality. The first area deals with the question of what definition of working on existing gender relations underpins the strategies.

The second area concerns the gender-specific experiences and consequences of conflicts. Women and men are affected by conflicts in different ways, and therefore have different needs and interests, which German development cooperation should recognise and address. The question of interest here is to what extent BMZ strategies do justice to this fact in the full complexity of its challenges, be they psychological (for example, dealing with traumatised people), economic (for example, income generation or education), political (for example, involvement in peace negotiations or participation in other processes) or social (for example, health or food security). (See also Sections 1.2 and 5.3).

The third area concerns the acknowledgement of multiple discrimination. Especially vulnerable groups are subject to multiple discrimination in post-conflict contexts. Existing social categories and social divisions (based on religion or ethnicity, for instance) are often exacerbated by the conflict, or may even be the crux of it. Here we examine the extent to which BMZ strategies address co-existing gender norms and roles as well as possible multiple discrimination of those also belonging to other disadvantaged social categories.

The fourth area concerns the risk of harassment, sexual violence and exploitation. As set out in Section 2.1, organisations have a duty to protect staff and target groups from harassment, sexual violence and exploitation. The importance of this issue was most recently reaffirmed by the OECD-DAC Recommendation (2019a) mentioned above.⁴² Here, the evaluation examines the extent to which this issue is already being taken up by the BMZ strategies.

The fifth and final area addresses the question of to what extent strategies contain clear statements promoting acknowledgement of the gender-conflict nexus. The assumption underlying the theory of change is that BMZ steering declines in intensity as the processes take their course. It is therefore crucial for BMZ

⁴² Even though this, like all recommendations of the Development Assistance Committee, does not have legally binding character for member countries, it does represent a strong moral commitment.

strategies to contain clear statements at the outset on how cross-cutting themes are to be borne in mind and implemented.

In the sub-sections below, the above-mentioned strategy papers are examined to determine whether they take up these key challenges.

In the first key area, we investigate what definition of working on existing gender relations is found in the BMZ strategies. The Gender Equality Strategy sets forth a transformative approach, which seeks to support changes in gender relations in the direction of more gender equality. The GAP II calls for a targeted reduction in existing inequalities. Our analysis shows that the newer strategies of both the BMZ (for example, the recent strategy on Transitional Development Assistance) and the German government (for example, the recent joint interdepartmental strategies) tend to focus more on working transformatively – that is to say, changing gender roles in the direction of more gender equality – whereas this is less true of the older strategies (for example, the German government’s policy guidelines [Bundesregierung, 2017] or the NAP II).

Analysis of the extent to which BMZ strategies recognise (post-)conflict-specific differences in the needs and interests of women and men, and identify these in all their dimensions – the second area – shows that in the older strategies, the overlapping nature of gender and conflict is not made explicit and the themes are usually thought about separately. It is only the more recent strategies that pay increasing attention to the intersection between the themes. The Gender Equality Strategy, for example, states that women are especially severely affected by conflict. The same applies to the GAP II, which places a strong but exclusive focus on women’s needs, particularly in thematic area 4 “Armed Conflicts, Peacekeeping and Displacement”. One potential pitfall of this, however, is that work on gender equality might be understood purely as “empowering women”, which not only downplays the underlying structural inequalities between the genders but also diverts attention away from strategic interests of particular importance in post-conflict societies such as addressing ideals of masculinity that glorify violence. While the strategy paper “Development for Peace and Security” does not highlight the issue that women and men are affected differently by conflicts, in one example it does mention working with approaches that address the gender-specific needs of women and men. Meanwhile, the updated strategy on Transitional Development Assistance (BMZ, 2020a) acknowledges that in crises, the extent of vulnerability is partly dependent on gender. The updated strategy on Transitional Development Assistance contains the new thematic area of “Peaceful and inclusive societies”, which also explicitly addresses gender-sensitive approaches and gender-specific needs.

With regard to the dimensions of the said needs and interests, our analysis of the BMZ strategies – the Gender Equality Strategy, the GAP II and the strategy paper “Development for Peace and Security” – shows that none of them make it explicit that gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests range across almost all thematic areas. The “Armed Conflicts, Peacekeeping and Displacement” thematic area of the Gender Equality Strategy does not make it clear, for example, that women’s practical needs and strategic interests can potentially surface in all other thematic areas as well. It is only the updated strategy on Transitional Development Assistance that advocates a broader view of gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests. This becomes clear from pilot measures in which these interests are addressed in different thematic areas, such as peacebuilding, access to resources and services, and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.

Country strategies steer the portfolio in each location and contain standards for the planning of procedures. For this reason, they are considered of the utmost importance. Our analysis of the extent to which these strategies reflect the full range of needs and interests found that only one of them discusses projects to tackle violence against women as a gender-specific experience of conflict (Doc. 166). Otherwise, the country strategies we analysed do not take up the issue of gender-specific experiences of conflict or consequences of conflict (Doc. 28, 167–169). Moreover, in three of the five country strategies we analysed, women are only cited as part of a disadvantaged group (Doc. 166–168).

The third key area examines the extent to which BMZ strategies address co-existing gender norms and roles as well as possible multiple discrimination of those also belonging to other disadvantaged social categories. The “Development for Peace and Security” strategy only makes the connection with the concept of multiple discrimination implicitly via coherence with the concepts on human rights and gender equality (BMZ, 2013c).

In contrast, the Gender Equality Strategy and the GAP II take up the concept of multiple discrimination; in the GAP II, in fact, it is a dedicated cross-sectoral area in its own right. The updated Transitional Development Assistance strategy (BMZ, 2020a) also deals with the concept and emphasises that gender analysis is an important tool for this purpose. Likewise, the interdepartmental strategies give special prominence to the issue in the “Transitional Justice” strategy.

The fourth key area concerns safeguarding mechanisms against sexual misconduct and the question of to what extent these are included in strategies. The strategies to date, including the updated Transitional Development Assistance strategy and the joint interdepartmental strategies, have not yet addressed harassment, sexual violence and exploitation by staff of implementing organisations nor institutionalisation of safeguarding against it. Enshrined in the NAP II is the German government’s own aim of sensitising the people involved in peace missions to the issues of “sexual violence” and “sexual exploitation”.

The fifth key area addresses the extent to which strategies contain clear statements promoting the acknowledgement and implementation of the gender-conflict nexus. The “Development for Peace and Security” strategy specifies that the PCA must be conducted with a gender perspective in mind, and makes it obligatory to assign the PS marker. Furthermore, reporting is required to cover the do-no-harm principle and record negative unintended effects. The Gender Equality Strategy refers to the gender analysis as a key standard, and specifies that projects be aligned with the guideline on human rights. Both strategies stipulate that the results of the PCA and the gender analysis are to be incorporated into the country strategy. In the wording of Gender Equality Strategy and the GAP II: “[W]hen drafting country strategies, we draw on gender analyses and set gender-differentiated targets, indicators and schedules in priority areas wherever this makes sense” (BMZ, 2016, p. 8).⁴³ An example of a country strategy with gender-differentiated targets is the publicly accessible country strategy for Afghanistan for the period 2014-2017 (BMZ, 2014b). Regarding the assignment of policy markers, the most recent strategy on Transitional Development Assistance stipulates that a GE1 marker should categorically be possible, as should a PS1 marker in post-conflict contexts. In addition, certain aspects are to be clarified by means of briefing sheets. The joint interdepartmental strategies also emphasise the importance of a gender-sensitive context analysis. The NAP II elaborates objectives and measures for the five thematic areas of the NAP and defines the responsibilities of the respective ministries.

Although the strategy papers are binding for all institutions of official development cooperation and the NAP II is binding for all federal ministries, there is no precise breakdown of the degree to which the stipulations these contain are binding. For example, the notes on the methodological framework do not reiterate that the PCA should include a gender perspective (BMZ and GIZ, 2014). Few of the standards from the BMZ strategies with regard to gender differentiation are transposed into the country strategies. Just one of them contains references to gender-differentiated goals, indicators or schedules, although this is stipulated for four of the five country strategies (those that were drafted prior to adoption of the Joint Procedural Reform [GVR]) under the provisions of the GAP II. According to the GVR, indicators are only to be defined at programme level.

Our analysis of the existing country strategies also revealed that so far the recommendations of the guideline on human rights (BMZ, 2013c) regarding gender equality have only partially been incorporated so far.⁴⁴ Another unclear point is how the standards specified in the BMZ strategies are reviewed and tracked. The Gender Equality Strategy and the GAP II refer to a review by external experts to assess the achievement of the strategy’s objectives. At the time of writing of this report (early 2021), however, no such review was available. Neither does the NAP II contain a precise breakdown of how the achievement of goals is to be

⁴³ It must be noted that the Joint Procedural Reform post-dated the adoption of the GAP II 2016, which states that indicators are only determined at programme level.

⁴⁴ Here we examined the extent to which the following recommendations from the guidance on human rights in Chapter 2 of the country strategy were taken into account: use of gender-disaggregated data to take account of the situation of women, reference to international conventions, adherence to the requirements of the Gender Equality Strategy, explanation of unintended effects in relation to human rights/gender, and links with partners’ gender strategies.

measured and within what time frame this is to take place. The lack of indicators for monitoring and evaluation was also one of civil society's major points of criticism with regard to the second NAP (Bernarding et al., 2020). At the time of writing of this report, the German government is drawing up indicators and outline time frames for the planned measures for the NAP III (Bundesregierung, 2020b).

Overall assessment of EQ 1.1: To what extent do BMZ strategies on gender equality and peace and security reflect the requirements that ensue from the gender-conflict nexus?

The BMZ strategies on “gender equality” and “peace and security” partially fulfil the requirements ensuing from the gender-conflict nexus.

Our assessment of the coherence of the BMZ strategies with the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda shows that the BMZ strategies do take up the Agenda. However, in the strategies that provide direct standards on the steering, planning and implementation of measures in post-conflict contexts (for example, the GAP II, NAP II or country strategies), so far there is only a minor focus on standards that specifically promote the implementation of the Agenda. In the same way, there are no measurable standards specifying how the strategies contribute to realisation of the Agenda. At least in the updated strategies, the links to it are made more obvious.

Our content analysis of the BMZ strategies shows that the most recent strategies in particular formulate a transformative understanding of gender; that is to say, they aim at changing how the genders relate to each other with a view to achieving gender equality. This approach is well suited to the post-conflict context because a conflict often transforms gender roles and norms, creating a window of opportunity which can be used by development cooperation to make progress towards gender equality.

With regard to gender equality and conflict, there are clear indications that the older strategies treat these as separate thematic areas for the most part, and do not see them as interlinked throughout. The gender-conflict nexus is only explicitly mentioned with reference to “women in armed conflicts” or to the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda. More recent strategies (BMZ, 2020a) reflect some conceptual refinement in this respect, and anchor gender-specific needs in many thematic areas. It can be rated positively that the issue of “multiple discrimination” is strongly anchored in the relevant BMZ strategies.

5.2 Process and actors

The following sections present the main findings on the process steps of planning (5.2.1), implementation (5.2.2) and post-implementation (5.2.3), and the (theoretical and actual) options of the actors involved to exert their influence. It will show how formal standards are translated into practice and how the various actors influence the process of gender mainstreaming during the course of projects in post-conflict contexts.

5.2.1 Planning

Project planning in post-conflict contexts is not fundamentally different than in other contexts; in principle, it follows the same process steps (Int. 3). Because these contexts are very varied and characterised by specific challenges, however, there are institutionalised mechanisms at different points in the process whose purpose is to identify gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests and to pinpoint ways in which projects can address them. At the same time, the actors involved – from the BMZ and the two implementing organisations included in the evaluation, GIZ and KfW, to the political partners and the implementing partners⁴⁵ – have the opportunity to incorporate gender dimensions during different steps in the process. Conceivably, such gateways could also be used to make gender mainstreaming more difficult, and the evaluation also looked at them from this angle.

⁴⁵ For a definition of “political partners and implementing partners”, see the Glossary and Section 2.1.3.

All the actors involved are in general agreement that the planning process, and the early steps in the process in particular, are crucial for (successful) gender mainstreaming. In the following, we therefore analyse the process as it is “lived out” in practice, looking specifically at four steps in the planning process (see Section 2.1): intergovernmental negotiations and consultations, the preliminary appraisal, the appraisal mission and the module proposal along with the results matrix, including analytical tools. Finally, we draw brief interim conclusions on the planning step of the process.

Intergovernmental negotiations and consultations

The BMZ’s Gender Equality Strategy and the GAP II specify that gender equality should be raised during bilateral policy dialogue – which includes intergovernmental negotiations and consultations. However, this aspiration is realised in different ways, and BMZ staff have certain reservations about raising the issue in these forums. There is little evidence from practice that gender equality and/or the gender-conflict nexus are systematically raised for discussion in intergovernmental negotiations and consultations. While there are individual country officers who speak up for it, this is not universally the case.

The occasional interviewee mentions that the “cruising altitude” of intergovernmental negotiations does not allow them to raise the issue – an attitude which others for their part criticise, pointing out that gender equality is an objective of the 2030 Agenda and other overarching strategies, such as those of the EU (Int. 6). Meanwhile the country officers, who do not fundamentally doubt that this is the right framework, cite other reasons. For example, BMZ staff indicate that on the diplomatic level, it is not always possible to talk about every topic in the way that one would wish (Int. 4). They also see a need for the Federal Foreign Office and the BMZ to reach agreement on which issues can be raised, and how (Int. 3). Others explain that the discussion of new commitments are a major part of these talks, and there is no time left to talk about other topics or to go into depth on them (Int. 5). In no small part, the reason cited is that gender equality is a very sensitive and perhaps even contentious issue that cannot be raised with every political partner.

Nevertheless, gender equality and gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests are occasionally brought up for discussion. This shows that even in contexts perceived as contentious, gender can be raised in intergovernmental negotiations. For example, when discussing a poverty reduction programme, women’s empowerment can also be mentioned (Int. 4). In countries with which no intergovernmental negotiations take place, other formats such as government talks on the technical level are used where appropriate. Raising the issue of gender in conjunction with a vocational training programme has yielded some positive experiences (Int. 7). These examples show that it is possible to use intergovernmental negotiations and consultations as a starting point for gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts (Int. 101).

Various political and implementing partners attribute considerably more capabilities to the BMZ than the ministry actually utilises. They express the hope that the BMZ will raise the issue of gender more vigorously in its dialogue with political partners (for example Int. 101). This also confirms the assessment of the study by the Federal Foreign Office, already mentioned, according to which Germany is not perceived as a trailblazer on this issue. Nevertheless, when gender equality is raised during intergovernmental negotiations, it tends to be instigated by the BMZ rather than other actors. Overall, there are indications that work on the theme of “gender equality” is not given such a high priority that it would always be addressed in talks with partner country governments.

Preliminary appraisal

There is great consensus among BMZ staff and implementing organisations that the “preliminary appraisal” step in the process is a crucial entry point for the inclusion and anchoring of gender and conflict dimensions at an early stage of planning (Int. 4, 7, 8). The preliminary appraisal is requested by the BMZ and completed by the implementing organisations. It explains the setting of priorities and the detailed shaping of the projects.

Before the preliminary appraisal is submitted to and discussed with the BMZ, an additional quality assurance step takes place within GIZ, which can be used to ensure that gender is anchored in the projects. This aspect is discussed internally at GIZ as part of its approval of the preliminary appraisal. By this point in time, the

preliminary gender analysis should also be available. In other words, within the framework of the Safeguards+Gender management system, a further internal process step exists here, which gives various actors within GIZ the opportunity to work towards the inclusion of gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests prior to the discussion with the BMZ (Int. 9, 10).⁴⁶ Internally, the Safeguards+Gender management system is well accepted (Int. 29).

At KfW, the quality assurance procedure takes the form of a consultation between the staff responsible for projects and the department heads. However, there is no additional approval, for example by an internal panel. Instead, the project managers have some discretion to make decisions on questions such as which analyses are commissioned (Doc. 86). While they can draw on internal knowledge, from the competence centre for example, this is not obligatory. Project ideas are usually discussed with partners in advance, or else the partners themselves can formally submit proposals for development measures (BMZ, 2008).

In the (few) available preliminary appraisals⁴⁷ there is only occasional evidence that these are actually used to bring up the issue of gender and/or to address the conflict-specific needs of women and men (Int. 13, 14). Even in preliminary appraisals mentioning women as a severely affected or marginalised group (Int. 5) or women's organisations as civil society actors affected by violence (Doc. 29), there is insufficient clarity as to what objective the projects are pursuing with regard to gender equality and peacebuilding. It remains unclear which approach and which logic of change the projects are to use to make their contribution to improving this situation in their respective sectors.

The preliminary appraisals already give indications of the intended markers for the projects. (Preliminary) gender analyses, which are an obligatory analytical tool, are carried out not only to support gender-sensitive project design but also in order to derive and assign a provisional policy marker (Doc. 8). Hence, the gender analysis "constitutes an important basis for assigning the GE marker" (BMZ 2014, p. 15, own emphasis). Irrespective of this, in practice prior consideration has often been given to the question of which marker a project might be assigned (Int. 29). There is some degree of discretion on this matter, but at the same time the classification must fulfil certain minimum standards (see Box 4).

The PS marker is also provisionally recorded in the preliminary appraisal as a matter of principle. Yet for fragile contexts, there is no more than a recommendation that the BMZ should ask the implementing organisation to comment on whether a project in such a context could have a PS1 or a PS2 marker; in other words, it explicitly asks what potential exists.

This standard raises the question of why only preliminary appraisals with PS1 or PS2 markers and projects with GE1 or GE2 markers are sent to the respective technical divisions at this point in the process. For example, when a GE1 marker has been proposed for a project, the technical divisions can check whether it might also work as a GE2 project, in which case they can make the alternative proposal. On the other hand, it remains unclear whether the potentials of projects with provisional GE0 or PS0 markers are being maximised. This is a significant issue, particularly because at this stage in the process, these are only proposed policy markers, not finalised policy markers.

When discussing the preliminary appraisal, (preliminary) gender analyses may be helpful for the framing of more precise and effective questions about gender equality and how best to anchor the gender-conflict nexus in projects. These questions can then be fed into the subsequent appraisal, and hence inform the detailed shaping of the project and the assignment of the marker.

To sum up, the preliminary appraisal itself and discussions based on it are key starting points for gender mainstreaming. They are put to best use when there are gender-competent and gender-sensitive staff involved, both in the BMZ divisions running the projects and in the implementing organisations, and when

⁴⁶ The Safeguards+Gender management system makes provision for involving the Safeguards + Gender Desk at a later point in the process: the desk receives the preliminary gender analysis *after* it has been discussed with the BMZ and an option selected, and *before* the appraisal or the appraisal mission.

⁴⁷ A total of 13 preliminary appraisals were available.

the latter draft the preliminary appraisal in a gender- and conflict-sensitive manner (see also Section 6.1.1 on individuals and Chapter 7).

Appraisal and the appraisal mission

Various stakeholders see the appraisal and the appraisal mission as offering an opportunity to exert influence, and identify this step in the process as important for successful gender mainstreaming. The main responsibility for preparing and conducting the appraisal resides with the implementing organisations. However, partners also report that this phase offers them good opportunities to provide their input (Int. 11), because regional needs are elicited more specifically and can be incorporated into further planning (Int. 17).

The consultants from the implementing organisations play an important role in the anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus in the appraisal missions, since they can exert a strong influence on the conception phase of a project. Several staff members from the implementing organisations emphasised, therefore, that in order to take account of the gender-conflict nexus, gender competence on the part of consultants is important and should be written into the terms of reference (Int. 9, 20, 21). It was also considered important for the appraisal team to have easy access to country-specific gender-conflict expertise; via meetings with the gender advisor at the country office in situ, for example. This allows local gender and conflict expertise to inform the appraisal mission (Int. 15).

Module proposal including results matrix

Since the results from the analytical tools are intended to inform the module proposal including its results matrix, we begin by explaining the extent to which the analytical tools respond to the demands and challenges of gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts. If the PCA is gender-sensitive and the gender analysis is conflict-sensitive, then based on a processual logic, the resulting module proposal and results matrix, including the indicators, will also be gender- and conflict-sensitive. We proceed to examine these aspects below.

Gender analyses and peace and conflict assessments identify to some extent which practical needs and strategic interests women and men are experiencing as the result of a conflict. The PCA is neither gender-sensitive per se, nor is the gender analysis conflict-sensitive per se. With regard to gender- and conflict-specific concerns in post-conflict contexts, there is thus a gap between the two analytical tools, where – at worst – it is possible to overlook consequences of the gender-conflict nexus for women and men. This is the case despite the requirement, applying to the PCA at least, that a gender perspective should be adopted (BMZ and GIZ, 2014). Further to this, there is an additional guideline designed to support the inclusion of gender aspects in the PCA (Doc. 22).

In the **peace and conflict assessments** available for analysis, women and their concerns tend not to be mentioned at all (Doc. 32–42). Only a few of them mention women and emphasise the importance of involving them (Doc. 43–51); some of the analytical tools even build on this by deriving gender-specific project recommendations (Doc. 52, 53). Consequently, the nexus-specific dimension is often left out of the thought process. Instead, many PCAs place their main focus on general risks in post-conflict contexts, especially with regard to the political context and the security situation (for example, Doc. 35, 47, 48).

However, there are notable exceptions: one PCA addresses the possible unintended effects of an activity – rising domestic violence against women, associated with the establishment of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) – and immediately suggests measures that might diminish this risk (Doc. 76). Particularly in post-conflict contexts, violence against women is often already widespread, not to mention culturally or socially accepted to some degree. This calls for special vigilance during such project activities.

What is the understanding of “gender” in the analytical tools?

Most of the analytical tools apparently rely on a binary understanding of gender, which means that women and men are differentiated but, for instance, LGBTI people are very seldom mentioned. Likewise, references to intersectionality or multiple discrimination in the analytical tools are only sporadic. When women are mentioned, they are described as victims of sexual violence, for example, or of other

disadvantages. More rarely, women are presented in more active roles such as participating in peace movements or in civil society organisations. Occasionally, the tools examine how existing gender roles and norms are also disadvantageous for men.

Turning to the **gender analyses**, we find a heterogeneous picture. Many of them specifically address the gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests of women and men; examples include different experiences of violence (Doc. 54), including sexual violence (Doc. 55), the situation of women-headed households and internally displaced persons (Doc. 88) or new gender roles resulting from conflict-induced changes (Doc. 56). There are just as many which cover the situation of women and the prevailing gender roles and norms in detail, but do not utilise the full potential of these findings by building on them to develop recommendations for project activities. Yet other gender analyses formulate concrete sector- and project-specific recommendations, which the project managers perceive to be useful (Int. 18, 25). Finally, there are others which barely contain relevant sector- and project-specific recommendations (Doc. 89), or the recommendations made are seen as insufficiently practice-oriented (Int. 1).

KfW's **target group and stakeholder analyses (ZGBAs)**⁴⁸, which are considerably shorter than GIZ's gender analyses, contain only occasional references to the situation of women – in connection with violence against them, for instance (Doc. 76), or with regard to socio-economic indicators (Doc. 90) – but offer few specific pointers on project implementation. Often these analyses identify women very generically as part of the target group and mention how they, too, will benefit from projects. There is a widespread assumption that the main concern of GE1 projects is to increase the proportion of women in the target group (Int. 26). In most cases, this is not elaborated upon in detail, so that once again, at times it remains unclear how the local implementing partners can make best use of ZGBA findings for the purpose of designing the projects.

In summary, PCAs highlight relevant security and contextual risks, while gender analyses yield many insights into the situation of women and men in the partner country and in the specific sector in equal measure; however, the analytical tools themselves do not always clearly elaborate on how these are linked. That is to say, the analytical tools sometimes have blind spots with regard to the gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests of women and men in the post-conflict contexts in which German development cooperation is implementing projects. This is relevant because the staff of the implementing organisations themselves assume that if the analytical tools explicitly take account of gender, then gender and conflict issues will automatically be incorporated into the subsequent project planning.

In context: Practice-oriented manuals and guidelines on gender approaches in project cycle management from the German NGO Welthungerhilfe.

In keeping with the 2030 Agenda, Welthungerhilfe has set itself the goal of fighting for gender equality and to strengthen the role of women. To this end, Welthungerhilfe has formulated guidelines on how different gender approaches can be applied in project cycle management. The guidelines distinguish between gender-sensitive, gender-responsive and gender-transformative approaches, and present these in conjunction with the associated goals, strategies, and examples of corresponding indicators. They also explain concepts such as “gender-exploitative” and “gender-unaware”. At each stage of the project, they require staff to question whether they have chosen the right approach to gender. Likewise, the manual contains practical steps on how a transition to a transformative approach can be accomplished. These guidelines enable project managers to reflect on the gender approach of projects and consciously make changes.

Source: Welthungerhilfe (2009, 2020); Doc. 57; Int. 22

⁴⁸ Since many of the KfW projects were appraised by the rapid response procedure, only a few ZGBAs were available. This limits the generalisability of the statements made here.

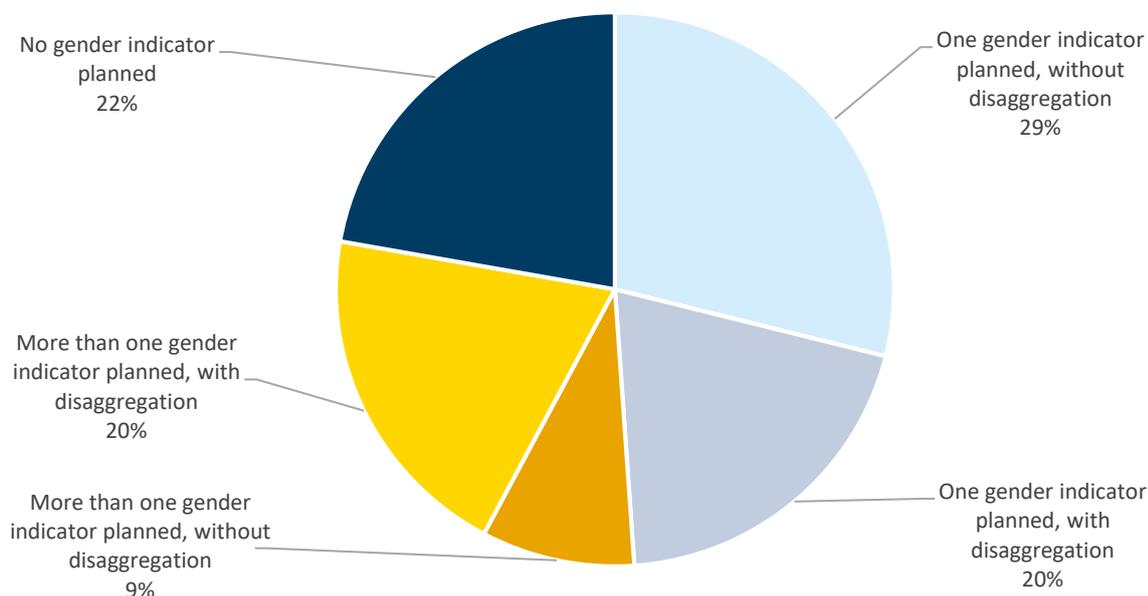
In the majority of the **module proposals**, gender equality is mentioned at relevant points, and gender- and conflict-specific needs are described at least briefly. This may amount to a presentation of the target group and context, a statement of measures designed to enable women to participate in activities, a justification of the marker, or the results matrix with the “gender indicator” (Doc. 58–63). In some module proposals, the mention of “marginalised groups” is also the starting point for discussing women, and the dimension of gender is usually cited in first place, ahead of others such as religion (Doc. 59, 64).

In many module proposals, we find statements that “gender-specific needs” will be addressed as part of the project, but no concrete explanations of how that is supposed to happen (Doc. 65). Occasionally there is some elaboration of the needs that exist – for example, that women are the primary victims of a culture of violence – without any indication of which approaches or activities the project can use to address this (Doc. 66, 67). Alternatively, it is stated that women will benefit especially from the measures; however, a more detailed justification is not given in these cases either (Doc. 68–71). As a general point, it is certainly a challenge to describe at reasonable length and in maximally concrete terms how projects intend to address gender-specific and conflict-specific needs of women and men.

The **results matrix** shows a similar picture: in many places there are endorsements such as “takes account of gender-specific needs” or “pursues gender-sensitive approach”, but no further explanation is provided (Doc. 59, 69, 72). This is problematic because statements of such a vague and general nature are often quite difficult to translate into practice (see also Doc. 108). It is generally evident that the options to disaggregate indicators are less well used than they could be, which means that important information may go missing (Doc. 72). Theoretically, there could be more opportunities to provide for gender-disaggregated monitoring in the outcome and output indicators as well as in the activities (Doc. 69, 72). In some projects, the reference to gender is no longer traceable in the outputs and activities although it should be, based on the GE1 marker, and although there is a corresponding module objective indicator (Doc. 63, 68). When this happens, it is impossible to trace which activities are the intended means of achieving the module objective indicator, and the linkages are obscured.

The **indicators** at module objective level play a particularly crucial role within the results matrix. Staff of both the BMZ and the implementing organisations see module objective indicators as a vital lever for ensuring that gender is addressed (for example, Int. 25). This is reinforced by the obligatory nature of the indicators and the fact that the achievement of them is subject to reporting or review. One criticism against this backdrop is that 22 per cent of the projects have no gender indicator anchored in the planning documents (see Figure 12). The rules include certain exemptions for Financial Cooperation in this regard. For example, it is permissible to omit an indicator at module objective level if effects with regard to gender equality cannot be attributed directly (Doc. 9). However, the analysis did not identify any statement justifying the omission of the gender indicator on this basis or find convincing grounds for it in any of the Financial Cooperation projects.⁴⁹ On the other hand, it is positively commendable that almost a third of the projects actually included more than one gender indicator in their planning, thereby exceeding the standards for GE1 projects (which represent the vast majority of the projects we analysed).

⁴⁹ This concerns 7 out of 12 KfW projects, which were appraised according to the regulations in force at the time.

Figure 12 Gender indicators (planning)

Source: own presentation.

Indicators that take up gender themes are often oriented to quantitative targets. A standard in common use is that 30 per cent of participants in a training measure or activity should be women (as in Doc. 62, 109). However, this figure is not helpful per se: in some heavily male-dominated sectors, this percentage would be ambitious (Doc. 11, 110), whereas in others, there is no obvious reason why the share of women should only be 30 per cent rather than, say, 50 per cent. Often no context-specific justification is given as to why a certain percentage has been chosen. That aside, the practice of instantly resorting to this “classic” indicator results in missed opportunities to develop a more innovative gender indicator. Occasionally, projects define their own additional internal gender indicators but do not record them in the results matrix (Int. 1). In addition, transformative potential is seldom discernible in the gender indicators. The BMZ has recognised the quality of indicators as an issue and is striving to bring about improvement. In 2020 it set out the quality standards for indicators in concrete terms (Doc. 163).

As a consequence, gender as well as gender- and conflict-specific needs are, for the most part, taken into account at specific places in programme and module proposals, including the results matrix. At the same time, this is often left unspecific when it comes to concrete measures. Most module proposals fulfil the minimum criteria by including a gender-related indicator at outcome as well as at output level, but – in the planning documents, at least – rarely go further than that. In some cases, proposals contain recommendations transferred directly from gender analyses and PCAs (Doc. 65, 77); for instance, gender indicators formulated in the gender analysis (Doc. 111, 112). Furthermore, while many of the recommendations are incorporated into the programme and module proposals (as in Doc. 62, 109, 113, 114), they are not always put into practice; this particularly applies to the suggestions or opportunities for transformative potential pointed out in some gender analyses (Doc. 110, 115–117).

In the KfW documentation, it is more difficult to demonstrate the links between the analytical tools and the planning documents. This is partly because many projects were developed under the rapid response procedure, where the use of some analytical tools is waived to begin with (for example, Doc. 43), and partly because the analytical tools do not necessarily give rise to direct project recommendations. Nevertheless, notable exceptions are found, such as the recommendation to plan for sensitisation measures when establishing village savings groups for women in order to counteract a rise in domestic violence against women (Doc. 76).

With regard to the BMZ's scope for action, the evidence from practice is that opportunities fundamentally exist for the ministry to request and insist that gender appears in programme and module proposals and the results matrix. However, this mainly happens when the relevant country officers pursue it actively and make efforts to anchor gender equality and peacebuilding in the projects (Int. 8). Indicators, first and foremost, are the main lever for achieving this (Int. 23) but are not used enough. Reasons given by way of explanation are the absence of standards and a need for more verification that standards are actually being put into practice (Int. 24). This would then give an effective signal to the implementing organisations, whose staff occasionally criticise the BMZ for providing too little guidance on the significance of gender. At the same time, the implementing organisations themselves have scope to influence the attention given to gender- and conflict-specific needs.

In conclusion, our overall observation is that the potential to anchor the gender-conflict nexus in programme and module proposals is not being utilised as consistently as it might be by the actors involved, especially the BMZ and the implementing organisations.

Box 8 Human rights principles

According to the BMZ, human rights are a guiding principle of German development policy (BMZ, 2011). Following a similar approach as for gender equality, the BMZ strategy for human rights provides for both dedicated projects on human rights and cross-sectoral embedding of its approach in development work. This evaluation focuses on two human rights principles: "participation" and "non-discrimination". Participation in this context means the involvement of those groups affected by measures in planning and co-determination processes, and designing these to be as inclusive as possible, from the early planning phase through to the project evaluations (BMZ, 2008). Non-discrimination means counteracting existing forms of disadvantage and working towards eliminating them (BMZ, 2013c). Such disadvantages may be based on "sex, ethnic background, age, disability, language, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender identity, geographical and social background, status or other such characteristics" (BMZ, 2013c, p. 3). In accordance with this evaluation's line of inquiry, we focus on what efforts projects are making to enable participation and to reduce barriers to access for women, who experience difficulties in taking part in activities due to existing gender roles or other barriers. In addition, we consider the do-no-harm principle.

The human rights principle of **participation** is included to varying degrees in the design and implementation of German development cooperation activities in post-conflict contexts. To begin with, participation is understood in different ways: on the one hand, answers to the question of who is participating or is intended to participate refer to communities, the target group, and women and men; on the other hand, they also mention the involvement of local implementing partners or local government structures (as in Doc. 79). Efforts to promote participation are generally evident in the majority of projects, and participation is seen as important for the success of a project (as in Doc. 45, 77, 118–120). At the same time, references to the participation of affected groups seldom relate to the general strategic direction of the programme. More participation is envisaged at the stage of shaping the concrete project, when the focus is on selecting particular measures, for example, or making decisions in communities about which themes should be prioritised. To this end, instruments such as participatory rural appraisals (Doc. 121) or community mobilisation (Doc. 99) are also used as methods of selecting activities that the community considers important.

The human rights principle of **non-discrimination** is likewise included to varying degrees in the design and implementation of activities. Planning documents frequently refer to vulnerable groups, women or ethnic minorities (as in Doc. 53, 63, 109, 122–124), and to approaching them proactively and enabling them to participate in activities. When following this principle, the method of selecting and making contact with the target groups is crucial. Usually it is the project stakeholders who determine the selection criteria. These are developed in a dialogue between the implementing organisations and political or local implementing partners. Occasionally the decision is left to the implementing partners or, in rare cases, the villages or

communities.⁵⁰ In the latter case, those in charge are occasionally oblivious to the problem that this may result in an interest-driven and discriminatory choice of target group, for instance if village authorities make such decisions without supervision. Such decisions can reinforce existing social power structures instead of breaking down barriers.

One international non-governmental organisation, which works on a German development cooperation project in a post-conflict context, prevents this by providing training for its staff on how to recognise and deal with potential conflicts of interest. The same set of problems can arise when the task is not to select individuals to participate in activities, but rather entire villages or regions (for example, Doc. 43). This is an equally sensitive process that needs to be handled tactfully by the actors involved, keeping the principle of “do no harm” in mind. From time to time, there may be programmes where the number of places available, e.g. for a workshop, is such that everyone in the defined target group who meets certain basic criteria can participate (Int. 18). Yet it often remains unclear how the statements of intent in the planning documents are actually put into practice, either due to a lack of relevant data or because there are no policy documents on inclusive values and monitoring adherence to them (Int. 122).

Project stakeholders, particularly implementing organisations and local implementing partners, are aware of the problem that it can be difficult for women or other disadvantaged people (such as ethnic minorities or LGBTI people) to participate in activities. Many projects generally endeavour to enable women and other people who may be subject to multiple discrimination to participate in project activities (Doc. 109, 123, 125). For example, they may offer hostel accommodation and adjusted training times for women attending vocational training programmes (Doc. 126), establish protected spaces for women (Doc. 160), provide transport, involve families (Doc. 159) or offer childcare facilities (Doc. 53). In addition to these measures, it is also important – especially in displacement-affected and post-conflict contexts – to provide psychosocial support for target groups. Otherwise the effects of trauma can be a barrier that impedes women and men from taking part in project activities (as in Doc. 127).

Finally, **do no harm** is found to be mentioned in many planning documents, such as the preliminary appraisal, the module proposal or the gender analysis (as in Doc. 47, 70, 79, 128–131). The PCA is a helpful analytical instrument for this purpose at the planning stage, since in many cases it draws attention to risks and possible unintended negative effects and suggests measures for avoiding them. One illustration of this comes from a project aimed at establishing VSLAs specifically for women. The peace and conflict analysis for the project points out that the establishment of these village savings groups is often accompanied by a rise in domestic violence against women (Doc. 76).⁵¹ It was therefore recommended that this activity be flanked with sensitisation and awareness-raising measures on the prevention of violence. In addition, an approach was then piloted in the communities to combat violence against women (Doc. 80). Examples of other measures for the conflict-sensitive design of activities, in compliance with the do-no-harm principle, include addressing refugees and internally displaced persons collectively (as in Doc. 119) or using do-no-harm monitoring tables (Doc. 105). A further possibility is to ensure that selection committees which make funding decisions explicitly consider possible negative consequences (Doc. 58).

However, the documents do not always make it clear how the entry points for do-no-harm, having been identified at the planning stage, are to be reflected in practice in the design of activities (as in Doc. 69, 132; Int. 69, 132; Int. 82). In the reporting on projects, not a single case was found which covered the topic of unintended negative effects, even though the case studies showed signs of these in some instances (Int. 120,121). Given the complexity and the many challenges of post-conflict contexts, this is quite surprising: even if planning is very good and activities are designed with due regard to the do-no-harm principle, it is still conceivable that such effects could occur.

⁵⁰ Ideally all stakeholders are involved in making this selection. Implementing agencies and their local implementing partners can insist on the inclusion of marginalised groups; in order to be able to actually identify disadvantaged people in situ, however, communities and local authority figures are important.

⁵¹ This is because VSLAs often result in women having more income of their own, or having their own income at all, which can lead to a backlash in families or communities.

Certainly, there are many reasons why it may be more difficult to record such effects (for example, because affected people are afraid to speak up, or local implementing partners feel reluctant about reporting them in case of negative repercussions for themselves). At the same time, there is an important need to identify and report unintended negative effects of this kind so as to be able to adapt the project accordingly and learn lessons for future projects. The question of whether negative effects occurred but were not reported, occurred but were not identified, or genuinely did not occur, could not be answered within the parameters of the evaluation.

Overall assessment EQ 1.5: To what extent are the human rights principles of “participation”, “non-discrimination” and “do no harm” taken into account in the implementation of projects in post-conflict contexts?

German development cooperation partially fulfils its aspiration of taking human rights principles into account in the implementation of projects in post-conflict contexts. In the development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts that we analysed, the human rights principle of **participation** is mostly fulfilled: many of the projects strive to enable target groups and other local stakeholders to participate in planning and design processes, as the responses of many project participants and partners also confirm. The human rights principle of **non-discrimination** is partially fulfilled: many planning documents, especially PCAs, emphasise the relevance of non-discrimination when designing projects; nevertheless, the people involved in implementation are sometimes oblivious to the problems surrounding the selection of target groups in communities, which can pose challenges such as reinforcing existing disadvantages. At the same time, some projects take steps to promote the inclusion of women and to reduce barriers. These may range from “classic” measures, such as offering childcare, to provision addressing more deeply-seated psychosocial and cultural barriers. Finally, the injunction to **do no harm** is partially fulfilled. Many planning documents mention that projects operate according to this principle, but too often remain vague and insufficiently transparent about how it is realised in practice.

Interim conclusions on planning

The process steps required for the planning of development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts and the analytical tools intended for this purpose do indeed show verifiable effects in terms of the integration of gender and with regard to women’s and men’s gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests. The recommendations derived from analytical tools such as gender analyses and PCAs, particularly on taking gender into account, are reflected to some extent in preliminary appraisals and module proposals. Once the analytical tools have identified gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests, however, it does not automatically follow in every case that measures to address them will be developed in the planning documents.

In this respect, the internal processes of the implementing organisations differ: whereas GIZ has a formalised process for reviewing and ensuring the quality of gender and conflict aspects in BMZ projects, KfW has guidelines and checklists but allows its operational teams considerable latitude and a high degree of responsibility. Within GIZ, the Safeguards+Gender management system has proven its worth as a clearing house; the process is structured effectively and accepted internally.

There is potential for improvement, however: firstly, the opportunities for transformative measures that certainly exist are seldom used, even when there are suitable entry points for doing so. Secondly, in most cases country strategies do not provide pointers to gender aspects in a form that would enable projects to use them for orientation or that would create transparency about objectives. Many projects therefore only carry out planning on their own behalf. This wastes opportunities to pursue common goals and activities, to utilise synergy effects and to learn from each other.

Overall, most stakeholders agreed that the planning process, especially the early steps such as the preliminary appraisal, but also the module proposal, are important starting points for taking the gender-conflict nexus into account. The German development cooperation actors, in particular, – namely the BMZ

and the two implementing organisations – have very good options in all steps in the process to exert their influence for the purposes of gender- and conflict-sensitive project design. The assignment of markers tends to be a strategic decision rather than the weighed result of a gender analysis. For the BMZ specifically, it is an opportunity to give a clear signal in favour of gender equality and to formally mandate that projects should address gender- and conflict-specific needs in post-conflict contexts.

Whether gender plays a major role in the planning of projects depends to some extent on the individuals involved in preparing projects and carrying out institutional oversight of their development and review – for instance, within the BMZ divisions responsible for projects or within the implementing organisations. But it is also a question of what the partners need; in dialogue with them, agreement is reached on which projects will be implemented and how, and what significance will ultimately be attached to the gender-conflict nexus. Thus, the significance of gender may equally be decided as a result of weighing different criteria against one another.

Nevertheless, the BMZ could generally be taking more action to track the inclusion of the gender-conflict nexus in project planning, not least to fulfil its own strategic aims and obligations. Documents such as the (preliminary) gender analysis could be used more intensively as a source of knowledge and information. At the same time, within the constellation of the BMZ, the implementing organisations and the political partners based in the countries, it is often the German development cooperation actors who use processual starting points in order to anchor gender in projects. In this regard, some project stakeholders consider that the BMZ especially could perform an even stronger role in supporting gender equality in dialogue with its partners.

While political partners have varying degrees of enthusiasm about gender, there are very few indications that they actively obstruct gender mainstreaming. On the contrary, in most cases political partners particularly welcome efforts to address gender- and conflict-specific practical needs – as opposed to strategic interests – of women and men. How these constellations and the various stakeholders' opportunities to exert influence take shape during the implementation stage (in which the local implementing partners also play a larger role) is explained in the next section.

5.2.2 Implementation

The following section explains the implementation phase of the process, which comes after the project conception and commissioning phase. We focus on the planning and delivery of concrete activities, and on the gender- and conflict-sensitive design of such activities. We also describe which gender approaches the projects follow. Furthermore, we discuss the safeguards against sexual misconduct within German bilateral development cooperation projects, and specifically, which prevention and complaint mechanisms exist in the projects, both for staff and for target groups. Finally, brief interim conclusions are drawn on the implementation step of the process.

The projects we analysed are almost exclusively GE1 projects. Nevertheless, they show a very broad spectrum of planned and implemented activities that either take account of gender or address gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests. In some projects, there were additional activities that went beyond what was envisaged at the early planning stage and documented in the module proposal. This was the case, for instance, when gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests were only recognised in the course of implementation, or when a situation had changed and it was necessary to adapt the activities in response.

In practice, some of the projects make use of their operational plans for the anchoring of gender. They explicitly list relevant gender-related activities (Doc. 82, 83) or at least mention women in conjunction with vulnerable groups (Doc. 84). Some projects make additional use of the operational plan as a monitoring tool, highlighting gender activities in a specific colour (Doc. 85). However, gender-specific activities are not evident in the projects' operational plans in every case (for example, Doc. 133); nor is it always possible to discern whether gender-related outputs are being achieved (as in Doc. 134). One reason for this may be that operational plans are instruments for projects in progress, which do not serve reporting purposes per se.

German development cooperation projects generally have numerous starting points that lend themselves to the integration of gender-conflict nexus aspects into project activities in diverse ways. In addition to activities

aimed directly at target groups, many projects also provide gender training for partners, be they political or implementing partners; for example, this may involve advising government authorities on gender-sensitive work, or providing further training on gender mainstreaming to government officials (as in Doc. 135). Other options for addressing gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests in project activities include striving for appropriate (context-specific) gender parity among target groups, implementing gender-differentiated approaches and taking account of gender-specific barriers to participation when planning concrete activities.

In order to better reflect the diversity of activities, below we provide a classification of the projects in terms of their gender approach, referring to a scale with four gradations: non-gender-sensitive, gender-sensitive, gender-specific and gender-transformative.⁵² **Non-gender-sensitive** signifies that projects take no account of gender aspects in any way. Their planning does not include reflection on the gender implications of their activities in post-conflict contexts, such as attention to existing gender roles and norms, and hence the implementation is not informed by such reflections. **Gender-sensitive** means that projects are conscious of such gender implications. Furthermore, it indicates that steps are taken in the planning and implementation of activities to ensure that women as well as men are able to participate. Reducing barriers to participation is the crucial point here. **Gender-specific** projects go a step further by implementing activities which are specifically tailored to women's and men's practical needs. Going further still, **gender-transformative** projects also address the gender- and conflict-specific strategic interests of women and men, which may encompass issues arising from the social and societal context, structural discrimination, and the prevailing gender roles and norms.⁵³

In synopsis, the picture that emerges is as follows (see Figure 13): the majority of projects either do not mention gender dimensions (non-gender-sensitive) or settle for "only" enabling participation in activities (gender-sensitive). On this basis, around one project in three is not planned and implemented gender-sensitively, but one project in five does at least address barriers to participation. Almost one third of projects pursue a gender-specific approach, while only slightly more than one tenth of projects also set their sights on transformative goals. This breakdown therefore reveals considerable potential for improvement, particularly at the upper end of the scale, since only a few projects are implementing transformative activities.⁵⁴

⁵² The evaluation undertakes this categorisation based on Doc. 138.

⁵³ A project was rated as sensitive/specific/transformative if it contained sensitive/specific/transformative activities, and hence the assessment of the projects looks comparatively favourable.

⁵⁴ A study published by INEF also finds that gender-transformative aims are only rarely pursued at the planning stage (Bliss, 2020).

Figure 13 Gender approaches of the projects⁵⁵

Source: own presentation.

The detailed findings are as follows: first, there are **gender-sensitive** projects. These endeavour to enable both women and men to participate in project activities. Many women in post-conflict contexts experience a whole host of challenges simultaneously. If projects do not think holistically and fail to take account of these difficulties, women are often unable to take part in activities at all. Even the minimum requirement of at least “keeping women in mind” and enabling them to participate can be an undeniable hurdle, depending on the context. For example, some projects report that there are not always enough women who qualify as potential participants in activities, and that it is difficult to find women wishing to participate in training (Int. 18).

Cultural aspects can constitute another impediment to participation (as in Doc. 90), as can a general mistrust of external actors. This often causes difficulties when the project needs to invite women to training events in contexts where they are not normally allowed to move about in public without a male chaperone. In such cases, there are various possible approaches: one option is for female staff members of the local implementing partners to establish contact and issue the invitations (Int. 99). Another is for staff to approach parents, especially fathers, about letting their daughters participate in measures (Int. 100). To this end, it is important to have good gender analyses which give helpful pointers on the implementation of activities and which already underpin the planning. Other options that projects can use to reduce barriers to participation include the flexible planning of training events in terms of locality and timing, and the provision of childcare (Doc. 55). There are also examples of elaborate doorstep campaigns to persuade young women’s families of the benefits of letting them participate in the project (Doc. 88). Many of the projects that have a gender-sensitive approach make substantial efforts in this regard, but do not necessarily go any further (Doc. 72, 79, 139, 140).

Next, there are projects with **gender-specific** approaches. This means that sometimes differentiated offers are made to women and men, or differentiated needs covered, within the activities reported upon. Many projects make quite concrete and direct contributions to addressing women’s needs through activities such as training health care workers and nurses on childhood diseases and maternal health (as in Doc. 141). In addition, there are frequent offers of capacity building (Doc. 142) and training for women, whether to empower them in the areas of “leadership” and “entrepreneurship” (Doc. 110) or in their role as elected

⁵⁵ “All projects” refers to 45 GE1 projects in total, of which 33 were run by GIZ and 12 by KfW.

representatives (Doc. 143). Some project partners integrate gender into initial vocational training or continuing education addressed to other themes (Int. 101, 102).

Finally, there are projects – albeit only a few – which are **gender-transformative**, meaning that their approach is aimed at the societal and political context. These attempt to address strategic interests of women and men. For example, this means that activities address the core causes, norms, values and understandings that underlie the inequality between women and men (Doc. 144). It may refer to workshops that explicitly make contact with and involve men, or it may mean that public authorities are approached and trained for a specific purpose, perhaps to develop a road map setting out how they might respond in certain situations (Int. 31). Sexual and gender-based violence is often exacerbated by conflict and, for that reason, a widespread problem in post-conflict contexts. Especially when dealing with such complex issues, approaches that mobilise and involve men are crucial to prevention and awareness-raising efforts. Other important approaches, however, are to sensitise and train local authorities, set up task forces on sexual and gender-based violence, and create or support in-country reporting mechanisms (Doc. 76).

Turning our attention to the two implementing organisations, differences can be observed in the gender approaches of projects. Projects promoted by KfW predominantly pursue a non-gender-sensitive approach and do not make provision for gender-differentiated activities. Non-gender-sensitive projects often argue that women and men are equally affected by the problems of a particular situation and will therefore gain equal benefit from an intervention. However, this approach misses its mark, as the effects of the same intervention on women and men can be different. In the case of measures to increase income, for example, women and men cannot always avail themselves of the additional income to the same extent, or violence against women can increase (Int. 9, 25).

At the same time, individual gender-sensitive projects promoted by KfW (and indeed by GIZ) sometimes show remarkable commitment to ensuring that women as well as men participate in the activities (Int. 32). One of the KfW projects we analysed even includes a separate “gender component”, meaning that one part of the project is exclusively dedicated to gender themes. Although KfW projects mostly concentrate on the practical needs of the target group, there are also a few projects that address strategic interests. When KfW projects address the nexus, however, women are mainly approached as victims and rarely empowered as actors. But there are exceptions: one project is noted in which women are seen as active agents and are supported in their advocacy work (Int. 86).

GIZ projects addressing the gender-conflict nexus target both practical needs and strategic interests. There are many examples in which gender-specific project activities are offered. The actor perspective is just as predominant in GIZ projects – presumably because the fundamental idea of technical cooperation is that of “building the capacity” of the target group. Here once again, however, there are several non-gender-sensitive projects.

Overall assessment EQ 3.1: To what extent do the processes *theoretically* allow the stakeholders involved to influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

The criterion that the process should theoretically allow the actors involved to influence the implementation of gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts is fulfilled. There are various points in the process at which the actors involved – from the BMZ via the implementing organisations GIZ and KfW to the political and implementing partners – can influence how the gender-conflict nexus is incorporated into project planning and implemented in the projects. Thus, they also have an influence on how well gender mainstreaming is achieved in development cooperation as a whole.

Via its strategies and its steering of the planning process, the BMZ has the powers to drive forward the anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus, and can give strong signals accordingly (quality at entry). However, this does not imply that the role of the implementing organisations is not equally important. Given that they develop the preliminary appraisals and module proposals, they have a similar opportunity and indeed a responsibility to anchor the gender-conflict nexus in these documents. The preliminary appraisal was identified as a fertile starting point for the anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus because at this stage the BMZ and the implementing organisations are still engaged in an open-ended discussion of the draft project

concept. In contrast, adjustments made subsequently during the development of the module proposal are often only minor. At the same time, what is documented in the module proposal and the results matrix is crucial, since this represents the binding framework for commissioning.

From the beginning of project implementation, agency passes to the implementing organisations. Their role is to maintain contact with the political partners and to select local implementing partners. The latter can exert an influence on the anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus in the implementation, since they contribute to designing the activities. Being in direct contact with the target groups, they can also identify specific needs and try to gear project activities towards them. Usually the political partners are more distant from the concrete implementation. Key opportunities for them to exert their influence are the intergovernmental negotiations and consultations as well as the appraisal missions, because in these settings they can clearly express to what extent they are favourably or unfavourably disposed towards anchoring the gender-conflict nexus in the projects.

Separately from the planning and implementation stages, the BMZ in particular and the implementing organisations have the opportunity to evaluate and synthesise the experience from the projects (in reports and evaluations). By doing so, they can learn lessons and instigate conceptual refinement in the area of supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

It becomes clear during implementation that the right choice of partners and good cooperation with partners, especially local implementing partners, are important factors for the implementation of gender- and conflict-specific activities. Some projects have developed their own gender-related criteria for the selection of local implementing partners and funded organisations (Doc. 103). Other projects, which provided their partners with intensive technical guidance, also report that the local partners carried out a large number of positive gender activities (Doc. 106). It is evident that implementing organisations have, and make use of, two options here to ensure the anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus: either to select partners based on their gender competence, or to support them with continuing education to develop their gender competence.

For KfW, the choice of partners is particularly crucial, since it delegates far more of the responsibility for implementation to its partners, and its contracts specify in advance such details as how women are to be involved (Int. 32). For that reason, an important additional step would be to review the gender competence or gender- and conflict-sensitivity of the partners as part of the project executing agency analysis. Based on the documents made available to the evaluation team, however, project executing agency analyses do not cover any gender aspects (Doc. 15,136).

In context: A gender bonus as an incentive

The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) identifies the reduction of inequalities and the strengthening of social cohesion as key factors for lasting peace in Colombia. The EU is also committed to furthering the implementation of the peace agreement in that country. Under the auspices of the EU Latin American Investment Facility, AFD and the EU are jointly funding a 5-year pilot project in cooperation with FINDETER – a territorial development bank – which understands the needs of Colombia’s regions. The aim is to close the gap between rural and urban areas. To this end, the project facilitates access to loans for development projects in post-conflict areas and provides technical assistance and investment grants. With a view to supporting gender equality, AFD, the EU and Financiera de Desarrollo Territorial S. A. have devised a financial incentive for projects: there is a “gender bonus” for projects that include a gender component.

Sources: Agence Française de Développement (n. d., 2018); European Commission (n. d.); Latin America Investment Facility (2020); Int. 28

Our findings also show what a central role the management staff of the implementing organisations play when it comes to anchoring gender and taking account of gender- and conflict-specific issues in the implementation of projects. GIZ managers in particular have opportunities to exert an influence here, since GIZ is more closely involved in the implementation of projects than KfW. Many examples illustrate how a manager’s commitment to the issue can positively influence both the project teams and the implementing partners. At the same time, many staff members from the implementing organisations mentioned the need

for concrete guidance on how to integrate gender into their projects in a meaningful way with due regard for the post-conflict context.

While the BMZ no longer has any defined role in this step of the process, political and implementing partners can contribute their input to the implementation of activities in different ways. Some local implementing partners report that work on operational plans and activity planning is carried out jointly, during which they are able to make their own suggestions (for example, Int. 103). Political partners likewise have good opportunities to contribute their input, either through planning workshops or by selecting participants to attend further training programmes addressed to staff in ministries and public authorities. An important entry point for the inclusion of gender can arise if implementing organisations and political and implementing partners take the time, at the beginning of a project, to develop a common understanding of gender in the post-conflict context and of gender equality (Doc. 52), in order to prevent misunderstandings during implementation.

Overall assessment EQ 3.2: To what extent do the stakeholders involved *actually* influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

The existing options for influencing gender mainstreaming in projects in post-conflict contexts are partially utilised by the actors involved. Whether the actors actually do this depends in part on the importance they attach to gender. According to the BMZ's strategy paper and Gender Action Plan, gender equality is an objective and a quality criterion of German development cooperation. Under the BMZ quality criterion "Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion" and the "BMZ 2030" reform process, this will remain the case. In these documents, the BMZ has fundamentally articulated its aspiration, which is known to the implementing organisations and binding upon their work.

However, the divisions running the projects do not always signal, in their interplay with the implementing organisations, that they consider this an important action area. Consequently, some of the potential that exists goes unexploited from the outset, as gender then appears to be one cross-cutting theme among many, and its importance as an objective in its own right is neglected. When the BMZ makes use of its entry points, which largely occur in the project planning phase, this is more likely to be attributable to the initiative of individual country officers. At the same time, it is the responsibility of the implementing organisations to contribute actively to the implementation of the strategic objectives, and to see that they are incorporated. By taking advantage of the various processual starting points, GIZ and KfW could work more vigorously towards the inclusion of gender- and conflict-specific issues in development cooperation projects than they actually are doing.

Turning attention to the interplay with the political partners, a variety of constellations are seen. Gender equality is rarely if ever one of the partners' own priorities. If the issue is presented tactfully, most of them accept it; only a few reject it altogether. This shows that sensitive communication between the BMZ, the implementing organisations and the political partners poses a major challenge.

Cooperation with political partners takes place in dialogue and is a process of negotiation and bargaining in which all participants have opportunities to exert influence and voice their positions. This is also in keeping with the development cooperation principle of partnership and cooperation on an equal footing. At the same time, development cooperation can place issues on the agenda, depending on the context, and can champion the implementation of certain activities, for example. While it is evident that many political partners welcome work that addresses women's and men's practical needs, they are more sceptical when the focus turns to strategic interests, and hence social power constellations. At times, a political partner who has shown some openness to gender during planning turns out to be less willing when the time comes for implementation; again, this calls for ongoing dialogue.

Finally, in practice the local implementing partners make their suggestions for addressing the gender-conflict nexus mainly during the implementation of activities. This makes the implementing partners' gender-and-conflict competence a factor of particular significance.

Box 9 Measures against sexual misconduct⁵⁶

Safeguards against sexual misconduct⁵⁷ in the context of German development cooperation projects are essential and indispensable. The population's situation is precarious in many post-conflict contexts, and sexual and gender-based violence is often widespread. These facts underline the relevance of effective safeguards. As an OECD-DAC member, Germany has committed itself to the goal of taking preventive precautions against sexual misconduct, which includes sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH), and of responding to any such misconduct appropriately. This has been especially relevant since the “DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response” was adopted in 2019.⁵⁸

Safeguards against sexual misconduct encompass three dimensions: (1) precautionary measures for prevention and awareness raising, such as training sessions and courses for those involved in projects, (2) complaint mechanisms which those affected know about, have access to and actually use, and (3) mechanisms that facilitate organisational learning in the first two dimensions and, when necessary, lead to change and adaptation of preventive measures and complaint mechanisms. The emphasis in the following section is on the first two dimensions: prevention measures and complaint mechanisms.⁵⁹

It is important for the **prevention** of sexual misconduct to provide awareness-raising and training measures for project staff. Within the development cooperation projects overall, we found a broad spectrum of such measures. For example, prevention measures take place in a large proportion of the projects (Doc. 145; Int. 145; Int. 18, 37, 74, 82, 83, 101, 104–106). These can be very diverse, ranging from presentations to role plays on the theme of “sexual harassment” and materials such as guidance notes (Int. 18, 104). Whereas in some cases, sexual misconduct is addressed within the framework of the individual projects, such as in the annual project dialogue (Int. 9, 25, 53), in many countries it is the country office that organises awareness-raising training sessions for all staff (Int. 74). To some extent, these training courses are also offered to the political partners and the local implementing partners, or are developed with external consultants (Int. 85, 108, 109). Nevertheless, there are projects where only individual staff members attend training courses (Int. 42), or where the gender analysis recommends training but it is not obvious from the documentation whether this recommendation is actually being implemented (Doc. 146).

Concerning the second pillar of safeguards, the complaint mechanisms, the essential question is whether these exist and whether those affected know about them, can access them, and are actually making use of them. Complaint mechanisms are addressed to victims of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and sexual harassment. They may be addressed an external target group (in the broad sense) of the projects, or internally to project staff. Complaint mechanisms for victims can exist on two levels (and ideally in parallel): at headquarters level within the implementing organisations, and at country or project level within the implementing organisations and/or the local implementing partners.

⁵⁶ Safeguards are dealt with in the section on “Implementation”, since the focus of evaluation question EQ 1.6 is on practice or implementation. At the same time, the question about safeguards is relevant in all phases of the project cycle, from planning to implementation to post-implementation. They must be thought about integrally at every point and taken into account at all stages to ensure that they are functional and capable of achieving the desired effect.

⁵⁷ In the following, the term “sexual misconduct” is used as an umbrella term for sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The difference, according to UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2020), concerns the question of who the victims and survivors are: people under the mandate of an organisation can be affected by sexual exploitation and abuse, whereas sexual harassment can affect members of staff.

⁵⁸ DAC Recommendations are legal instruments of non-binding character. Nevertheless, they exert great normative force and reflect the political will of the DAC members (OECD, n.d.).

⁵⁹ The evaluation inquires principally into whether complaint mechanisms exist and are known about. On the subject of use, the evidence is very sparse, and it was not analysed systematically. Similarly, the evaluation does not consider the question of learning in relation to safeguards, as many actors are still in the process of putting safeguarding mechanisms in place.

Too often, there are no established **complaint mechanisms** for target groups. According to UN Guiding Principle 31, such mechanisms should be transparent, accessible and trustworthy (United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights, 2016). Mechanisms that exist at headquarters level, such as online forms, are more likely to be off-putting due to the way they are structured, and tend to be inadequate. Responsibility for establishing and maintaining complaint mechanisms is often passed on to the local implementing partners. This can make sense, on the basis that the implementing partners are closer to the target groups. KfW, for example, contractually delegates the responsibility for complaint mechanisms to the implementing partners, and has developed reporting channels so that the project managers in charge are notified about cases (Int. 91, 110). However, many representatives of the target groups say that they are unaware of any complaint mechanisms (for example, Int. 111). No information is provided on how to use them. All in all, although individual implementing partners endeavour to offer many different low-threshold channels and to set up systems (Int. 82, 97, 112), complaint mechanisms for target groups are still not sufficiently anchored in German development cooperation projects – the existence of complaint mechanisms and the level of awareness and use of them all have scope for development.

Various complaint mechanisms exist for staff, but overall they are not of an adequate standard. A facility is available for staff members of the implementing organisations to report incidents at headquarters level (with an option to do so anonymously). For national staff especially, this is not necessarily a viable route, however. This explains why other channels are frequently established at country office level (Doc. 89; Int. 18) – such as confidential committees or gender focal points that act as points of contact (e.g. Int. 14, 21) – or are currently being finalised (Int. 107). These channels are known to many members of staff, but not to all. Since there are occasions when the work of the implementing organisations in this area can have repercussions for political partners, complaint mechanisms are also being set up in the partner ministries (for example, Int. 8); whether and how these are being used is a different question, however.

Awareness of complaint mechanisms is generally higher among staff than among target groups, while internally, international staff are better informed about existing channels than national staff. Reporting routes between implementing organisations and local implementing partners are partly established and even contractually anchored, yet there are only occasional signs that the mechanisms are being used (and when they are used, it is to complain about something other than the issue of “sexual misconduct”).

The evaluation finds that safeguards against sexual misconduct could be strengthened considerably and anchored more systematically in German development cooperation projects. Currently, Germany is not living up to its aspiration and its responsibility in this area, as the OECD-DAC Recommendation of 2019 also requires. While some projects are very active in operating preventive measures, training is not always obligatory for all staff, which means that too few of them actually take advantage of the provision that exists.

Our findings on complaints mechanisms show a mixed picture. Awareness of these is best at the level of staff members, particularly among the international staff of the implementing organisations; at national level there is somewhat less awareness of the mechanisms, but they are still known to the vast majority of national staff. The complaint mechanisms are too rarely focused on the people in the project location, and representatives of the target group are often unaware of them. While the low level of usage can be explained by the low level of awareness, overall it is not satisfactory.

Generally it is noticeable that the responsibility for establishing complaint mechanisms for the target group is being shifted along the chain of delegation from the BMZ via the implementing organisations to the local implementing partners. The implementing organisations are making observable efforts to establish systems at headquarters and country office level, all the more so when their projects are working at close quarters with target groups. Likewise, some implementing partners have already established their own mechanisms and channels or are at least making discernible efforts in that direction. Nevertheless, the responsibility for safeguards should not be left to them alone. It is for the BMZ and the implementing organisations to ensure that effective safeguards are in place in German development cooperation projects.

In context: How can organisations determine how good their safeguarding mechanisms are?

Brot für die Welt and Diakonie-Katastrophenhilfe are developing a self-assessment tool for reviewing internal safeguarding mechanisms. Safeguarding refers to the activities that an organisation undertakes to protect human rights and prevent the abuse of power in projects. It also encompasses safeguards against sexual misconduct.

On the one hand, the tool makes it possible to take stock of which mechanisms already exist. On the other hand, it draws attention to what is missing or in need of improvement. The tool views safeguarding in terms of three thematic areas: (1) prevent, (2) detect and react and (3) learn. Within each of the thematic areas, the tool contains statements on which project coordinators and project staff are asked to give an honest rating. The points add up to a total score, which can then be used to evaluate the safeguarding system as a whole. The findings from the tool may then act as a basis upon which project stakeholders can strengthen and further develop their own safeguarding system to meet the needs of the target groups and the stakeholders.

Source: Doc. 137

Overall assessment EQ 1.6: To what extent are there safeguards against sexual misconduct in German development cooperation projects?

The aspiration for German development cooperation projects to have safeguards against sexual misconduct is barely fulfilled. While prevention measures are moderately widespread and many projects have developed such measures, the number of complaint mechanisms and the degree of awareness and use of them are all insufficient. Above all, the target groups are not adequately well informed about them. The fact that little or no reporting of cases is taking place likewise indicates that an effective complaints route has not yet been established.

While some implementing partners have put in place functioning systems of their own, there are gaps along the chain of delegation between the BMZ, the implementing organisations and the local implementing partners. This makes it difficult to establish a stringent system for preventing and dealing with sexual misconduct.

Interim conclusions on implementation

While the planning of projects is important, many challenges only come to light in the course of implementation and the actual delivery of activities. The development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts that we analysed are implementing numerous different activities, mostly linked to gender but some also linked to the gender-conflict nexus. Overall, more gender-related activities are taking place than the project documentation shows. In some cases, these go beyond what was envisaged during the early planning stage. Many examples demonstrate that, even in more complex contexts, there are diverse options for addressing gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests and for integrating gender. Only in exceptional cases do projects seem unable to realise further relevant measures in response to situational factors, in addition to the activities originally planned with the political and implementing partners. In the projects we analysed, this was the case when difficulties with the partners had already arisen during the implementation of planned gender-related activities (Int. 66).

In general, findings show how important it is to plan the allocation of resources for gender-related activities from the outset. The main reasons for the non-delivery of particular activities, even if people have good ideas, are lack of time and unsatisfactory gender competence. If the project planning is informed by gender competence, if staff have acquired such competence and if sufficient resources are allocated, it is easier for projects to respond to requirements that only arise during implementation. The main factors favouring the delivery of a large number of activities are the presence of competent and committed managers and project staff, who are not daunted by the subject matter and who find ways of dealing with the challenges of the

post-conflict context and the country-specific conditions. Even so, many project staff express a need for more sources of guidance on how to address the gender-conflict nexus specifically in their sector.

It emerges that planning in the course of the project provides those involved in projects with initial entry points for dealing with the issues of gender equality and the gender-conflict nexus – by preparing a gender analysis, for example – which can generate knowledge as well as sensitivity to the various issues. In many respects, the planning process also ensures that the gender dimensions of planned projects are fundamentally kept in mind. At the same time, in the implementation phase, a need is noted in many projects for additional guidance and support on realising the plans in practice. Particularly when it comes to the challenge of addressing women’s and men’s gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests – and especially in specific sectors – gaps become apparent. This is partly resolved by having staff with gender and conflict competence or equally competent implementing partners (selected by chance or deliberately), but is not anchored systematically.

Overall, the projects implement many gender-related activities jointly with the political partners and local implementing partners. For the most part, these are gender-sensitive or gender-specific and seldom gender-transformative, even though our analysis of the planning process highlights viable entry points for such an approach. Working transformatively is certainly demanding and it would be wrong to overstate what individual projects can achieve in this respect. Nevertheless, more use could be made of opportunities to set impulses.

Overall assessment EQ 1.2: To what extent do gender mainstreaming strategies, planning processes, guidelines and analytical tools lead to specific gender-related activities in post-conflict contexts?

The aspiration that gender mainstreaming in German development cooperation will lead to specific gender-related activities in post-conflict contexts is mostly fulfilled. As a general result of the strategies and the planning process, including guidelines and analytical tools, many gender- and conflict-related activities – on varying scales – are planned and implemented in post-conflict contexts.

To some extent the strategy papers of German development cooperation take account of the issue that women and men are affected differently by conflicts. The process for planning projects is very clearly delineated and formalised. Certain analytical tools such as gender analysis are commonly employed to identify disparities in gender equality as well as the underlying causes. However, direct links with conflict are only discussed sporadically, and explicitly joined-up thinking about the nexus of gender and conflict is quite rare.

To sum up, projects often do not address causes of inequality, such as gender roles and norms, or established structures, which are also manifested in a country’s political, economic and social institutions. Only rarely are these questions tackled systematically in the course of cooperation with partners. As a result, potential for transformative work on different levels is forfeited or remains unexploited.

5.2.3 Post-implementation

The process steps of reporting and evaluation serve the purpose of reviewing the relevance and effectiveness of the approaches used. They also generate feedback as a basis for adjusting the steering of current projects and those commissioned subsequently. The theory of change underlying this evaluation (see Section 2.1) views the post-implementation phase as part of the gender mainstreaming process, since gender mainstreaming implies the adoption of a gender perspective in all steps of the process. Accordingly, the mechanisms in this phase can contribute to anchoring the gender-conflict nexus in German bilateral development cooperation in post-conflict contexts. Furthermore, they can take suggestions on how this can be achieved from the implementation level and feed them back into the strategy and planning processes.

We therefore begin the following section by discussing reporting and evaluation. Next, we analyse overarching learning processes based on these mechanisms. This raises the complex issue of inter-organisational and intra-organisational learning. Our analytical findings on this topic only show a segment of an extensive learning reality, the aim being to comment on learning with a particular focus on the gender-

conflict nexus, although it is not always possible to make a clear-cut distinction between this and more general learning.

Reporting and evaluation

“Reporting and evaluation” are part and parcel of the gender mainstreaming process.⁶⁰ The BMZ specifies standards for both. On the reporting side, the main instrument with which the implementing organisations render accountability to the BMZ at project level is the annual report. At GIZ, the documentation contains three additional concrete starting points for gender-sensitive reporting. An internal guidance document emphasises (1) the relevance of generating plausible causal hypotheses in relation to gender, (2) the integration of gender aspects into the impact-oriented monitoring system and (3) the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data (Doc. 92, 93). The last point, disaggregated data, is particularly significant for reporting, because only this creates a knowledge base capable of informing decision-making in projects.

Turning to evaluations, the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and specifically the evaluation criteria adopted by the BMZ in 2006 (BMZ, 2006)⁶¹ are of central importance. Various review questions cover gender aspects in a selective way. Guidelines on the evaluation of development cooperation are in the process of being drafted; these might instigate more consistent attention to gender and human rights aspects.

Both GIZ and KfW have their own further-reaching standards for evaluations. For example, GIZ’s internal guidance documents specify that the various evaluation formats, such as project evaluations, are to include gender-related effects as part of their analysis (Doc. 91, 92, 161). A manual on gender-responsive project management, which serves as guidance for evaluations, makes use of gender-related questions in the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria as well as in the five success factors of the GIZ performance analysis system CAPACITY WORKS (Doc. 94). In addition, the GIZ Safeguards + Gender Desk is tasked with providing greater support in the integration of gender aspects, both in reporting to the BMZ and in the organisation’s internal evaluation work (Int. 29). At KfW, the internal evaluation department is accorded a special role: the gender strategy emphasises the importance of ex-ante and ex-post evaluations for the ongoing development of work towards gender equality (KfW, 2011).

Our analysis of various types of reporting documents (including the implementing organisations’ annual and special reports to the BMZ on their individual projects) and evaluation documents, along with interviews conducted with people involved in projects, reveal a mixed picture as regards the inclusion of gender- and conflict-specific aspects. Based on the annual reports we analysed, reporting at GIZ shows only sporadic references to gender equality or the gender-conflict nexus. With regard to the three starting points for gender reporting, reporting documents rarely feature gender-related results chains, while gender-related project reporting – integrated into operational planning, for instance – is also a rare occurrence (Doc. 96). Most of KfW’s reports to the BMZ contain no statements at all on gender aspects. This can be partly explained by the generally low level of references to gender in the projects. Of the KfW projects included in the analysis, despite having GE1 markers, a majority of projects⁶² contain no gender-related indicator (see Section 5.2.1) and do not therefore report on gender.

In terms of evaluations, GIZ publishes an annual status report at project level in individual countries on how projects are contributing to gender equality (Int. 30, 31). Evaluations at project level usually involve interviews with a broad range of stakeholders, in some cases so frequently that members of the target groups become quite practised at giving answers about the project. In the context of KfW evaluations, interviews

⁶⁰ In addition to individual projects, which are the focus of this evaluation, the implementing organisations also carry out reporting and evaluation on company-wide gender strategies. To be specific, GIZ has conducted various relevant evaluations at company level. For example, a corporate strategic evaluation on the theme of “gender” was conducted in 2015 and a corporate-strategic evaluation on the gender strategy in 2016 (Doc. 27, 161). At KfW Development Bank, the company-wide gender strategy of 2011 stipulates annual reporting to management on the progress of the measures initiated in the gender strategy.

⁶¹ In September 2020, a new BMZ guideline document on the use of the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria was adopted; for the evaluations examined here, however, the old guidelines were still valid.

⁶² This equates to 7 out of a total of 12 KfW projects with a GE1 marker.

with target groups are conducted at project level in gender-segregated groups where necessary (Int. 32). In comparison with reporting formats, evaluations are thus comparatively gender-sensitive.

Regarding the options available to the different stakeholders during the reporting and evaluation step, our analysis found that reporting on the selected GE1 and GE2 projects in the various post-conflict contexts is primarily internal, and is carried out within German development cooperation. During evaluations, on the other hand, project partners normally have greater latitude than during reporting: their assessment of the particular project and how it addresses the gender-conflict nexus is treated as a crucial perspective in many evaluations. Within organisations, individual project or country managers keep track of gender aspects. At KfW, for example, some of them include gender-related matters in the memos they complete on returning from in-situ visits (Int. 32). This is not institutionalised, however, but depends on the given individual's commitment to the issue.

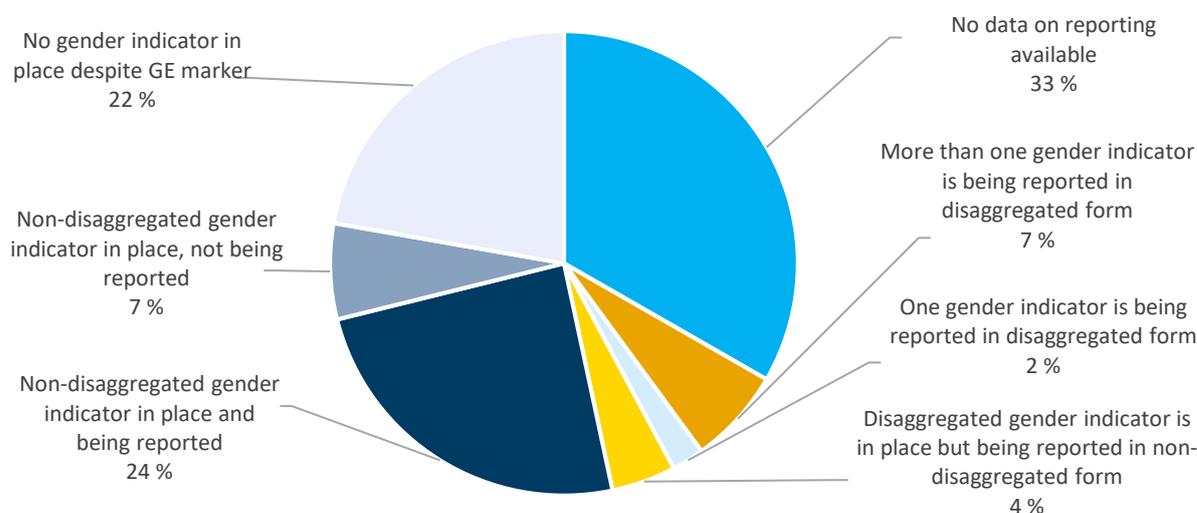
Box 10 **Excursus: Gender-disaggregated data in project indicators (reporting)**

Both for reporting and evaluation and for learning purposes, it is necessary to have reliable and meaningful data. In order to measure effects on gender equality, gender-sensitive indicators and relevant monitoring are needed; these are in keeping with the standard that the BMZ aspires to in bilateral official development cooperation (see Section 2.1.1). This excursus therefore gives a brief presentation of findings from our analysis of gender-disaggregated data from project indicators. This is an important issue, not least because the standard specifying gender-disaggregated reporting has frequently not been adhered to in the recent past (Int. 33).

When collecting data on project indicators, it is important that such data be broken down by gender. In this respect, our analysis of reporting from the GE1 projects included in the evaluation shows a less than positive picture (see Figure 14). Only a few projects submit reporting that is disaggregated by gender. In most cases, this amounts to a breakdown of participation in further training or other events by gender. It infrequently refers to the satisfaction of representatives of the target groups or the effects of the activities, which would permit more in-depth information and conclusions about the effects of the projects. However, there are individual projects which actually report several indicators broken down by gender rather than just a single project indicator, for instance the mandatory gender indicator in GE1 projects. In contrast, a few projects incorporate a disaggregated gender indicator in their planning documentation, but do not report this broken down by gender in their report documents.

With regard to gender-related indicators in GE1 projects, it is commonly assumed that they are aimed at increasing the proportion of women in the target group (Int. 26). This is not surprising, since the wording of a relevant passage in the BMZ standards suggests as much (Doc. 9). A comparison of the indicators shows that the level of ambition regarding the desired proportion of women in the target group varies, which is entirely in keeping with the BMZ standards (Doc. 9). However, no justification is usually given for the chosen level of ambition, by citing contextual factors, for example.

There are three general arguments against formulating the indicators with the sole aim of increasing the share of women participating in the project. Firstly, the interviews provide plausible accounts of how purely quantitative indicators which identify the relative proportions of each gender group can counteract gender-related project objectives. Although it may make sense to increase the proportion of women in the target group for certain activities, in other cases the purpose is better served by deliberately recruiting men as a vehicle for changing norms and roles, along the lines of a gender-transformative approach. In that context, an increase in the proportion of women would be potentially counterproductive (Int. 34). Secondly, quantitative indicators do not usually yield sufficient information about project quality, and struggle to reflect the gender-specific realities of life in a small number of metrics. These limitations impair indicator-based learning (Int. 14, 20). Thirdly, it is a demanding exercise to formulate a realistic level of ambition, because this can vary depending on the sector, the context and other factors. Thus, to arrive at a reliable and comprehensive assessment of project success in terms of gender, quantitative indicators alone are not sufficient.

Figure 14 Gender indicators (disaggregation in reporting)⁶³

Source: own presentation.

Learning

The following section makes a distinction between two forms of learning: inter-organisational learning between the BMZ, GIZ and KfW on the one hand, and intra-organisational learning within the BMZ, GIZ and KfW on the other. Inter-organisational learning consists mainly of two-way learning between the BMZ and each of its implementing organisations in the course of each organisation's projects; there is less inter-organisational learning involving all three actors. In the findings section of the analysis, the emphasis is on written documentation, such as reporting, which is intended to facilitate learning between the BMZ and the implementing organisations. This is just part of a wider learning reality which also includes informal channels such as personal conversations and face-to-face meetings.

Inter-organisational learning is a central element in the annual reporting that the implementing organisations produce and send to the BMZ. For example, they are expected to incorporate learning experiences from previous projects into the concepts drafted for new projects. Our analysis of planning documents shows that in many cases the implementing organisations omit any content from the required chapter of the annual report devoted to learning experiences. At the same time, the BMZ and the implementing organisations only rarely refer to annual reports and evaluations as a source of learning on gender equality and the gender-conflict nexus. It was also quite rare to find any mention of the BMZ making use of annual reports or evaluations for timely steering responses. This state of affairs may partly explain why report-writing can sometimes be perceived first and foremost as a labour-intensive burden. Indeed, it appears that all actors have more opportunities for (joint) learning than they actually use or have capacity to use because of the workload and the time pressure they are under.

On the other hand, positive experiences are also found. Status reports are one example. The preparation of a status report is an opportunity for learning. Such a status report performs a learning function when it presents the gender mainstreaming approaches used by different projects and cites examples from different sectors of how gender mainstreaming is being put into practice. In this way, such a report contributes to learning between different implementing organisations and the BMZ, because only then do they have a basis

⁶³ "No reporting data available" means that no reporting documents (such as project progress reports) were available for the respective project at the time of data collection because it was currently a project in progress, and at the time of our request for documentation, these types of document were not yet available.

for dialogue on different gender mainstreaming approaches (Doc. 158). Annual workshops on gender-related themes are also organised on occasion between staff from the BMZ and the given project (Int. 26).

Turning to **intra-organisational learning**, the more operational the level, the greater the clarity with which this can be observed. Particularly at project level within the partner country, there is a rising density of reported learning experiences. One reason for this could be that hands-on learning and learning in direct interaction is rated as more successful than written formats (Int. 11, 12). For instance, questions can be asked in various forums (Doc. 97; Int. 11, 37) such as training hubs in GIZ's external structure (Int. 38) or within the community of practice (Int. 18). Emphasis is also placed on dialogue with gender focal points or gender experts (Int. 39). At the same time, analytical tools such as the gender analysis or the PCA provide important starting points for staff of the BMZ and the implementing organisations to learn from the experience of previous projects. Many gender analyses include lessons learned from preceding projects, for example. Similarly, appraisal missions in the early planning phase are supposed to document lessons learned from past projects (Int. 23). This is at odds with interview reports that knowledge holders are not being contacted with a view to exchanging experience (Int. 18). Particularly at project level, then, numerous opportunities for informal learning are utilised but resources could be used more systematically in some cases.

At corporate level, both GIZ and KfW make provision for additional learning opportunities. GIZ's internal Safeguards+Gender management system is tailored to the institutional profile of responsibilities and competences. Part of its purpose is to gather information systematically and make feedback available for project planning, which it does by providing tools, for example (Int. 29). The process of preparing the gender analysis requires the Safeguards + Gender Desk to provide feedback. This itself results in learning when the project coordinators give thought to the desk's comments and incorporate this feedback into the gender analysis. From this point of view, project coordinators also consider it important not to outsource gender analyses to short-term consultants but, due to the complexity of the thematic area and the contexts, to have them conducted by the respective teams themselves (Int. 40).

Other positive examples of learning through formal channels at GIZ are: evaluations completed by attendees of further training courses at the Academy for International Cooperation (AIZ), the results of which are sometimes carried across into corporate gender-related documents and checklists (Int. 38); the corporate Gender Strategy which is used occasionally for individual guidance (Int. 41); or gender-sensitive context monitoring, from which information is continuously fed into the operational planning of activities (Doc. 98). With regard to gender-related learning, however, formal channels for acquiring knowledge are mentioned less frequently in general, although there are numerous courses on offer in the corporate knowledge management system (for an overview see Section 6.1.2). The frequent comment from project staff in situ that there is not enough information (Int. 42, 43; see also Section 6.1.1) therefore indicates that corporate information platforms are not adequately well known or perceived as sufficiently useful (Int. 39).

Among the possible reasons for this are that staff consider the information to be ill-adapted to the concrete context, hard to find, or hard to understand. While on the one hand, staff members themselves are asked to actively seek out the information they need and familiarise themselves with the sources of knowledge on offer, on the other hand it is also conceivable that specific information relevant for practical action might better be held in readiness by means of local capacity building and networking across post-conflict contexts rather than via additional corporate formats. Nevertheless, it is equally important to think about learning opportunities from the perspective of users and to ensure that information is easy to find.

At KfW, responses about formal pathways make particular mention of taking advantage of the different contact points that exist (Int. 4); for example, the competence centre for "Social Development and Peace" tries to organise learning (for further details on contact points, see Section 6.1.2). One challenge in intra-organisational learning processes lies in putting the internal ambition of the gender strategy into practice, such as reporting regularly in the management bodies on the realisation of the strategic gender objectives (KfW, 2011); another is the lack of awareness of guidance documents (Int. 45). Other activities to foster learning rely mainly on informal formats such as sector retreats (Int. 12), lessons-learned lunches (Int. 46), or direct requests to colleagues responsible for another project (Int. 44).

Interim conclusions on post-implementation

On inter-organisational learning, our overall finding is that the projects we analysed only partially adhere to specified standards on gender-oriented reporting. In particular, there are problems around the availability and use of gender-disaggregated data. However, the relevant BMZ supplementary guidelines specify that project-related reporting should demonstrate and assess the achievement of objectives with reference to indicators and risks; this also encompasses gender indicators, or the project objectives in the case of GE1 and GE2 projects. Furthermore, reporting may deal with measures and any need for action on gender and other cross-cutting issues. By far the most frequent references to gender or the gender-conflict nexus in reporting are found in the sections on context analysis, justification of the marker, or fulfilment of the project indicators. Risk assessments or do-no-harm assessments containing any reference to gender are rare. Good practices are seen occasionally but rather unsystematically, and for the most part without any further review of results. In keeping with this finding, there is no evidence of any systematic follow-up such as transfer into the planning of future project activities.

Learning with regard to gender aspects is moderately to well anchored in the processes, even if various challenges are evident in the implementation phase. However, learning pertaining to the more specific theme of the gender-conflict nexus is institutionalised to a lesser degree within the organisations. Both BMZ guidelines and the implementing organisations' guidance documents on the theme of "learning" highlight gender- and conflict-sensitive aspects, but do not present an integrated perspective on the nexus. Accordingly, nexus-related learning happens mainly at the individual level. In view of the specific challenges of post-conflict contexts in relation to gender mainstreaming and supporting gender equality, there is all kinds of potential here for the broader transfer of locally available knowledge into the organisations, and for promoting knowledge building and dialogue on these issues.

Overall assessment EQ 1.4: To what extent do processes of gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts facilitate learning?

Processes of gender mainstreaming facilitate some learning both about and within projects in post-conflict contexts. Reporting and evaluation are intended to contribute to feedback mechanisms which facilitate learning at the level of project planning and implementation in post-conflict contexts, and at the strategic level with regard to gender equality and peacebuilding. The reporting and evaluation processes certainly earmark space to talk about learning. However, this is not used to the extent that it could be. Furthermore, there are challenges concerning the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data.

Inter-organisational learning between the BMZ and the implementing organisations has scope for development. Although learning is anchored within the reporting system, it gives rise to little discussion of gender-related learning. In part this is certainly due to high workloads, time pressure, and the need to plan and implement new projects. However, this results in lost opportunities for inter-organisational learning, particularly about the specificities of gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts and about the gender-conflict nexus – challenges on which those involved in projects have a definite need for knowledge and dialogue. A striking positive finding is that within the organisations, and specifically within GIZ, knowledge is being collated and made available in a variety of ways. At the same time, this is only used to a limited extent by staff in the partner countries. The significance of informal learning opportunities is also evident. Staff often take advantage of these, yet once again there is inherent potential that remains unused.

5.3 Outcomes

Beginning with the BMZ strategies, and proceeding via planning and implementation to post-implementation, so far this section has concentrated on our analysis of the gender mainstreaming process in German development cooperation. While this evaluation's main focus is on the process dimension, the question of what effects⁶⁴ the projects achieve, that is to say their outcomes, remains an important criterion for the success of gender mainstreaming. The analysis of outcomes seeks to establish what effects the projects unfold in relation to the gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests of women and men in post-conflict contexts. The analytical focus is on changes initiated in the lives of target groups and their context as a result of project activities.

Because of the focus on these aspects, this section includes not only our analytical findings based on interviews and documents but also the findings from the storytelling analysis. This method gives us a direct means of capturing the target groups' perspectives concerning the changes in their lives as well as how German development cooperation contributed to these (see Chapter 3). There may be equally observable effects on other actors such as state institutions and political partners, who may have – say – attended workshops which sensitised them to the thematic area, but these are not the focus of our analysis.

We first explain which effects the projects have generated in relation to practical needs, which may be **economic** (e.g. increased income), **social** (e.g. basic needs such as food security or health), **psychological** (e.g. overcoming trauma) and **political** (e.g. legal and historical investigation of war crimes) in nature. We then present the effects of the projects on strategic interests, such as **active involvement in peace and reconciliation processes, improved security/reduced violence**, and awareness-raising about **rights and opportunities** and increased self-confidence. Finally, we explain how practical needs and strategic interests are interlinked.

Effects pertaining to practical needs

One group of effects that projects achieve in relation to practical needs are **economic** in nature. Economic issues have an additional gender dimension in times when men are absent due to conflict and women are responsible for generating the necessary family income alone, or when they have to build a new livelihood together due to displacement. The consequences of this situation are complex: in many cases, the woman is empowered within the household when she takes on such tasks and bears sole responsibility for fulfilling them. However, the dual challenge of her family and/or caring obligations coupled with the economic responsibilities imposes a huge individual burden and a high risk of poverty (Doc. 54, 55, 113, 147).⁶⁵ Projects on “sustainable economic development”, which are geared towards improving the target group's income situation, therefore respond to the widespread poverty among war widows by focusing on this group (Doc. 73, 75).

The outcomes for former participants from such projects included becoming self-employed, improving business processes in their family businesses or micro-enterprises, using newly gained contacts and market access or applying more actively for job vacancies (Doc. 106, 148). In this way, they boosted their business profits whilst also finding various ways to increase and stabilise their income. At the same time, the stories of the women who participated in the projects illustrate what other effects can be generated by project activities, going beyond such direct effects as increased income.

A negative side effect of projects in Colombia for some women was that their higher income led to problems with their husband or family. In contrast, some project participants from Liberia and Pakistan reported that their higher income or new job gained them more appreciation from family members or their community. This illustrates how important it is when carrying out such project activities to take account of the familial

⁶⁴ The term “effects” refers partly to a change in the lives of the target group, and partly to changes in organisational culture or how procedures are practised, by the political partner for example.

⁶⁵ Hence, the extent to which women identify with such new roles can also vary.

and societal situation of the target group, for example by ensuring that men or local authority figures such as village leaders are also addressed in the course of projects.

Practical needs of a **social** nature, especially diverse basic needs such as health, education or food security, are a second area in which development cooperation projects generate effects. Often these practical needs are direct and acute consequences of conflicts for both women and men. In many contexts, however, longer lasting repercussions are equally evident, such as when infrastructure like markets or educational facilities were destroyed during the conflict and not rebuilt afterwards. Infrastructure projects to build roads, for example, therefore also have indirect positive effects that contribute to meeting basic needs, in this case by making it easier to access markets and health facilities.⁶⁶

Projects in other sectors also achieved effects in relation to practical social needs: for example, women participants in a backyard garden project reported that not only had they increased their income (economic aspect), but by cultivating the garden they had improved their own food security at the same time (Doc. 148). Projects on “vocational training” such as those in Pakistan have also achieved effects, particularly in terms of continuing vocational education for women and men and the acquisition of technical and management skills (Doc. 148). It emerges that projects designed principally to meet practical needs can also have wider-ranging consequences for gender roles and norms. For example, women participants in vocational training projects in Pakistan stated that by taking part in the project they had improved their position within the family and the community (Doc. 148). In this way, one-off projects give rise to effects in the direction of transforming existing relations, even if this is not necessarily one of the stated project objectives.

A third group of practical needs are those of a **psychological** nature. Many conflicts are characterised by massive violence. Women and men are often severely traumatised as a consequence of enduring such violence (as in Doc. 115, 116, 149), which not infrequently leads to lifelong psychological and physical impairments. Sexual and gender-based violence, such as rape, not only traumatises women but can also result in unwanted pregnancies or forced abortions (Doc. 149). Furthermore, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence – irrespective of their gender – may be profoundly affected by the taboo nature and the stigmatisation of sexual violence (Doc. 54). Targeted psychosocial support to overcome this is a vital but sometimes unrecognised need for many affected people.⁶⁷

Representatives from the target groups of the projects that addressed sexual violence and experiences of war reported that psychological counselling along with networking and dialogue with like-minded people had helped them to overcome trauma. This in turn strengthened the target group’s ability to develop forward-looking perspectives for the future (Doc. 148). It is evident that specifically in the area of “overcoming trauma”, gender-segregated activities are an important factor (Int. 9, 53). For example, many women in the relevant projects in Colombia emphasised that their interactions with the other women had been very important in helping them to process their traumatic experiences; they felt as if the other women had become a “second family”. The interaction among male project participants also contributed to sensitisation and to the critical questioning of existing gender roles (for example, Int. 113, 114). At the same time, it emerged that work with men on their traumatising experiences of violence very seldom takes place.

In this connection, we note the fact that sexual and gender-based violence is widespread in many societies, and not just during conflicts. On the contrary, it is a persistent problem for society as a whole and calls for continuous work that goes beyond addressing practical psychological needs.

⁶⁶ This can also have a positive effect on the economic sphere if, for example, it becomes easier for women to sell agricultural products at local markets. This is an exemplary demonstration of how the different dimensions can be interrelated.

⁶⁷ The amount of evidence on interventions making use of behaviour change communication (BCC) to address gender equality and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is indeed modest. An evidence-gap map points to a lack of methodologically sound and up-to-date systematic reviews of such approaches (Sonnenfeld et al., 2020).

A fourth and final group of practical needs are those of a **political-social** nature. Particularly in Sri Lanka and Colombia⁶⁸ there are project activities aimed at the legal and historical investigation of war crimes. The projects are having effects here because they support target groups in asserting their claims or bringing their cases to public attention. Society's acknowledgement of the injustice suffered is also considered an important step in coming to terms with the past and successfully reintegrating into society.

Effects pertaining to strategic interests

German development cooperation projects also have effects on gender- and conflict-specific strategic interests, albeit on a smaller scale. The following section shows that fewer effects on this aspect can be identified because there are fewer projects carrying out work on the strategic interests of women and men or addressing them explicitly.

The first of the gender- and conflict-specific strategic interests is **active involvement in peace and reconciliation processes**. Women are left out of peace negotiations in many cases, even if they were affected by the conflict, involved in it as combatants, or played a decisive part in ending the conflict through civil society organisations (Doc. 54, 55, 150). Despite the relevance of this thematic area, the projects we studied barely include activities that explicitly take up this strategic interest, although it would have been conceivable to do so in some of the contexts. Only occasionally are there projects that see women as agents for social cohesion and aim to empower them in this role. Since these are still in progress, however, it is not yet possible to comment on their effects (Doc. 151). Project activities in Colombia are one exception: here, women's groups that received support to participate in reconciliation talks felt empowered to continue their political activities.

A second group of strategic interests relate to the issue of **security** or the **reduction of violence**. A long-term consequence of some conflicts is a continuation and "normalisation" of (sexual) violence, especially against women. For example, an increase in domestic violence is observed in some contexts after war-traumatised soldiers or combatants return home (Doc. 146). Therefore, one strategic interest of women, but also of men in many post-conflict contexts, consists of improving the security situation and counteracting violence, especially sexual and gender-based violence. It is strategic because in order to realise this aim, it is necessary to critically question and change existing gender roles and norms, not least the fact that violence against women is often widely accepted, even by women themselves.

Effects in this area can be identified in a project in Liberia. Awareness-raising work was carried out in selected communities, and both men and women enhanced their knowledge of women's rights as a result. Furthermore, training was provided to trainers, who have since continued with this work. In their stories, both women and men reported that there was less violence and more respect and appreciation for women in the community (Doc. 148). At the same time, different people evidently have different views about what led to this outcome: while some attributed it to changes "in [people's] heads", others believed that the effect was due to the more stringent law enforcement/prosecution that also happened as part of the project. In any event, the project succeeded in generating an effect with regard to gender equality.

A third strategic interest relates to knowledge transfer about **rights and opportunities** and **increased self-confidence**. This aspect is manifested in the often long-term consequences for the personal and employment biographies of conflict-affected women and men (Doc. 148), but can also appear in other post-conflict contexts without being a direct consequence of conflict. Projects produce a variety of effects pertaining to this aspect, even though the activities implemented in these areas are few in number. Concerning awareness-raising on women's rights and opportunities, changes are noted in the direction of women's empowerment within their communities; for example, they are able to take part in community meetings and get involved in local decision-making processes (Doc. 148). Furthermore, many women participating in projects in Colombia, and similarly in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, reported that increased self-confidence was a crucial change in their

⁶⁸ At the time of data collection, the main conflicts in both countries had happened in the recent past and were thus more recent than in other countries.

lives, and felt that their future prospects had improved after participating in the project (Doc. 148). This gain in self-confidence was especially noticeable when it was accompanied by the acquisition of expertise and technical skills.

The interlinkages between practical needs and strategic interests

Our analysis of the projects with regard to their effects in the two dimensions of “practical needs” (improving living conditions as a basis for “coping” within the structures of an existing gender order) and “strategic interests” (changing the existing gender order that results in inequalities) shows that the two are often interlinked and that reciprocal effects occur. Through their activities, projects can – sometimes unintentionally – impinge on ideas about gender roles and norms that are deeply embedded in society. For instance, projects addressing women’s practical needs of an economic nature (e.g. increasing income) can result in increased violence against women or a worsening of their security situation due to a rise in domestic violence (Doc. 76). Another example is that just because women achieve production or efficiency gains, it does not necessarily follow that they can choose how the additional resources are spent, because their husbands make those decisions (Doc. 148).⁶⁹ This means that such activities are not conducive to the aim unless norms and values are taken into account and other people in the context, such as husbands or village elders, are involved in any discussion about gender relations. Neglecting to think transformatively makes the project objectives harder to achieve or diminishes the level of success.

On the positive side, respondents from several projects described how project activities contributed not only to project objectives but also to empowerment in private and public spheres. Many of the women interviewed find the empowerment aspect more important than the economic benefit to their own household. Successful transformative results could be observed particularly when project approaches included both professional and personal development of the target groups; in other words, when psychological counselling was offered in addition to technical training (Doc. 73; Int. 7).

When the aim is to change or improve the target group’s life situation, the importance of a transformative approach should not be underestimated. Staff of the projects often argue that a long-term commitment is necessary for any work on deeper-seated structures such as norms and values. This is certainly true, yet the findings also show that as soon as a project is working on practical needs, it should address related strategic interests in parallel; these are sometimes at the root of the needs and may first have to be uncovered. Whereas in some projects concerned with strategic interests, such as involvement in peace and reconciliation processes, the need for negotiation of roles and norms of participation is obvious, in projects on other themes it is less overtly clear. This requires projects to adopt a sensitive approach, and when this happens, the projects show positive effects in terms of gender equality.

Overall assessment EQ 1.3: To what extent do the projects have effects with regard to gender equality in post-conflict contexts?

German development cooperation projects mostly achieve effects in relation to gender equality by addressing gender-specific and conflict-specific practical needs. Effects on strategic interests are identified much less frequently, but are likewise much less frequently the object of project activities. It is particularly the stories told by project participants which illustrate how the projects can change gender roles and norms in the lives of the target groups. However, they also reveal that the societal context and the prevailing gender roles and norms are not always adequately taken into account. This may result in unintended negative effects, principally for women participants, and may even undermine fundamentally positive contributions to gender equality. Overall, it can be concluded that while positive effects in relation to gender equality are certainly achieved, there is untapped potential that is not utilised to the full, especially with regard to strategic interests.

⁶⁹ This was also noted in an INEF report (Bliss, 2020).

5.4 Assessment against OECD-DAC criteria

The OECD-DAC evaluation criteria articulate a set of uniform characteristics which promote the comparability of evaluation results across development projects. The evaluation was conducted on the basis of the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, as revised in 2019 (OECD, 2019), and the BMZ guidelines of 2006 (BMZ, 2006), which were revised and adopted in 2020 (BMZ, forthcoming publication). The evaluation questions for this evaluation cover the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria “relevance”, “coherence”, “effectiveness” and “efficiency” (see Section 2.3). The assessment consists of applying each criterion to the procedure for gender mainstreaming in German development cooperation and to the contents and the direct effects of the projects analysed.

Relevance: Is the measure well designed?

Applying the criterion of “relevance”, we reviewed the planning, implementation and post-implementation process in German bilateral official development cooperation as well as the content of the selected bilateral development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts to determine whether they reflect the requirements arising from international and national agreements but also from the target groups’ needs. The criterion of “relevance” poses the question: is the measure well designed? For the purposes of the evaluation, this means asking whether the process and the projects are relevant in terms of normative and strategic agreements, target group needs, and appropriateness of the concept as drafted; in other words, are they doing the right thing with regard to appropriate implementation of gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

The themes of “gender equality” and “peace and security” are accorded a high priority in international treaty frameworks. This is evident in the multitude of international agreements and national strategies that take up these issues and translate them into action plans (see Section 5.1). The most important document for the gender-conflict nexus is UNSCR 1325 including its follow-up resolutions and implementation plans. Under the existing procedure, the strategies of German development cooperation take account of all relevant international agreements at the time they are drafted; however, they do not fully incorporate subsequent elaborations of the discourse from today’s perspective. Examples of this include aspects of the latest follow-up resolutions to UNSCR 1325 that remain to be implemented, as well as the OECD-DAC Recommendation on ending sexual misconduct in development cooperation projects.

Turning to the planning of projects, it is evident that while international and national conventions and action plans are referenced in the early planning phase, frequently the requirements they formulate are not transposed into concrete approaches. It is positively commendable that some GIZ planning documents require the project’s contribution to the 2030 Agenda to be presented in a dedicated section. During the planning of concrete activities or the implementation phase, links with global and BMZ goals are put in place by formulating appropriate success indicators.

When assessing the alignment of the procedure with the needs and capacities of stakeholders, we find that the target group’s gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests are normally identified in advance by means of various analytical tools. However, our assessment of the projects clearly shows that more needs are usually identified than the implementation actually addresses. The vast majority of attention is devoted to practical needs rather than strategic interests. In practice, this often means that more activities relating to the gender-conflict nexus take place than are obvious from the documentation or the planning. Similarly, although especially disadvantaged groups are often identified in the planning process, the inclusion of these groups does not always happen in practice.

Our assessment of the appropriateness of the process shows that in terms of its design, it creates opportunities for all actors to play their part in influencing the implementation of gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts. Nevertheless, they themselves must actively take advantage of these. Likewise, there is a need for active tracking of the gender-conflict nexus at certain points in order to ensure realistic implementation, since the process per se does not accomplish this. With regard to the implementation of the process, it is clear that the actors involved utilise only some of the options for influencing gender

mainstreaming in projects in post-conflict contexts. Their commitment to doing so depends heavily on the importance attached to gender mainstreaming within the respective organisations.

The evaluation rates the criterion of “relevance” as “partially fulfilled”. It should be noted here that the underlying ratings vary: while the procedure’s relevance, measured against the normative and strategic agreements and the target group needs, is rated as “mostly fulfilled”, the – more important – relevance of the projects actually implemented, measured on the same basis, is only partially fulfilled.

Coherence: How well does the measure fit into the context?

In the vast majority of bilateral official German development cooperation projects, gender equality is incorporated as a cross-cutting issue. Under the “coherence” criterion we examined the extent to which the procedure for German development cooperation is embedded in the context of German development cooperation as a whole (internal coherence), and the extent to which this is true of the projects’ concrete gender mainstreaming activities. In addition, we assessed the extent to which these activities fit into the context of the activities of development partners and other donors (external coherence). Applied to the evaluation, the criterion of “internal coherence” assesses the extent to which gender mainstreaming activities in post-conflict contexts within German development cooperation are designed to be complementary and based on work-sharing, and the extent to which Technical Cooperation and Financial Cooperation instruments are integrated and synergies are harnessed.

The findings of the evaluation in relation to the procedure show that there is sometimes a lack of clarity in the operationalisation and tracking of the standards of German development cooperation. As yet, only a few of the existing country strategies contain any specifically embedded standards on gender mainstreaming. Similarly, the majority of gender analyses are not carried out at the country level, but for each project individually (even if they often draw on existing material). This neglects the opportunity to utilise synergies or to make knowledge on the gender-conflict nexus available for the whole of German development cooperation, for example.

Within the procedure, potential can be observed for improving the intersection with Technical Cooperation and Financial Cooperation in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. There is a tension here between the BMZ’s standards and the different internal processes for implementation in each case. Both GIZ and KfW pursue their own internal approaches to the implementation of gender mainstreaming activities. This is reflected in the conception and the detailed shaping of their respective development cooperation projects.

The criterion of “external coherence” assesses the extent to which German development cooperation is carried out in coordination with other donors. In post-conflict contexts, there are several examples of dialogue and coordination with other donors; however, there were no reports of concrete examples in which multi-donor dialogue was reflected in project planning. Multilateral projects, in which different donors integrate their own objectives to arrive at a common approach, present an opportunity for complementary and harmonised efforts. In this regard, experience from the case study countries shows that it is normally other donors who insist on certain aspects of the gender focus.

The “coherence” criterion relates to the embedding of the procedure and of the projects both in the context of German development cooperation as a whole (internal coherence) and in the context of the activities of development partners and other donors (external coherence). The evaluation finds that it is “partially fulfilled” in both respects.

Effectiveness: Does the measure achieve its objectives?

Under the criterion of “effectiveness” we examined the extent to which the procedure implemented in reality matches up to the intended process; in other words, how effectively the process standards are being translated into practice and achieving the intended goals. With regard to the projects themselves, we analysed to what extent effects pertaining to the target group’s gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests are plausible, and hence to what extent the projects contribute to gender equality in partner countries of German development cooperation.

Our assessment of whether the procedure leads to effects in relation to gender equality shows that although the procedure per se is not designed to identify gender- and conflict-specific needs explicitly, they are nevertheless kept in mind by enshrining various entry points. With regard to the effects of the projects, the evaluation finds that these are mostly achieved for gender equality, primarily by addressing gender- and conflict-specific practical needs, whereas effects on strategic interests are identified much less frequently.

Concerning the achievement of the outputs (gender indicators), an uneven picture emerges: since the projects included in the evaluation were mostly still in progress, data on the fulfilment of the gender indicators is often unavailable. In the few instances where such data exists, the indicators are mostly formulated quantitatively, although there are difficulties with measuring effects on gender equality in this way.

The assessment of the quality of steering and implementation shows that there is a gap between the high level of ambition formulated by the BMZ on the strategic level and the way it is put into practice by the implementing organisations. However, the latter also bear responsibility for ensuring, by means of their internal processes, that implementation takes account of the gender-conflict nexus. The findings of the evaluation show that in the course of project implementation there is often still a need for advice and support concerning how to implement gender mainstreaming activities in practice amidst the specific challenges of post-conflict contexts.

The criterion of “effectiveness” also takes account of unintended effects, since examination of these is embedded in the procedure. Analytical tools are used at the outset to identify unintended negative effects. Within the projects, there was clear evidence from storytelling narratives that projects can have positive as well as negative unintended effects. A further effect concerns the aspiration for German development cooperation projects to have safeguarding mechanisms against sexual misconduct. So far, this is barely fulfilled. Nevertheless, at least efforts are being made on many levels to do better at living up to this aspiration.

In summary, the effectiveness of the procedure and projects of German development cooperation is rated as “mostly fulfilled”. This assessment is based on our review of the extent to which the procedure implemented in reality corresponds to the intended process; that is to say, the extent to which the activities of German development cooperation achieve the self-set objective of contributing to gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

Efficiency: How economically are resources used?

Under the criterion of “efficiency” we examined the extent to which the procedure for planning and implementing gender-related activities leads to economical and timely results which promote gender equality.

As noted previously under the criterion of “coherence”, the evaluation identified hitherto unutilised potential for synergies, particularly in the early stages of planning. Similarly, for the purposes of the “efficiency” criterion, it would make sense in the early stages of planning to have a precise structure including concrete standards and guidance on the implementation of gender mainstreaming activities, and to track how these are addressed by the respective projects. For instance, most country strategies do not contain pointers on gender aspects from which projects might take their guidance. The evaluation concludes that positive effects can be generated by making joint use of the various analytical tools (anchoring gender in the country strategy, sector-specific gender analyses, PCA), since this enables knowledge sharing within German development cooperation as well as with external actors. It also makes it possible to collect and utilise context-specific and sector-specific knowledge.

Since many projects normally carry out planning only on their own behalf, opportunities are being missed for projects to pursue common goals and activities, to make use of synergy effects and to learn from each other. It is equally essential, and must be communicated clearly from the very start, that gender should be anchored in the conception, planning and implementation phases. This could yield major opportunities for making the procedure more efficient.

Another finding of the evaluation is that recommendations from the analytical tools are not always implemented, even when they seem plausible and conducive to the aims. This raises the question of why inputs that have been identified are not always put to use. It is often found that insufficient gender competence in the conception or planning phases of the project leads to a lack of resources for gender-related activities in the subsequent implementation. Many activities are only carried out in settings where there are competent and committed managers and project staff, who are not daunted by the subject matter and find ways to deal with the challenges of the post-conflict context and the country-specific conditions.

Under the “efficiency” criterion we examined the extent to which the procedure for planning and implementing gender-related activities leads to economical and timely results in terms of supporting gender equality. The evaluation rates this criterion as “partially fulfilled”.

6. FINDINGS 2: INFLUENCING FACTORS

In Chapter 5, we described the evaluation’s findings concerning the **process** of gender mainstreaming in projects in post-conflict contexts (EQ 1) and the theoretical and practical options available to the **actors** to exert their influence (EQ 3). In Chapter 6, we present the findings on the main **influencing factors** (EQ 2). The chapter begins with a more detailed look at internal organisational factors (Section 6.1), before proceeding to deal with external factors (Section 6.2), where we analyse the specific characteristics of post-conflict contexts.

6.1 Organisational factors

Different organisations differ in the priorities they set when formulating their strategies, the planning steps they specify, how these are implemented and lived out in practice, and consequently what results their projects achieve. The multiplicity of factors that play into this can be grouped under the four headings of “individuals”, “institutionalisation”, “gender climate” and “resources” (see also Section 2.1). With regard to the overarching evaluation question for this section, EQ 2.1 (influence of organisational factors on successful gender mainstreaming), the identification of these areas gives rise to four specific questions:

- **Individuals:** To what extent do the organisation’s staff contribute to successful gender mainstreaming through contributions such as competence and commitment?
- **Institutionalisation:** To what extent do established processes, such as rules, contact points or knowledge management, contribute to successful gender mainstreaming?
- **Gender climate:** To what extent do leadership, soft factors (such as organisational culture) and hard factors (such as financial incentives) prove favourable or unfavourable to successful gender mainstreaming?
- **Resources:** To what extent are the factors “institutionalisation” and “individuals” backed up with adequate staffing and working time, but also financial resources, to make gender mainstreaming a success?

To answer these questions, working on the basis of interviews and project documents we analysed the extent to which the four organisational factors mentioned above are present or can be observed in the selected projects. To this end, we systematically included them in all relevant interviews and questioned all interviewees about them. Due to the somewhat heterogeneous nature of the working reality at the BMZ and the two implementing organisations GIZ and KfW, involving interplay between their central headquarters in Germany and their respective external (in-country) structures, in our analysis of the various organisations we differentiate between the national and international levels where necessary.

The following section begins with a multifaceted description of each of the four organisational factors and identifies possible evidence that might point to their presence or absence. In a further step, we arrive at an overall assessment.

6.1.1 Individuals

Concept and standards

When an organisation has a policy of pursuing a certain goal, such as gender mainstreaming, people need to take purposeful actions towards that goal. In this section, the focus is on the staff of an organisation. The role-specific contributions of staff with management responsibilities are considered separately in the section on “gender climate”. A group of staff who play a key role in gender mainstreaming are those who, alongside their regular duties, take on gender-related functions such as the role of a gender focal point.

Individual commitment

The evaluation reviewed the assumption that the commitment of staff members is crucial for successful gender mainstreaming. One reason for this is the competition between different themes within development cooperation: apart from fulfilling a wide range of – say – administrative or technical and sector-related tasks, staff are also expected to cover a multitude of cross-cutting issues (including gender equality, human rights, climate neutrality and anti-corruption). While all of these can rightly claim a high degree of relevance, it is scarcely possible to cover all of them comprehensively. Furthermore, prioritising gender equality in the course of daily work also requires a certain flexibility, perhaps because activities have to be redesigned or stakeholders convinced of the new approach. This is likely to entail some loss of efficiency at the moment of readjustment, and thus sets a negative incentive for commitment to the issue.

This evaluation registered whether staff of an organisation are committed to gender based on whether interview respondents could name concrete situations in which such commitment was or – although it would have been appropriate – was not witnessed. Evidence of commitment found in documents was also taken into account.

Individual competence

How can organisations better motivate their staff to show an active commitment to gender equality? One answer to this is that gender competence and commitment to gender issues are closely related. People who have dealt more directly with gender-based inequalities are usually sensitised to these disparities in their daily working lives, and therefore more frequently notice when action is needed. Indicators for the existence of gender competence may include further training courses they have undertaken, internal or external recognition of their competence, or the presence of external experts with a relevant technical background. Ideally, the gender-conflict nexus is reflected in further training courses and in the competence portfolios of project staff, partners, experts and consultants. On the other hand, high staff turnover, interview responses expressing a lack of guidance on how to deal with gender-related tasks, and internal or external criticism are indicative of possible gaps in gender competence within the organisation.

The role of individuals in practice

BMZ

How gender aspects are incorporated into the planning and implementation of projects is often characterised as dependent on individuals (Int. 48–50). An individual's technical background and personal preferences are relevant factors (Int. 35). In some cases, the BMZ intervenes with regard to gender-related matters in individual projects (Int. 6, 12, 51). In the majority of cases, however, other issues take precedence over gender equality (Int. 46) – and instead, more reliance is placed on the inputs of the implementing organisations in this area (Int. 48). Possible reasons are that staff lack the requisite expertise or the necessary time to address the issue rigorously (Int. 6, 50).

GIZ

Similarly at GIZ, the concrete staffing of the respective organisational units is an important factor in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Here, too, the theme of gender is frequently seen as “dependent on individuals” (Int. 15, 38). The BMZ has a positive perception of the level of gender competence in GIZ projects overall and has confidence that they implement gender mainstreaming stringently (Int. 48).

Within GIZ itself, some internal criticism of low gender competence is voiced at project level in some projects, particularly by project teams and more rarely by project leaders; this takes the form of self-criticism combined with a desire for learning opportunities (Int. 6, 17, 42, 52–56). When asked about possible ways of improving the situation, respondents note that a one-off measure is not sufficient to build gender competence; instead, more continuous and addressee-appropriate methods must be found (Int. 6), which would require corresponding resources (Int. 57). Sometimes the necessary level of expertise is underestimated; with regard to sector-specific gender expertise, for example (Int. 32, 55).

Gender-competent individuals are usually more active in their commitment to gender issues (Int. 58). At the project level, a few interview respondents noted that staff members without such a keen awareness of the issue can slow down their actively committed colleagues (Int. 41). More frequently, however, responses positively emphasise the active commitment of staff members (Int. 12, 14, 30, 38, 53). Local partners hold the projects in considerable esteem for their gender orientation (Int. 53).

Important factors enabling designated contact persons (gender focal points) to achieve results (internally and in relation to project partners) are seniority, experience, comportment and authority (Int. 59). In light of this, it seems less than helpful that, in many cases, very inexperienced staff members take on the gender focal point function.

There is some coverage of the gender-conflict nexus at the company level as part of preparation for foreign assignments (Int. 38), just as the GIZ Gender Strategy envisages (Doc. 91); however, the concrete shaping of this depends on the trainers (Int. 38). With regard to the gender-conflict nexus, workshops at project level occasionally address such matters as the powerlessness of conflict victims (Int. 9).

KfW

Due to the fact that KfW-financed projects are delivered by local implementing partners, the following assessments of KfW primarily relate to the internal corporate level – although in some instances they also touch on the interface with the implementing partner. Once again, individual competence and the active commitment of individuals play a decisive role in gender mainstreaming. On this point, there is commonly presumed to be a correlation between the gender of staff members and their attitude to gender (Int. 26, 44). However, the overall picture shows that actively committed individuals are faced with a majority of staff who tend not to see any opportune points for integrating gender into their daily tasks (Int. 45, 60).

The extent to which gender-related matters are incorporated into the planning and implementation of projects depends strongly on which sector the project addresses (Int. 61). As a rule, gender-related matters only feature in those sectors where a direct correlation between the sectoral objectives and gender objectives is comparatively obvious (Doc. 86) (KfW, 2011, p. 3). Conversely, there are many sectors in which gender mainstreaming is treated as a lesser priority, since no links to the given sector are seen (Int. 61). On the one hand, this is consistent with the observation in the BMZ Gender Equality Strategy, which responds by demanding continued efforts to promote gender equality even in sectors deemed not to be relevant (*“nicht einschlägig”* BMZ, 2014a, p. 12). On the other hand, numerous internal examples from KfW show that executing agencies or implementing partners can introduce aspects of gender equality, in a meaningful way, in sectors perceived as gender-neutral (*“genderfern”*, Doc. 100). Various staff see systematic consideration of the gender-conflict nexus as an additional requirement that is not compatible with the volume of other tasks to be done (Int. 44, 46, 62).

Interim conclusions on individuals

Across the organisations, gender competence tends to be seen as an “additional qualification” rather than as working knowledge that is relevant to all sectors. Accordingly, only a minority of interviewees can draw on expertise on gender or the gender-conflict nexus. In this connection, various interviewees, both within the BMZ and at GIZ and KfW, commented that they lack practical information relevant to gender that is broken down in concrete terms for their respective work contexts. Particularly at BMZ and KfW, a shortage of time or staff resources is the root cause of low individual contributions to gender mainstreaming.

A correlation between gender competence and commitment to gender issues can be observed both at the ministry and in the implementing organisations. In this context, the relevance of the commitment of individuals should not be underestimated: even one actively committed person can positively influence the working climate. Frustration can also set in, however, if they perceive the environment as inhibiting and consequently feel that their own efforts are futile. At the same time, many examples show how members of staff committed to the issue ensure that the planning and implementation of projects are informed by reflections about gender aspects in general as well as the gender-conflict nexus perspective.

Across all three organisations, it is evident that staff only rarely begin to think about the gender-conflict nexus during the planning stage. It is on the ground that the nexus is more likely to be considered, depending on the flexibility, openness and commitment of the staff in charge locally.

6.1.2 Institutionalisation

Concept and standards

How can organisations ensure that gender mainstreaming is put into practice even when only limited reliance can be placed on the “personal factor”, perhaps because of the high staff turnover in projects in fragile contexts? Institutionalised structures and processes can provide orientation and establish bindingness. Key questions for successful institutionalisation are: to what extent are standards on gender mainstreaming in place within the organisation? Are there appropriate contact points for support? Are staff members supported by a gender-sensitive knowledge management system?

Standards

All individuals associated with the organisation are embedded in a set of rules which ensure that their practices are aligned with organisational goals. Standards specify the minimum requirements, for example with regard to gender mainstreaming, that staff are required to adhere to. The nature and scope of the standards are usually adapted to the different organisational levels and work contexts. The main elements in the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming in bilateral official development cooperation are: standards from the manual for bilateral development cooperation (Doc. 10) and the corresponding country strategy; standards concerning the GE and PS markers and the drafting of indicators; standards for the use of analytical tools, such as gender analysis, the PCA or the ZGBA, and for the preparation of planning documents; a gender strategy at the organisational, division or project level, in which the organisation or one of its units states its commitment to certain attitudes or activities or sets these as objectives; standards requiring assessment according to gender-related criteria when selecting local implementing partners, project staff and target groups; contractually defined gender-related commitments by project partners or project staff; and, on the operational level, the existence of a gender project plan that specifies objectives, activities, resources, responsibilities and deadlines.

Contact points

In addition to standards, established structures known as contact points can provide orientation, advice and active support, for instance by taking charge of work packages or coordinating activities. Contact points differ from “committed individuals” in that they have an official mandate to advocate for gender aspects.

There is a great deal of variation with regard to institutional anchoring, the volume of tasks and resources, and the delegation of power. The spectrum ranges from gender focal points at project level – usually team colleagues whose employment contract allocates a portion of their working time to gender themes – to quality assurance units at organisational headquarters, which may have veto rights and must sign off a project proposal before it is submitted to the BMZ, for example.

Knowledge management

An organisation’s knowledge management system is intended to ensure that the information required for a particular function reaches and is assimilated by the relevant units in the most straightforward way possible. In the subject area of “gender mainstreaming”, the availability of gender-disaggregated and gender-specific information plays a vital role. Important steps in this area are therefore to collect information in a systematic and gender-disaggregated way, to compile such data in a user-friendly and addressee-specific manner, and to make it available via channels that are easy for the intended recipients to access. Ideally, the information is presented in such a way that it both empowers and motivates those who read it to apply the content in practice. The GAP II also emphasises the importance of sound knowledge management to “ensure high programme quality and institutionalise gender-responsive policies and organisational processes” (BMZ, 2016a, p. 18).

There can be a diversity of successful approaches to gender-sensitive knowledge management: these range from guidance documents or checklists to advisory contact points (for help with project planning, for instance), and from gender-specific or gender-sensitive workshops⁷⁰ to training provision for partners. Gender-disaggregated reporting and evaluation are also essential elements of gender-related knowledge management.

The role of institutionalisation in practice

BMZ

In its capacity as the funding agency and initiator of the activities undertaken by the evaluated projects, the BMZ plays a key role in setting a binding regulatory framework. Within the BMZ, the formulation of standards is sometimes hampered by information deficits: a lack of specific guidance documents, particularly for project monitoring, means that in some cases no standards are in place, perhaps because it is unclear what level of ambition is realistic (Int. 7). In addition, there are no plans to question candidates on their gender competence during staff recruitment, or to provide mandatory training for staff on gender or on sexual and gender-based violence.

A recently conducted study looking at the practice of assigning policy markers (Doc. 164) reveals various deficits, as a result of which the standards on handling the markers were revised (Int. 63). This is relevant specifically because the BMZ describes project markers as one of the most important steering instruments, both for ensuring that cross-cutting themes are anchored and for initiating the implementation of specific projects (Int. 5).

At the beginning of the overall process of cooperation between the BMZ and the implementing organisations, the density of regulation is initially very high. It diminishes significantly from the time of commissioning onwards. This means that there are various standards on gender aspects at the supra-project level or in the early planning stage of projects (for further details, see Section 5.2). In the further course of the process and at the project level, however, project leaders from the implementing organisations can design their approach to gender with a relatively high degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the BMZ. This approach is consistent with the ministry's aspiration to ensure quality at entry, which means making sure that projects are planned in line with its quality standards (Int. 8), and then granting a certain degree of flexibility over the implementation. Overall, however, respondents repeatedly relativise the potential of institutionalisation by stating that it partly depends on how standards are "lived out" in practice (Int. 8, 35, 49).

At the project-leader level within the implementing organisations, respondents comment that more guidance on the part of the BMZ would be desirable in order to know "where the project stands" and to what extent adjustment is needed (Int. 21). This might be done as part of the feedback on annual reports or evaluations, for instance. As there is no central contact point for gender themes within the ministry, various units deal with matters relating to gender when questions arise concerning cooperation between the BMZ and implementing organisations (Int. 5). The BMZ's "Human rights, gender equality and inclusion" division and the "Sector Project Gender", which is implemented by GIZ but directly supports the BMZ, advise on individual planning processes, including project objectives and the corresponding GE marker.⁷¹ Their involvement is usually instigated by individual country officers; in other words, institutionalisation only takes effect in one-off cases due to the active commitment of individuals. In addition to supporting the BMZ division, the Sector Project (SP) assists the BMZ in the implementation of the NAP on the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda and in its portfolio design, and acts as an interface into GIZ (Int. 50, 63). A helpdesk on gender equality,

⁷⁰ "Gender-specific workshops" are understood here to mean workshops with gender issues as their main objective, while "gender-sensitive workshops" are devoted to a different theme and integrate gender aspects relevant to the theme.

⁷¹ Moreover, as required by law, the BMZ has a gender equality officer. However, her responsibilities cover internal organisational and personnel policy issues, while the "Human rights, gender equality and inclusion" division and the Sector Project "Gender" are available to answer questions of a technical nature.

included as a beacon in the “Road Map” monitoring report (BMZ, 2017b) on the GAP II, has not been established to date.

In the course of cooperation with the implementing organisations, all binding standards for project planning are put in writing, and this constitutes the knowledge management at the interface with the BMZ. Within the ministry, however, there is sometimes a lack of specific guidance documents (Int. 7, 49), and gender-related matters are not usually covered in the organisation’s internal further training, either (Int. 5). There are plans to do so when the quality criterion is introduced, however. Furthermore, the length of some policy documents causes problems of acceptance in the daily work of country officers (Int. 8). But here, too, efforts are currently in hand to improve knowledge management using IT-based and other solutions (Int. 5).

GIZ

The central corporate anchor point for gender-related standards is GIZ’s extensive Gender Strategy. With its standards and its relatively high level of ambition, it supports actors entrusted with gender-related responsibilities to advance its intra-organisational gender mainstreaming (Int. 6). Additional standards relate to the contents of the planning documents (for example, the preliminary appraisal, gender analysis and module/programme proposal) as well as the reporting and evaluation documents. In a few instances, there is potentially a need for further regulation. For example, job advertisements do not systematically demand gender competence (Int. 6, 57). This is surprising, considering that this is one of the review questions in the company-wide manual on gender-responsive project management (Doc. 101).

The Gender Strategy breaks standards down to the project level. For example, project leaders are required to oversee adherence to the Safeguards+Gender management system (Doc. 97). They are also responsible for fulfilling the indicators on gender in projects (Doc. 97), and for ensuring adequate gender competence within their projects (Int. 6).

While the corporate standards for project leaders ensure a certain standard of gender mainstreaming at project level, there is a great deal of variation in the type and scope of internal project standards: some projects have mandatory training sessions (Int. 6, 21, 57). A few projects have their own gender strategy including a self-commitment (Doc. 102), their own gender action plan (Doc. 102), or gender criteria for the selection of partners or target group representatives (Doc. 103). However, the majority of projects only implement elements selectively. In terms of equal opportunities, it is positively commendable that flexible working time models are offered, not only at corporate headquarters but also in individual projects in partner countries (Doc. 89).

At the corporate level, the gender contact points at GIZ are known in their entirety as the “gender architecture”. It is listed in the Annex to the Gender Strategy (GIZ, 2019) with brief descriptions of the areas of responsibility, and includes the following actors and groups of actors: management board, strategy committee, management committee, gender ambassador, GIZ gender commissioner, human resources department, sectoral division – gender, Safeguards + Gender Desk, gender coordination group, the thematic forum on gender, and gender focal points. It is positively commendable that the gender commissioner reports directly to the head of division and thus has a means of creating structures or introducing mandatory processes (Int. 63). This can also be understood as a declaration of management support for gender aspects within the company. The Safeguards + Gender Desk performs an important quality assurance function, especially in the planning phase. It must first approve all programme and module proposals before they are sent to the BMZ (for details see Section 5.2.1). Thus, the Safeguards + Gender Desk is a kind of clearing house, and does actively fulfil this role (Int. 29).

At project level, almost all projects have what is known as a “gender focal point”, a contact person who serves as a point of contact for gender-related questions and, in some countries, is supported by a gender focal point at country level (Int. 64). There is a further gender focal point at corporate headquarters, who mobilises gender focal points in the individual countries, distributes information, offers motivation and draws attention to news (Int. 50).

In some cases, however, uncertainties can arise concerning the role of gender focal points (Int. 15, 25, 65); for example, when the responsibility for implementing activities or achieving objectives is delegated to them

without allocating the necessary resources, or when a manager assumes that all team members will feel responsible for gender aspects but does not take care to provide a structuring framework. This can result in the non-achievement of gender objectives, especially as respondents in some projects observe a deterioration in the contact between gender focal points and corporate headquarters (Int. 66).

At the corporate level, the Gender Strategy provides for all staff to take on specific gender-related roles, depending on their position in the company. These are communicated in a need-appropriate manner via the Gender Pathfinder, also known as the “personal gender path”, which gives a breakdown of these roles and the corresponding positions in the company. Staff members thus receive support in finding their own place within the Gender Strategy. The Gender Strategy and its guidelines for operationalisation also describe various formats, such as the annual gender week, the gender competition held every two years, the alternating country and department competitions, or the annual gender leadership award (Doc. 91; Int. 91; Int. 6, 18). Some of the formats, such as the gender competition, are increasingly well received and appear to be having a certain sensitisation effect, based on the rising number of entries (Int. 6). Alongside the Gender Strategy, the internal data management system and other digital tools like the gender chatbot or the Gender Navigator provide access to extensive information such as good practices on gender (Int. 6, 18). In addition, a large number of exchange formats exist (for more details, see Section 6.1.3).

At the project level, although gender analyses for the projects usually exist, they are not always fully incorporated into project planning. Occasional projects include a systematic reference to gender in analysis tools, for example in the context report (Doc. 104) or do-no-harm reporting (Doc. 105). Gender themes are also frequently addressed locally during the onboarding process for new employees (Doc. 106; Int. 106; Int. 6, 10, 57, 67). GIZ publications occasionally write up the experience gained at project or country level (Int. 30).

Beyond project planning, however, the project teams and, less frequently, the implementing partners express a need for more training sessions and more information materials (see also the section on “Individuals”), especially when staff turnover reduces the team’s knowledge base (Int. 66). Thus, while there is a broad range of provision, take-up by the addressees is rather hesitant. The reasons most often cited are low relevance and practicability, little adaptation to the sector or context (Int. 6, 68), confusion due to the variety of offerings, or poor accessibility (Int. 6, 58). This demonstrates that the importance of gender themes must be explained over and over again, and the staff must be convinced of it (Int. 29, 55).

A further challenge is that of addressing the gender-conflict nexus. Although GIZ’s digital platforms contain some patchy information, it can only be found with difficulty. Nexus-related topics are not anchored in further training plans (Int. 59).

KfW

At corporate level, there are BMZ supplementary guidelines on the GE marker in conjunction with internal KfW explanatory notes. Furthermore, there are internal documents setting out which gender-related reviews are to be carried out and when (Doc. 86). Gender competence is not usually a criterion for recruiting new staff, but newly hired staff undergo mandatory gender training (Int. 13, 61).

At the project level, there is a directive from corporate headquarters to include gender-related matters in early planning processes such as the feasibility study and in the target group and stakeholder analysis (Doc. 86; Int. 32). However, there is no guidance on formulating the module proposal, or for later processes in the project cycle such as implementation and post-implementation (Int. 60).

An internal KfW study (Doc. 26) concludes that over half of the projects analysed that were working in conflict-affected contexts had the conceptual potential to promote gender equality to better effect at an acceptable cost. A guidance document developed in 2018 (Doc. 15) is designed to support this.

In implementation practice, the terms of reference contain relevant requirements, such as those applying to the feasibility study or the appraisal reports of a project; occasionally a corresponding clause is inserted in the memorandum of understanding or the supplementary agreement with the partner. The field visits by the project or country managers, which are usually undertaken annually, also provide an opportunity for exchange and review (Int. 32, 70). However, there are no instructions from corporate headquarters as a basis

for making use of these opportunities to intervene, so the commitment of the project and country managers is the determining influence (Int. 32).

Due to KfW's decentralised implementation structure via local project executing agencies, it only maintains contact points⁷² for gender-related questions at corporate level. Support is provided as needed by gender focal points, which have to be appointed in all competence centres, according to the gender strategy (KfW, 2011). For additional advisory support, staff can also consult the competence centre for Social Development and Peace. It can help them obtain materials such as BMZ supplementary guidelines; it also organises further training courses or network events and responds to enquiries, for example on the assignment of markers or on the target-group-affinity of a project (Int. 13, 45, 46, 61). Within the competence centre, projects in fragile contexts or with a conflict focus obtain guidance on linking up the thematic areas of "gender" and "conflict" (Int. 46). This is provided on request.

The competence centre could be involved more systematically in the planning of projects; so far this is not envisaged (Int. 44, 46, 61). There is no central quality control to ensure that, for example, gender aspects are integrated in planning documents, but some project or country managers do consult the competence centre in this regard (Int. 61). Here once again, the responsibility for integrating gender aspects is theirs (Int. 61).

For knowledge management at corporate level, formats such as sector-specific guidance documents are intended to provide all employees with guidance on how to incorporate gender aspects in a meaningful way (Doc. 86; Int. 61). An internal evaluation on the theme of gender contains a collection of good practices (Doc. 26). However, there are no gender-differentiated impact analyses, which would be helpful to facilitate gender-specific learning (Int. 46). In addition to the above, there are said to be further checklists and documents (Int. 71), but KfW did not make them available to the evaluation. Consequently, they could not be assessed. So far, there has been no further training specifically on gender, for consultants, for example (Int. 46). This would be an important starting point for gender mainstreaming, however, since there are so few interfaces between KfW and local partners.

At KfW, as at GIZ, either the existing guidance documents are little known (Int. 45) or some staff members find it challenging to filter out the information that is relevant to them, given the amount of information provided (Int. 13). Moreover, there is no structured means of accessing the available information, making it impossible to conduct a systematic search for nexus-related topics. This is surprising, since the gender strategy specifies that a focus of KfW's gender work should be in the areas of "peacebuilding" and "conflict prevention".

Interim conclusions on institutionalisation

Despite a relatively high density of regulation, all three organisations give certain staff members considerable latitude to set their own priorities. For example, this applies to the BMZ country officers, KfW project managers and GIZ project leaders. At the whole-organisation level, the BMZ, GIZ and KfW each have a gender equality concept or a gender strategy, but only at GIZ is this operationalised to the extent that it serves as guidance for the concrete specification of staff roles. As a result, which standards are applied internally within projects and insisted upon in practice (with the exception of policy markers and project indicators) depends heavily on the priorities set by the respective country or project manager. Particularly at the project-internal level, a "shifting of responsibility" onto committed individual members of staff is not unusual. In terms of resourcing and team dynamics, this can be problematic. At the whole-organisation level, the central contact point for gender (among other issues) at the BMZ and KfW is not systematically involved in project planning. One exception is the Safeguards + Gender Desk at GIZ, which functions as a clearing house with veto rights.

⁷² The fact that KfW also has an equal opportunities officer is mentioned for the sake of completeness (Int. 26). However, because she is more focused on internal organisational matters than on questions of project planning and implementation, she is left out of the further analysis.

There is great variation in how information is disseminated in the three organisations: information resources specific to gender and perceived as helpful are rare within the BMZ; at KfW, there are resources providing guidance to a moderate extent; GIZ has a very extensive knowledge management system. In all three cases, however, there is limited take-up of the learning on offer, with interviewees perceiving the information to be insufficiently clear and accessible and the content only moderately helpful.

The gender-conflict nexus is not institutionalised at the BMZ and GIZ: there are no nexus-related standards or contact points, and information can only be found with great difficulty. In contrast, KfW has a competence centre that deals with the sectoral themes of “gender equality” and “peacebuilding” as part of its work. There is also a KfW guidance document that addresses questions at the interface of gender and conflict. Nevertheless, staff in all three organisations consider it challenging to obtain systematic and readily accessible information on the nexus of gender and conflict.

6.1.3 Gender climate

Concept and standards

While institutionalisation is intended to ensure that individuals in an organisation adhere to certain practices, the organisational climate exerts an implicit influence on whether staff members are motivated to advocate for gender equality in the course of their work. Which options for action are considered and ultimately chosen depends upon such considerations as the conduct of one’s own manager and colleagues, and whether there is any prospect of benefiting personally from the respective decision. Accordingly, the next few sections take a more detailed look at the extent to which the leadership, culture and incentives of an organisation favour successful gender mainstreaming.

Leadership

Managers operate amidst tensions of many different kinds within an organisation. Tasks often conflict with each other – when it comes to choices between the quality aspiration and other pressures such as time or demands on resources – and it is not unusual to have to consolidate the interests of different stakeholders. At the same time, the analysis so far has shown that managers exercise a key role in the detailed shaping of gender mainstreaming due to the degree of discretion they have.

Leadership at corporate level is rated as favourable when the manager encourages team members to incorporate gender aspects into their daily work, is open to gender-related suggestions from staff, and stands up for team members committed to gender issues when they encounter resistance from others; also when other stakeholders, such as project partners or staff members, regard the conduct of management as helpful.

At project level, leadership on gender equality is demonstrated when, for example, the project leader ensures that external information material contains references to gender, such as images of women as well as men in technical, expert and decision-making roles, or ensures that gender is discussed regularly. A further example is the existence of additional gender-related project indicators and project activities that go beyond the minimum requirement of the GE marker. In contrast, one expression of a lack of leadership at the corporate or project level may be if managers are unable to cite any examples of references to gender in their sphere of influence.

Culture

Aspects of organisational culture are usually only formalised to a limited extent, such as in the organisation’s vision statements, by means of self-commitments such as codes of conduct, or in strategies; for the most part, however, they are expressed in staff members’ assessments of which attitudes and actions are desirable. Nevertheless, specific activities such as regular events or awards can also influence the norms and values of the staff body. Another sign of a “gender equality-friendly” culture is when team members describe the internal communication between women and men as “appreciative” and “on an equal footing”, when they consider gender-related training sessions and activities to be important, or when external parties such as project partners describe the team as gender-sensitive.

Moreover, managers have a far-reaching influence for reasons besides their institutional role and their formal fields of competence; team members also take notice of their conduct and priority-setting, so that managers exert a similarly strong influence on implicit values and patterns of behaviour. Another favourable sign is when managers talk about sexual misconduct, including harassment, abuse or exploitation from the viewpoint of providing information (on prevention and complaint mechanisms) and responding actively when incidents occur. Signs to the contrary are reports by staff of discrimination against women in the context of evaluating staff performance or awarding employment contracts, or reports that a gender imbalance in the staffing structure is hampering gender-related work. Other examples are reports of women being subjected to demeaning experiences, or comments drawing attention to a gap between the proclaimed gender-related values and the behaviour witnessed in reality.

Incentives

An organisation's norms and values are implicit mechanisms for staff motivation, whereas formal standards clearly operate explicitly. A middle path that may motivate staff to demonstrate their commitment to gender is to set incentives in the form of recognition and sanctions. For example, a gender indicator in the project results matrix or gender-related annual targets, perhaps coupled to remuneration, constitute incentives to take account of gender-related effects.

A consistent response to sexual misconduct also has a steering effect. A conversation is an especially good way of developing positive incentives: which goals are important to the member of staff, and how can the organisation support them? For project partners, demonstrating commitment to gender can help them qualify for another round of funding. Recognising commitment by offering awards, as in Good Practice competitions or the GIZ Gender Leadership Award, can also work as an incentive.

The role of gender climate in practice

BMZ

Within the BMZ, responses stress the importance of the commitment of managers or leadership, particularly as opposed to the factor of "institutionalisation" ("paper is patient") (Int. 35). The recently adopted "BMZ 2030" reform strategy (Doc. 162) combines gender equality with human rights and disability inclusion in a single quality criterion. From a BMZ-internal, strategic perspective, on the one hand this provides a means of overcoming the competition between cross-cutting themes. However, there is also a risk that it could jeopardise the depth of content of the individual themes.

With regard to the gender-conflict nexus, various managers within the BMZ demonstrate commitment. For example, the BMZ financed a documentary film on a nexus-related theme: the fate of abducted Yezidi women (Int. 48). On occasion, there are also portfolio design initiatives to address the gender-conflict nexus (Int. 48). At the same time, the predominant view internally is that the leadership could take on a stronger role in addressing gender-related issues (Int. 5, 7, 8, 35, 49). This finding applies equally to other cross-cutting themes. For example, experience concerning the inclusion of people with disabilities shows that the intensity with which relevant activities are pursued varies noticeably, depending on the particular individuals with leadership (Int. 35).

In its cooperation with the two implementing organisations, the BMZ holds a leadership role in its capacity as the commissioning and funding agency (Int. 7). With regard to the gender-conflict nexus, this role is partly performed by actively committed individual country officers who oversee specific projects. Most country officers welcome the commitment to gender equality in principle, but in their own practice they see more conflicts (especially time and resource conflicts) than synergies between the inclusion of gender and other goals and tasks (see "Resources"). This places a constraint on systematic integration of gender aspects. The implementing organisations confirm this perception (Int. 21, 57).

In its Gender Equality Strategy, the BMZ aims to close the financing gap in respect of gender-oriented projects (BMZ, 2014a); the European Union's current Gender Action Plan has the same thrust (European Commission,

2015). Arising from this, the standards on assigning the GE1 marker are having a substantial incentive effect; a strong trend towards GE1 markers can be observed (for details, see Chapter 4).

The assignment of the marker has an influence on the subsequent project planning processes, on the drafting of success indicators, and hence on the design of the project. Furthermore, the GE1 marker enables BMZ country officers to insist on a certain focus on gender equality, and indeed to monitor it. The trend towards assigning the GE1 marker can therefore be rated as one of the most important and successful steps towards gender mainstreaming on the part of the BMZ. With regard to the organisational climate, the theme of “gender” is described as a medium priority overall: while matters relating to gender are not a priority issue, they are being implemented without resistance (Int. GIZ 7).

GIZ

Many interviewees ascribe importance to the active commitment of managers (Int. 1, 15, 17, 34, 37, 38, 41, 50, 63, 66, 72–75). Many managers at corporate level are sensitised to gender issues, according to the interview responses (Int. 58, 76, 77). As to their commitment, the assessments vary: appreciation of their commitment (Int. 18, 74, 78) carries about the same weight as the view that the business policy interest in gender themes is low (Int. 57, 75). A positive trend is described: it is now possible to use the gender theme to enhance one’s professional profile (Int. 6) and managers are insisting more on gender-related results (Int. 63), although less noticeably so when it comes to decisions with major financial implications such as increasing GE2 projects (Int. 63).

In the case studies, many of the managers interviewed, although not the majority, could cite examples of how the gender commitment of the country directorate, project leader or component leader has informed their work in the team or with partners. For example, country directorates designate sexual harassment as a matter to be tackled by senior management (Int. 55), organise mandatory training sessions (Int. 55), take care to ensure gender parity among staff (Int. 79), are clear in their external communication about the GIZ-wide corporate target of 50 per cent female recruitment, and broaden the diffusion of job advertisements to increase the chance of female applicants (Int. 37,41). They also take care to address women explicitly in the text of the advertisement (Int. 80), or order revisions to an insufficiently gender-oriented annual report before it is sent to the BMZ (Int. 37).

Project leaders repeatedly provide gender focal points with a platform to raise gender aspects for discussion (Int. 81), offer to assist with the issue in email correspondence (Int. 81), encourage staff to participate in further training (Int. 25), or earmark a separate budget, e.g. for external gender consultants (Int. 38) or to hire long-term gender experts (Int. 37). This list of good practices shows that managers can promote gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts, in some cases at little cost.

In contrast, other respondents have witnessed no particular gender-related activity by the country directorate or project leader (Int. 18, 65, 79) and remark that on the issue of the gender-conflict nexus, a chasm exists between words and deeds (Int. 37). Often, the initiatives of the gender focal points are not followed up (Int. 79), which risks allowing the effects to peter out. Overall, this means that managers in situ partially fulfil the criterion of commitment.

With regard to the organisation’s gender climate, a few critical assessments (Int. 74) are offset by a majority of positive assessments (such as Int. 72, 77). A positive finding at corporate level is that communications refer to numerous company-wide campaigns on the Gender Strategy and the Gender Pathfinder (Int. 6) in the aim of contributing to a “gender-friendly” culture and making “gender equality” a more visible theme (Int. 6). For example, “gender champions” receive awards (Doc. 97), and documents are usually worded in gender-sensitive language (Int. 38). Overall, there is a positive trend towards a more gender-sensitive organisational climate.

At project level, some project staff and many project partners perceive the respective GIZ team to be gender-sensitive and committed to gender (Int. 82-84). This may partly be due to the fact that the gender roles in situ are often more traditional than those of GIZ staff working internationally (Int. 85). In contrast, there are isolated reports at the corporate and project level about gender-related inequalities in human resources policy (Int. 11, 37, 41, 85). Female staff from some projects report that male team colleagues display

“traditional” conduct or a “macho culture” or disparage them verbally (Int. 53), and gender focal points report instances of resistance or denigration (Int. 66, 81). Female managers are not always accepted on an equal footing by male team members (Int. 68, 79). By the very nature of the data collection, these are the assessments of individuals; nevertheless, they highlight the great responsibility incumbent upon organisations and managers to bear gender aspects in mind in all situations when working in post-conflict contexts, and to ensure that all members of staff can contribute to the success of the project (Int. 75). At corporate level, incentives are communicated by setting gender-related annual targets for expert and management staff. There may be effects on remuneration for the latter (Int. 63). In addition, the Gender Competition is increasingly well received (Int. 6). The predominant assessment, however, is that apart from project indicators referring to gender, there are no hard incentives to integrate gender themes into one’s own work (Int. 42, 53, 73). This indicates how important GE markers are as a starting point for gender mainstreaming.

KfW

For KfW, the interview findings suggest that gender equality is not a central priority among KfW managers (Int. 20, 45, 46). One expression of this is the fact that gender themes are not included in KfW’s business strategies (Int. 46). At the same time, managers are especially key within the hierarchical structure of KfW, for example when it comes to making sure that project proposals take account of gender or the gender-conflict nexus (Int. 13, 46, 86). Attention is also drawn to the important role of team leaders and department heads when assigning the GE marker that is central for gender mainstreaming (Int. 32).

In the case studies, managers in the country offices were only able to report on their own interventions on gender equality to a very limited extent. In several instances, actors outside KfW also spoke of gender themes not being treated as a priority. Occasionally, managers from the local implementing partners deliberately advocate for gender themes in their organisations, for example by mentoring up-and-coming female staff (Int. 87). However, there is no observable sign that KfW systematically selects partners according to gender-related criteria (see section on “Institutionalisation”).

As a funding agency, KfW takes on a steering function vis-à-vis its local partners. However, KfW does not fully utilise its potential to insist on the integration of gender aspects in project implementation, and hence to support committed implementing partners (Int. 88). For example, only rarely are any gender-related conditions included in terms of reference (e.g. specifying female consultants) or in the supplementary agreements (e.g. specifying a minimum quota of female management staff in project-executing agencies) (Int. 32).

At the corporate level, interviewees report that the working climate is respectful (Int. 87, 89). According to a recently conducted staff survey, the gender-related organisational climate was assessed as “very positive” (Int. 13); the study was not made available to the evaluation, however, and could not therefore be analysed in more detail. A positive trend is observed in the direction of increased sensitisation to gender-related aspects, as demonstrated by the fact that the specified gender-related questions in feasibility studies are being answered more frequently (Int. 44, 71, 90). In many cases, however, interviewees also use terms such as “lone voices” to describe who, within the organisation, deals with gender equality issues (Int. 45, 46, 60, 61). Among the reasons cited for this are KfW’s character as a bank (Int. 2), a lack of resources (see section on “Resources”), or the argument that gender aspects are only relevant in specific sectoral contexts (Int. 36, 44, 46, 61). Certain sectors seem to have few ideas on how gender-specific approaches and effects can be included in a meaningful way.

The trend within the BMZ, already described, towards assigning GE1 markers creates only limited incentives within KfW to incorporate gender aspects into project design. Interviewees predominantly report that project managers are free from constraints in proposing the markers and in shaping the project design (Doc. 14; Int. 26, 45, 71), and that it is not unusual for projects’ gender markers to be downgraded in the course of implementation (Int. 26, 91). An analysis of references to gender and gender-specific disaggregation of project indicators shows that a very high proportion of KfW projects are not using any gender-related indicators, despite having a GE1 marker (for details, see Section 5.2.3).

Interim conclusions on gender climate

In all three organisations, the active commitment of managers is described unanimously as a very important influencing factor. With regard to the leadership in the BMZ and at KfW, our assessment based on the interviews conducted is that gender themes tend to be a lesser priority. Significantly more interviewees at GIZ report concrete examples in which managers have incorporated gender aspects into their work.

The organisational gender climate is described as “open” at GIZ, not least because of numerous actions that increase the visibility of gender themes, and “respectful” at KfW. The BMZ gives medium priority to gender themes within the organisation. While a positive trend is noted at both GIZ and KfW, potential for improvement is pointed out at the same time. There are, however, major differences between corporate headquarters and the external structure, and between the different partner countries and cultural contexts.

Hard incentives are not found at all within the BMZ, and only rarely at GIZ and KfW, both at corporate headquarters and in the projects in situ. One incentive identified in the cooperation between the BMZ and the implementing organisations is the gender-related drafting of project indicators on the basis of the GE markers. This effect is not infrequently reduced, however, by indifferent reporting that is only sporadically followed up, either internally or by the BMZ (see section on “Institutionalisation”). This dissipates the motivating factor for making operational project decisions based on the gender indicator, especially at KfW. The findings therefore suggest that while institutionalisation can provide orientation, it only sets incentives to the extent that non-compliance is followed up with consequences. The gender-conflict nexus does not feature in incentive structures of the three organisations.

6.1.4 Resources

Concept and standards

The detailed shaping of all three organisational factors considered so far is highly dependent on the availability of resources. The BMZ Gender Equality Strategy points out that necessary elements of gender-sensitive project planning and steering are a gender-sensitive budget and appropriate human resources planning (BMZ, 2016b: 8). The following sections focus on personnel as well as financial resources.

Personnel and time resources

The allocation of a “time budget” to individuals entrusted with gender-related tasks, e.g. those acting as gender focal points, has proven favourable. This may mean that – say – 15 per cent of the working time in their job description is set aside for gender work packages. Another worthwhile approach in some circumstances is to assign a person to gender tasks on a full-time basis, under a local contract, for example. We also assessed it as a favourable factor if, during the interviews, gender focal points described their own resourcing as at least sufficient.

Financial resources

In order to ensure that sufficient financial resources are available for activities to promote gender equality (in post-conflict contexts), including support for activities on overcoming trauma, for example, appropriate financial resources must be budgeted from the outset. This shows how important it is to consider the gender-conflict nexus at the time of project conception. It also proves favourable if projects join forces and fund gender activities at the country level. During the interviews, we considered it indicative of good resourcing when, for example, the project leader and at least one other person assessed the resource situation as satisfactory, or when a project was able to mobilise resources for unplanned gender activities. We viewed it as detrimental if staff members saw financial resources as the greatest challenge to successful gender mainstreaming.

The role of resources in practice

BMZ

According to the interviews, gender mainstreaming at the BMZ is only backed up with limited personnel resources. Individuals with gender-related responsibilities have too little time to do justice to the multiplicity of tasks (Int. 7). Actors from outside the BMZ comment that the shortage of staff and time is expressed in a more superficial level of steering – which applies to planning, but also the organisation’s response to reporting and to suggestions for learning.

In contrast to personnel resources, financial resources seem to be potentially available, provided that they are budgeted for at an early stage (Int. 49). This opens up options for anchoring gender aspects in the early stages of planning, in particular, and on occasion this is realised successfully in practice (Int. 35). It is unclear to what extent the future, more outputs-oriented, method of budget planning allows for the strategic integration of gender equality as a cross-cutting theme, backed by adequate resources (Int. 11).

GIZ

Within GIZ, there are no concrete standards at corporate level requiring the allocation of adequate resources for gender mainstreaming (Int. 6, 79, 84); this contradicts the approach of some partners (Int. 82). However, both at corporate (Int. 75) and project level, resources are frequently cited as the greatest challenge of gender mainstreaming (Int. 17, 92). One positive observation is the improved allocation of personnel resources to GIZ’s gender officers (Int. 6).

At the project level, the attitude of managers is decisive with regard to what level of resources are made available in the project (Int. 1). In some cases, managers successfully find ways to mobilise resources even for unplanned purposes (Int. 37, 57, 79). Interestingly, several project leaders rate resource issues as “less important” (Int. 11, 14, 15), while the majority of gender focal points are dissatisfied with their own resourcing. They expressed a need for more time to implement ongoing activities to a higher quality standard, or to implement activities in the first place, if they had been postponed due to lack of time (Int. 17, 53, 64, 93). One reason for this is that there are different understandings of the role of gender focal points: although conceptually they are set up as amplifiers of pre-existing dynamics within the project, gender focal points frequently find themselves entrusted with the bulk of responsibility for gender-related work packages during project implementation (Doc. 91; Int. 50). There is thus a need for clarification about the distribution of responsibilities between teams and gender focal points (Int. 15).

In line with the standards, GIZ’s financial project planning only rarely indicates a percentage of resources earmarked for gender (Int. 17, 77). Thus, time and financial resources correlate closely: the availability of time resources is often dependent on financial resources (Int. 67). However, there is generally a more critical view of time and personnel resources than financial resources (Int. 72).

The availability of personnel and time resources are rated positively, both at corporate level (Int. 58) and at the project level. For example, almost all the projects we analysed have appointed a gender focal point, who takes charge of work packages and thus ensures a minimum level of resourcing. On the other hand, lack of time is mentioned as a critical limitation (Int. 55); for example, the experts whose primary work deals with non-gender-related themes consider the usual time budget of 5 to 6 per cent of working time insufficient, partly because there are other cross-cutting issues to be addressed as well (Int. 38, 94).

Throughout the company, there is adequate funding for further training in the vast majority of cases; other activities are generally held under resource constraints. At GIZ as in the other organisations, financial resources are more likely to be available, the earlier in the process they are budgeted. For example, gender-related activities can best be incorporated into operational planning if gender objectives are already embedded in the indicators (Int. 6). In some projects, gender-related further training has to be completed outside regular working hours. An important positive example is that several projects have a national long-term expert or local consultants who are assigned solely to gender issues. These local staff members are considered very important elements in the cooperation with the partners and are frequently seen as highly gender-competent.

KfW

In a ranking of the four organisational factors, resources are seen as the greatest bottleneck at KfW. KfW staff consider a lack of resources “the limiting factor” and cite it as the main reason that the gender mainstreaming process at KfW has potential for improvement. At the same time, the vast majority of staff who are not primarily concerned with gender-related issues do not see any shortage of resources (Int. 12, 45, 61). However, it is usually quite apparent to those members of staff who cite concrete examples of how they have incorporated gender aspects into their work (Int. 32).

As at GIZ, financial resources human and time resources present more of a bottleneck for successful gender mainstreaming at KfW than financial resources (Int. 13, 26, 51). Access to financial resources, upon request or when anchored appropriately in the project design – for example as part of flanking measures – is mostly straightforward (Int. 13, 20, 32). Interviewees in the majority of projects emphasise that they need more time, and often also additional skills, to support the gender mainstreaming of projects (Int. 20, 32). Both project staff and partners voice this criticism (Int. 95–97). In addition, staff at headquarters draw attention to the local partners’ strong ownership and responsibility, and the distance between corporate headquarters and activities in situ (Int. 16, 20, 45, 46, 55, 61, 86). Within this somewhat unclear allocation of roles between KfW and local partners, gender-related aspects run the risk of being overlooked.

Even in the countries where KfW maintains a team larger than an office manager and one or two support staff, often it was not possible to identify a contact person for gender. One of the projects examined has a “women’s component” – in the “gender-relevant” sector of “health” – but this part of the project also bears responsibility for other cross-cutting issues. Additional workload is another consideration that deters a few country managers from integrating gender-related indicators into the project design (Int. 45), or causes them to have reservations about GE2 projects (Int. 20).

Interim conclusions on resources

A clear picture emerges across the organisations: interviewees in all countries and across all three organisations describe a sometimes major deficit in resources and rank this as the most important challenge, as compared with the other three organisational factors. When working in post-conflict contexts in general, neither within the BMZ nor at GIZ or KfW is there any systematic budgeting of financial or time resources to address the gender-conflict nexus. Only when both issues intersect in the project design are resources made available.

Personnel and time resources

Under this heading we primarily mean lack of time to devote to gender and conflict-related tasks. All organisations consider a shortage of personnel and time to be far more problematic than a lack of financial resources. By planning anticipatively, great potential can be derived from this finding. Depending on competence levels and context, gender mainstreaming can also turn out to be more resource-intensive than planned; for example, because the necessary information first has to be obtained or because it proves difficult to eliminate gender- and conflict-specific barriers to participation. It is striking that the more concrete the involvement of staff in implementing themes at the gender-conflict nexus, the more negatively they view the resourcing situation.

Financial resources

It is observed across all three organisations that a lack of financial resources can be addressed by budgeting for the relevant resources at an early stage. Good experience has been gained particularly by integrating gender aspects into success indicators and project design (e.g. in the project proposal or, in the case of KfW, in the supplementary agreement with the executing agency as well). Once financial resources are available, time issues can also be addressed effectively by means of appropriate personnel planning and team organisation.

Overall assessment EQ 2.1: To what extent do the organisational factors “individuals”, “institutionalisation”, “gender climate” and “resources” influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

“Individuals”, “institutionalisation”, “gender climate” and “resources” at the BMZ, GIZ and KfW are partially favourable for successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts. The trend is assessed as positive overall, yet there remains much room for improvement on all four factors. It is clear from the overall analysis that contributions from individuals, including managers, and the availability of resources are the most important factors for successful gender mainstreaming. This is of particular interest in view of the fact that efforts often tend to be focused more on the area of institutionalisation.

One explanation for the high significance of the “personal factor” is that the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming leaves considerable scope for individual decisions, which only some – motivated and competent – employees make use of. A two-pronged approach that strengthens both individuals and institutionalisation would therefore be appropriate. Both starting points are important for successful gender mainstreaming: management and resources are prerequisites for ensuring that institutionalisation takes effect and potential is fully realised. Gender competence and commitment on the part of staff are rated as “partially favourable” because, although there are many good examples of individual contributions, these can be traced back to individuals rather than the majority of staff.

The BMZ has institutionalised gender mainstreaming intensively up to the process step of commissioning, but there are crucial points where considerable latitude remains. GIZ responds to this with its own guidelines and institutionalisation; the overall density of regulation here is higher than at KfW. However, KfW has a contact point as well as various guidance documents, which cover not just matters relating to gender but also the nexus. Therefore, gender themes are mostly institutionalised at GIZ, whereas KfW structures reflect the gender-conflict nexus to a greater extent.

Interviewees within all organisations describe the organisational climate as predominantly neutral: gender equality issues are treated with medium priority. GIZ staff are fundamentally sensitised to gender, whereas this is less clearly evident at the BMZ and KfW. Within GIZ, interviewees could identify a number of measures to exert a positive influence on the organisational culture; this in tandem with strong institutionalisation raises the visibility of gender issues and has a positive effect on the organisational climate, which is assessed as “mostly favourable” at GIZ and “partially favourable” at the BMZ and KfW.

The resourcing of gender-related work is considered to be stretched in all three organisations, and thus hardly favourable. This confirms the necessity of bearing gender aspects in mind from the very start, and budgeting sufficient resources to deal with the thematic area. Committed and competent staff, above all, and the systematic institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming are the main means of ensuring this.

6.2 Context factors

Besides internal organisational factors, external context factors can also influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts. This is because conflicts can change the existing gender order that governs relations within society: a conflict may disrupt the prevailing gender order, or it may cement it. Men’s and women’s often drastic experiences of conflict and the specific gender roles and norms that apply during the conflict may linger on during the (transitional) phase towards a post-conflict context, in the form of gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests. These aspects are thus important factors, which German development cooperation actors should take into account in the design of projects in post-conflict contexts.

In the following section, we first take a closer look at the special challenges that exist for German development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts, and what distinguishes these from other contexts. In the course of this, we present the analysis results for EQ 2.2 (influence of the post-conflict context on gender mainstreaming) and EQ 2.3 (synergies and trade-offs between different goals). Finally, we outline which responses to these challenges German development cooperation actors have developed in the context

of the projects we studied. These include conflict-sensitivity, flexibility, and coordination with other donors and other development cooperation actors.

What characterises post-conflict contexts?

For the development cooperation projects we studied, post-conflict contexts entail challenges that particularly affect project implementation. In the following section, we elaborate on seven thematic complexes that were identified as part of the analysis of project documents and interviews, focusing on the four case study countries Colombia, Liberia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka:

1. Social cohesion and trust
2. Fragility and weakness of state institutions
3. Violence and lack of security
4. Social polarisation
5. Complexity and lack of data/knowledge sources
6. Challenges specific to displacement
7. Coordination with other donors

Conflicts can dispel or destroy **social cohesion and trust**. At the same time, post-conflict contexts also uncover the resilience of individuals and communities. They overcome conflict-related traumas such as widespread sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), or learn to deal with them; in some cases, social cooperation may even be strengthened in this phase (for example, see Bauer et al., 2016; Koos, 2018). Taking account of this complexity is a challenge for development cooperation projects dedicated to promoting peace and gender equality in post-conflict contexts, and underlines how crucial a knowledge of trauma dynamics and trauma sensitivity is in these contexts. On a small scale, then, development cooperation projects can indeed have positive effects on social cohesion (Doc. 107). That said, to rebuild social cohesion on a lasting basis, it is important to address structural causes of conflict – interventions targeting groups are not sufficient by themselves.

But even in projects whose actual focus is on other themes, social cohesion and trust can be relevant aspects: for example, the target group may be distrustful of external and national actors alike, due to their (presumed or real) involvement in the conflict. It has become clear from individual projects that it takes time to gain the trust of target groups and to convince them that there is no hidden agenda (Int. 119).

Since acceptance by the population is a necessary prerequisite for the (sustainable) success of projects, any loss of trust can impair the effectiveness of development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts. Furthermore, causes of the conflict can persist in the post-conflict context, and consequences of the conflict can be a potential source of future social instability (Doc. 76). Many problems that led to a conflict will not necessarily have been resolved at the beginning of a fragile post-conflict period, as projects attest during the project planning stage. These can take the form of unresolved land conflicts and illegal acts of expropriation, loss of contact between different regions and demographic groups, the unexplained disappearance of individuals and the situation of internally displaced persons (Doc. 59). If such problems are not addressed, this can make processes of dialogue, reconciliation and reparation difficult or even impossible.

Widespread **fragility and the weakness of state institutions** pose a further challenge in post-conflict contexts. Projects are often dependent on being able to cooperate with government institutions that are essentially functional and capable of performing their work. However, government institutions in post-conflict contexts frequently have only limited capability to supply the population with goods and basic services such as health and education – the state's capacity to meet basic needs is limited.⁷³

The development cooperation projects we analysed, for example, report that state institutions in post-conflict contexts often lack technocratic knowledge and continuity of personnel, since elections are followed

⁷³ See also Ziaja et al. (2019) on the “constellations of state fragility” typology. Ziaja et al. refer to the dimensions of “authority”, “capacity” and “legitimacy”.

by staff fluctuation in ministries and authorities, in many cases (Doc. 91). As well as suffering from diminished efficiency, it is equally common for state institutions to lack legitimacy. A further challenge in some instances is high susceptibility to corruption, which often means that projects have to be implemented via non-governmental organisations instead of ministries or state institutions (Doc. 76). Last but not least, dependence on donors is very high in some post-conflict contexts; for instance, if the running costs of a health system are largely financed by external actors (Doc. 152).

Even if a country is in transition to a post-conflict status in formal terms (for example, once a peace agreement has been concluded), **violence and a lack of security** continue to be key issues. It is often the case that state authority – i.e. the state’s monopoly on violence – has not yet been restored, or at least not fully (Doc. 153). Weakened states cannot be relied on to maintain security, or are themselves actors in new dynamics of violence. Moreover, the values that underpin peaceful societies often get lost during conflicts.

As regards development cooperation projects, violence and the potential for escalation pose challenges in many different respects: project staff report security risks to target groups such as smallholder farmers or internally displaced persons, who might be exposed to risks by participating in activities (while travelling to the activity, for example, or because others consider them “suspect” for taking part). This applies in equal measure to partner organisations: in Colombia, for example, violence against representatives of human rights or women’s groups has been on the rise since 2018, having initially declined following the signing of the peace agreement in 2016 (Int. 115). Last but not least, there are also risks to the security of local and international staff of implementing organisations. Any deterioration in the security situation can then mean that these organisations stop approving travel or suspend official development cooperation altogether (Int. 23). The security situation is a crucial factor that can influence the implementation of projects, and hence also the success of gender mainstreaming, and requires continuous monitoring.

In some post-conflict contexts, there is a high level of (ongoing or intensifying) **social polarisation** even after a civil war has (at least officially) ended. This may be the case when a peace agreement is disputed, for example. In Colombia, the peace agreement is being implemented amid a change of government, and thus changing political priorities. With regard to gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts, this is an especially interesting example because conservative forces in Colombian society (such as the Catholic Church) reject the peace agreement because they perceive its “gender ideology” to be too strong. The anchoring of gender aspects in the peace agreement is thus an ongoing focus of societal and political disputes over which gender orders, roles and norms Colombian society as a whole wishes to embrace.

Post-conflict contexts in particular are characterised by **complexity and sometimes confusion**. On the one hand, the reason for this in some contexts is that the lines of conflict are unclear or the contextual conditions are rapidly changing and volatile. Another factor is that, because of the conflict, there is frequently an **inadequate data basis** to inform the actions of development cooperation actors. In any event, this heightened complexity entails the risk that important dynamics and changes might go unrecognised or unnoticed, which adds to the danger of projects having unintended negative effects.

Post-conflict contexts that have a high number of internally displaced persons or refugees face further **challenges specific to displacement** (Doc. 116, 154). For example, the projects we studied indicate that socio-economic resource and distribution conflicts can arise, since there is especially heavy pressure on resources such as water, electricity, land or firewood when refugees and host communities are using them at the same time. This harbours the risk of further conflicts and disputes.

Last but not least, there are some post-conflict contexts in which **numerous bilateral and multilateral donors as well as international non-governmental organisations** are present, implementing transitional development assistance and development cooperation projects. The degree to which these actors coordinate their work and cooperate with each other varies in the different contexts. While donor coordination is always in place in formal terms, how donors make use of this interaction in practice and what effects it achieves are never foregone conclusions. Occasionally, there are specific working or coordination groups on themes such as gender; in most cases, however, this is reliant on the initiative of individual actors.

What is specific about post-conflict contexts with regard to gender mainstreaming in development cooperation projects?

The findings from our analysis make it clear that, in post-conflict contexts, there are various factors that potentially impede gender mainstreaming. Whatever presumed or actual progress towards gender equality has been achieved during the conflict phase, it is not always possible to build on it, or not unless certain enabling conditions are in place. The first impeding factor is that in the aftermath of some conflicts, **traditional role models** are reinforced rather than broken down. Many post-conflict contexts are patriarchal in nature and allot specific roles to women and men. These gender roles and norms are societally and institutionally anchored. In a nutshell, women are active inside the home and men outside it; women are “caretakers, mothers and housewives”, men “earners and head of family”; women’s roles are reproductive, men’s productive (Doc. 90, 115).

These traditional ideas are reflected in various areas, such as the underrepresentation of women in political leadership roles, the disadvantaging of women in matters of inheritance and property ownership, the invisibility of women in the public sphere, their minimal scope to make their own decisions, and disparities of access to information and resources (for example, Doc. 155–157). Such ideas are often especially prevalent in rural areas. Existing gender norms then make it difficult for women to participate in political, economic, social and cultural life. Also, violence against women is often socially accepted – even by women. Nevertheless, existing gender norms can also have negative consequences for men. For instance, society’s expectation of them to demonstrate strength leads to especially risk-taking and hence health-endangering behaviour (Doc. 150).

The second factor consists of the **traumas** suffered by the target group and the consequences of sexual and gender-based violence. Both aspects affect women and men alike, albeit to different degrees. In some contexts, target groups are severely traumatised. Traumatic events and past feelings of powerlessness often lead to diminished self-esteem, a sense of poor self-efficacy and a lack of motivation and initiative in survivors. These, coupled with experiences of being stigmatised in the social context, can increase the difficulty of participating in the activities of a project. Depending on the objectives, in accordance with the gender mainstreaming approach there may be a need for additional activities even just to create the enabling conditions for people to participate in a project successfully. Some projects succeed in addressing this challenge (see Section 5.3), and the importance of a trauma-sensitive approach is noted.

Thirdly, in approaches based on capacity building, it can be difficult to find **suitable target groups**, particularly women, if the level of education is low, since conflicts disrupt educational biographies (Int. 116). Fourthly, **infrastructure destroyed during the conflict and not yet rebuilt** can make it harder to contact the target groups, and this in turn has repercussions for gender equality work. Fifthly, but no less importantly, working on gender issues can be seen as an **attempt at wielding influence by foreign actors**. This calls for a cautious approach and tends to deter some development cooperation actors from tackling these issues at all.

Nevertheless, there are many opportunities for development cooperation projects in post-conflict contexts to contribute positively to gender equality if the impeding factors are addressed. For example, work on overcoming trauma and reducing socio-economic inequalities can equally be a contribution to promoting social cohesion and peace. Post-conflict contexts can offer windows of opportunity to establish new institutions that are more gender-responsive than their predecessors. Likewise, depending on the context, it can be easier to communicate the necessity of empowering women economically because they are often making an important contribution to the family income.

Despite these diverse opportunities, in view of the complex social realities, development cooperation actors should not overestimate their scope to exert influence; in some contexts, for instance, there are signs that access to the Internet and media can change role models more to a greater degree than a conflict does.

Equality and peace: Trade-offs or synergies?

Gender equality and peacebuilding are both goals of German development cooperation in post-conflict contexts. On the one hand, synergies or mutually self-reinforcing mechanisms may operate between these goals; on the other hand, trade-offs between goals are conceivable. The latter situation can give rise to

challenges for gender mainstreaming in projects in post-conflict contexts. In this regard a distinction must be made between two dimensions: firstly, how do German development cooperation actors understand the relationship between the two goals, and do they recognise inherent, logically reasoned trade-offs or synergies between the promotion of both gender equality and peace? Secondly, are there challenges in implementation which prevent both goals from being addressed in equal measure – for instance, because of scarce resources or multiple themes competing for limited attention?

The evaluation found that **no inherent trade-offs** are seen between gender equality and peacebuilding. For example, in its strategy paper “Development for Peace and Security” (2013a), the BMZ stated that it considers “integrated approaches – which address different aspects of peacebuilding and statebuilding, combine various instruments and take into account relevant issues such as climate, environment, the economy, human rights and gender equality – as being particularly effective” (BMZ, 2013a, p. 11, own emphasis; cf. Section 5.1). Overall, development actors have an awareness that discrimination and violence against women are obstacles to the development of a peaceful society (Int. 7, 19).

Moreover, overcoming trauma is seen as a prerequisite for women as well as men to be able to participate in development measures at all (Int. 95). In this regard, the findings show that in many post-conflict contexts it is perfectly possible and in keeping with the political partner’s interests to address practical gender- and conflict-related needs. At the same time, it is far less common for projects to work on gender- and conflict-related strategic interests (Int. 55; see Section 5.3). Not only can it be more difficult, but in some cases the political partner considers it less desirable (Int. 2).

Thus, the relationship between the promotion of gender equality and peace is usually understood on a higher level as **synergistic**. Within this framework, two arguments can be distinguished: a purpose-based instrumental argument and a rights-based normative or universalist argument. According to the **purpose-based argument**, activities to promote women’s economic empowerment are accepted partly because they result in women contributing to the family’s household income. For that reason, it is argued, the fact that women participate in economic development has positive consequences for social cohesion. The inclusion of women is seen as a guarantor of peace. Women are viewed as actors of social cohesion, and the intention behind supporting them is to make a similar contribution to peace or the peace process.

The **rights-based or universalist argument**, which is far less widespread among German development cooperation actors, tends to note that conflicts can initially amplify gender inequality because conflicts are often accompanied by an increase in gender-based violence (Doc. 59). Against this backdrop, when re-establishing institutions in a post-conflict context, it is particularly important to take gender equality into account and explicitly promote it, for example with regard to women’s participation in political decision-making processes. Because “if you’re not mainstreaming gender in peacebuilding, you build a state that is gender unequal. Gender equality is [not] just the right thing to do, *it’s a basic human right*” (Int. 98, own emphasis). According to that response it is intrinsically right to promote gender equality, since this is a human right and there can be no positive peace if “half the population” does not benefit from it (Doc. 89).

At the same time, **practical challenges** arise when addressing the goals of gender equality and peacebuilding together in the course of planning and implementation. For example, development cooperation actors draw attention to the numerous cross-cutting themes and the fact that they compete for priority, or that problems occur at the practical implementation stage, such as conflict over which resources are spent on what. Development cooperation actors also point out that in some contexts, peacebuilding and rapprochement between former warring parties are seen as priorities. As a result, they note that women’s concerns slip into the background somewhat or are seen as coinciding with the promotion of a peaceful society (Int. 7, 117), although this alone is not an adequate approach. There is controversy surrounding the question of whether, during a phase when humanitarian assistance is being delivered, gender should initially give way to other more urgent needs until a phase of stabilisation and development cooperation begins. Some of those involved in projects criticise this as the wrong approach, since it leaves the inclusion of gender-related matters until too late in the process and does not sufficiently anchor them in the projects (Int. 118).

The fact that it is challenging to promote gender equality at the same time as building peace, and that this calls for a context-adapted approach, does not mean that it is impossible to implement. The overarching

question here is which conception of peacebuilding the approach is based on: a narrow one concerned with overcoming the conflict and the direct causes of the conflict, or a broad one concerned with overcoming social discrimination and injustice in its various forms.

When carrying out projects in fields such as providing basic services or promoting economic growth, it is important not to neglect the structural causes of conflict, such as the marginalisation of rural areas or high levels of inequality. Promoting sustainable economic development in conflict-affected regions and, in the process, addressing gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests, contributes to a country's peaceful development. From a normative perspective, it is also necessary in post-conflict contexts to work towards overcoming social discrimination and injustice in all its forms. One aspect of this is working towards gender equality in order to support lasting peace.

Overall assessment EQ 2.3: To what extent are there potential trade-offs or synergies between “supporting gender equality” and “peacebuilding” which influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?

The aspiration for German development cooperation to deal with potential conflicts and synergies between the two goals of “equality” and “peace” in projects in post-conflict contexts is mostly fulfilled. German development cooperation actors mostly understand the two goals as interrelated, intersecting issues, although they mainly cite purpose-based instrumental arguments rather than rights-based normative arguments. There is no perception that the goals are fundamentally in conflict; interviewees are more concerned with practical challenges during implementation, such as cross-cutting themes “competing for attention”, or conflicting demands on resources.

These practical challenges should not be neglected, since they evidently increase the complexity of project implementation and constitute real constraints for the actors involved. This is something for which German development cooperation has answers, but these leave scope for improvement and could be thought through with more thoroughness and depth. At the same time, project stakeholders are not yet taking systematic enough account of possible self-reinforcing mechanisms between the two goals. As a result, opportunities are being missed to implement gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts more effectively.

How do development cooperation projects deal with the challenges of post-conflict contexts?

First and foremost, both of the implementing organisations studied place a clear focus on questions of **security and risk management**. This reflects their duty of care towards their international and local staff. For example, some country offices have security consultants, work in cooperation with the United Nations security service or have their own risk management structures. The implementing organisations also make frequent use of context, actor and interests analyses as well as continuous context reporting so that they can recognise changing situations and potential security risks at an early stage. Responses to these range from temporary travel restrictions and short-term suspension of project activities to the use of remote management modalities and, in the last resort, a complete cessation of projects. Guidance from the BMZ on development cooperation in fragile contexts (Doc. 11) also contains a reference to considering these eventualities at an early stage in the planning, discussing them with the implementing organisations and requiring them to follow the same guidance. There were only a few indications in project documentation that this is actually being adhered to by explicitly setting out different implementation modalities at the project planning stage.

In addition to questions of security and risk management, the evaluation highlights the responses of German development cooperation projects to challenges of the post-conflict context in two further areas: in respect of the general sectoral priorities of projects (the “what” and the “where”), and of the concrete, context-sensitive shaping of projects (the “how”) with political partners, local implementing partners and the target groups.

With regard to the “what” and “where” of the **general sectoral priorities**, it is apparent that many projects are situated in sectors that are seen as particularly important for socio-economic development and

peacebuilding in a country. Occasionally, these priorities are tied in with central themes of peace agreements and aimed at creating income opportunities in marginalised rural areas, for example. If a peace agreement is highly disputed within society, however, it can make more sense to link priorities to a National Development Plan, which also includes objectives relevant to peace such as the reintegration of (male and female) ex-combatants. In some contexts, more general needs such as rural development are addressed, although the implementing organisations comment that this should likewise be designed to support the government's approach and ultimately to contribute to peacebuilding. It is generally viewed as stabilising, and thus potentially conducive to peace, to create sustainable life prospects.

In addition to rather indirect and long-term contributions to peace and security such as these, the development cooperation projects we studied are often active in project regions that have been identified, either by the project itself or in consultation with the political partner, as being particularly affected by conflict. The level of need in these regions is extremely high and hence important to address. The projects usually argue that women are co-beneficiaries or the chief beneficiaries of such activities (for example, Doc. 110).

With regard to the **shaping of project activities**, especially in terms of concrete operations “in situ” and the question of “how” projects cooperate with the political partner, the implementing partner and the target group, different approaches adopted by the projects can be identified. In relation to the political partner, this includes proceeding sensitively and using a vocabulary adapted to the context, for example. One example is that, depending on the context, it may be more effective to talk about *women's protection* rather than *sexual and gender-based violence*. Another important point to consider is how to approach and, where appropriate, involve local government bodies – be it via formal or informal channels. A project's capacity to take action may be helped in some contexts by working closely with local authorities or other local actors, because this confers legitimacy in the eyes of the target groups. In other contexts, however, the same approach entails the risk of a project no longer being perceived as impartial and neutral. Ideally, it helps to carry out continuous context and risk reporting in order to weigh up such questions.

In relation to the local implementing partners, it is important to select them carefully and to sensitise them to the various specifics of the post-conflict context; it is equally important to be open to sensitisation from them based on their experience of the context. With regard to the target group, conflict-sensitive project design is of the utmost importance. This might involve proceeding slowly as a means of fostering trust vis-à-vis the development cooperation actors and within the communities. Human rights principles such as non-discrimination and transparency are also relevant here. For example, making it publicly known that a project is particularly intended to promote women can be an effective course of action. In order to address the traumas that are present in the target groups, psychosocial support is an important component of any project, irrespective of the sector. Interventions in the field of trauma treatment in post-conflict contexts are complex, and it is not that easy to know which types of intervention actually work (Doc. 107). By no means must it be the project itself that provides psychosocial support. A preferable option can be to cooperate on this aspect with civil society organisations that have specific expertise, and in this way ensure that appropriate services are available for target groups.

Overall, working in post-conflict contexts is demanding for development cooperation projects because, in addition to concrete sectoral goals, they are expected to make direct or indirect contributions to social cohesion and peace. To this end, development cooperation projects use various means to honour the do-no-harm principle and to contribute to supporting gender equality. Many development cooperation projects begin by placing more emphasis on addressing the practical conflict-related needs of women and men; meanwhile their strategic interests are often left in the background. Addressing both practical needs and strategic interests requires attention, contextual knowledge and context-sensitivity, as well as the flexibility to make judicious adjustments to ensure that projects are able to continue operating and guarantee the fulfilment of objectives.

Overall assessment EQ 2.2: To what extent does the post-conflict context influence successful gender mainstreaming?

Post-conflict contexts are not necessarily favourable for gender mainstreaming in German development cooperation projects. Alongside the numerous risks associated with these contexts, to what extent they offer opportunities for successful promotion of gender equality with due regard to gender-specific living conditions and interests depends partly on the projects' approaches to dealing with these. It is generally challenging for those involved in development cooperation projects to plan and implement projects in post-conflict contexts because they are frequently beset with difficult contextual conditions (such as political fragility and security risks). Successful gender mainstreaming requires a context-sensitive and context-adapted approach. To this end, firstly it is essential to recognise challenges such as social polarisation, and to counter them. Secondly, it is important to make use of the windows of opportunity for gender equality that exist in all contexts including post-conflict contexts. This aspiration is partially fulfilled by the development cooperation projects we studied; in particular, they could give greater consideration to gender roles and norms and do even more to address the strategic interests of women and men.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The question this evaluation seeks to answer is to what extent the process of gender mainstreaming in German development cooperation leads to the planning and implementation of activities that contribute to gender equality in post-conflict contexts. The evaluation thus aims, firstly, to take stock of and assess the extent to which gender- and conflict-specific activities are planned and implemented. It pursues the secondary aim of developing recommendations relevant to practice derived from its findings. These will assist those involved in planning and implementing projects in post-conflict contexts to better recognise and utilise the opportunities and potentials arising from bilateral official development projects, so as to contribute to achieving the BMZ's goals in the field of gender equality.

In order to assess whether the process for gender mainstreaming is successful, the evaluation considered two dimensions. On the first dimension, we analysed to what extent the process of strategy, planning, implementation and post-implementation as such is suitable for identifying women's and men's gender- and conflict-specific experiences, practical needs and strategic interests, and addressing them in projects (**process dimension**). Secondly, we evaluated whether the intended gender-related effects are actually realised (**outcome dimension**).

For the analysis of the process, three overarching questions were developed and dealt with in the course of the evaluation: (1) the formally specified steps in the process and the analytical tools used in the process (**formal process**; this also encompasses safeguards put in place by German development cooperation to prevent sexual misconduct, due to the high relevance of this issue in post-conflict contexts), (2) influencing factors, both within the organisations involved (individuals, institutionalisation, gender climate and resources), and rooted in the post-conflict context (**influencing factors**), and (3) theoretical and practical options of the actors involved to exert an influence on gender mainstreaming, and how they make use of them (**actors**).

The evaluation finds that the process of gender mainstreaming, as currently specified for German bilateral official development cooperation, which also guides Transitional Development Assistance and Special Initiatives, is essentially adequate for anchoring the promotion of gender equality in post-conflict contexts. However, in practice the methods and analytical tools are rarely used in a way that consistently anchors the gender-conflict nexus in the projects. As a result, gender mainstreaming in German bilateral official development cooperation in post-conflict contexts is only partially successful, and the relevant potential of official development cooperation is not being maximised in a systematic enough way. Against the backdrop of the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda formulated by the German government and the BMZ, contributions in this direction would make an important difference and would be directly relevant to the target groups. Individual projects addressing the issues of "overcoming trauma" and "increasing income" stand out as exceptions: these do achieve relevant outcomes and not only meet practical needs but also contribute to empowering women, changing gender roles and enhancing equality.

In contrast, strategic interests relating to gender roles and norms, such as women's active involvement in peace and reconciliation processes, are addressed much less frequently than practical needs. In the overall analysis, there is thus a considerable gap between the political goals and the commitments of the BMZ, on the one hand, and how these are actually implemented in development cooperation projects, on the other.

The reasons for this can be summarised as follows:

- The BMZ's Gender Equality Strategy, with its three-pronged approach consisting of gender mainstreaming, empowerment and development policy dialogue, emphasises that the ministry considers gender equality a goal in its own right and a guiding principle for its work. However, it is one of many cross-cutting themes that has to be borne in mind when drafting development project concepts and realising them in practice. A tension exists between the multiplicity of cross-cutting themes and the high workload of staff, with the result that not all themes can be dealt with in equal measure, and priorities have to be set.

- The anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus depends very heavily on the commitment and interest of the responsible staff members in the BMZ divisions running the projects (especially the country officers) and in the two implementing organisations. Weighed against a multitude of other themes that have to be dealt with in the course of project conception and implementation, the theme of “gender equality” often ends up as a low priority. The evaluation found that commitment is greater when staff have prior experience and knowledge in the thematic area of “gender and conflict”. Overall, the competence of staff from the BMZ and from implementing organisations with regard to the gender-conflict nexus can be characterised as heterogeneous.
- In the country strategies, the promotion of gender equality or the gender-conflict nexus within priority areas is not usually anchored by means of targets or indicators. As a result, the bindingness of contributing to certain “gender objectives” in light of the post-conflict context is not made explicit in this important steering document. Consequently, since the objectives from the country strategy are reflected in the wording of programme objectives, and these in turn are reflected in the wording of module objectives, when it comes to developing module proposals, there is no clear framework specifying which “gender objectives” a project should contribute to within its priority area.
- Despite the BMZ’s objective, described above, of supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts, there is only one project in the countries we studied and during the time frame of the study in which this theme and peacebuilding are pursued – in a single phase – as joint principal objectives (PS2/GE2 marker). This constitutes a challenge, because PS2/GE2 projects are geared towards working specifically on the gender-conflict nexus with the political partners, the implementing partners, or indeed the target groups.
- Knowledge and practical experience on the promotion of gender equality in post-conflict contexts may be obtainable from German bilateral official development cooperation projects or indeed from other donors. However, staff of the implementing organisations (especially in the partner countries) and the BMZ do not find it easy to access, notwithstanding the approaches to internal knowledge management that exist, within the implementing organisations especially. It follows that those planning and implementing projects are not always able to benefit fully from the body of experience available.

There follows a presentation of the evaluation’s conclusions and recommendations (a) on steering by the BMZ on the basis of the thematic strategies, country strategies and portfolio, (b) on structures and the process for planning and implementing projects, and (c) on knowledge and competence.

7.1 Steering by the BMZ

Supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts is a relevant goal of German development cooperation. On the one hand, there are normative reasons for this, such as those set out in the women’s rights conventions (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 2013), the SDGs (United Nations, 2015) and UNSCR 1325 (United Nations Security Council, 2000) and their follow-up resolutions. On the other hand, there are also some studies which indicate that improving gender equality is instrumentally relevant when it comes to achieving other objectives of development cooperation. This means that, for example, lasting peace and long-term reconciliation can only be achieved if efforts are made in parallel towards gender equality and the realisation of human rights.

The German government has anchored the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda in its policy guidelines on “Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace” (Bundesregierung, 2017a) and the joint interministerial strategies that have emerged from them to support (1) security sector reform (Bundesregierung, 2019a), (2) dealing with the past and reconciliation (transitional justice) (Bundesregierung, 2019b) and (3) promoting the rule of law (Bundesregierung, 2019c). Implementation of the Agenda is described in more detail in NAP II (Bundesregierung, 2017b).

Although gender equality and the realisation of human rights are among the German government's priorities, this is not always apparent in relation to the work taking place in post-conflict contexts. A study commissioned by the Federal Foreign Office concludes that while Germany's commitment to implementing Resolution 1325 has increased since 2018, the international community does not perceive Germany as one of the Resolution's active trailblazers. Moreover, in comparison with other international actors who have been working on the issue for decades, Germany's engagement does not yet evidence the same consistency and coherence (Auswärtiges Amt, 2020a). Our interviews with political partners in situ confirmed this impression. Likewise, the portfolio of German bilateral development cooperation in post-conflict contexts has no obvious focus in this area.

This also highlights a tension in the division of responsibilities between the BMZ and the state implementing organisations. The ministry performs its steering function primarily through its strategies, which are binding for the institutions of official development cooperation and serve as guidance for civil society organisations, and also through the procedures for the planning of development projects. Ideally, these are realised by the implementing organisations, whose implementation work is monitored by the BMZ. However, the evaluation concludes that the inherent potential contained in the strategies and procedural standards for planning and implementing gender- and conflict-sensitive projects is not being utilised to the full.

The reason given by the majority of the stakeholders interviewed, within both the BMZ and the implementing organisations, is that given the large number of cross-cutting issues to be dealt with, staff find it a challenge to tackle this multitude of parallel objectives effectively.⁷⁴ Lacking clear prioritisation from the BMZ, the result is that although the standards are adhered to (for example, inclusion of a gender indicator in projects with a GE1 marker, or explanatory notes on the marker), the thematic area is not anchored coherently in the projects, and consequently, is not a coherent thread running through the logic of change. This only happens either if the BMZ division running the project sends a clear signal in favour of prioritising the thematic area of "gender equality in post-conflict contexts" or if the assigned staff members in the implementing organisations are particularly committed to the issue. From the converse perspective, this means that the reason for inadequate implementation is that key stakeholders both in the BMZ and in the implementing organisations do not prioritise the thematic area in a form that promotes effective implementation, above and beyond anchoring it formally in projects.

The evaluation therefore concludes that, particularly in the planning process, personal commitment on the part of the staff in the BMZ divisions running the projects has a key influence on the extent to which the gender-conflict nexus is anchored in the procedures and the potential effects are maximised. Within the implementing organisations, it is particularly those involved in planning and implementation who can exert an influence on this. As a prerequisite for staff members to succeed in demonstrating their commitment, however, the procedures need to be institutionally anchored so that staff have sufficient time and expertise at their disposal to tackle the thematic area and to integrate the BMZ objectives into the projects appropriately.

Anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus in thematic strategies

The analysis of the relevant BMZ strategies along with the German government strategies that guide the activities of the BMZ reveals some variation in the degree to which they take up the gender-conflict nexus. In the older strategies, the themes of "gender equality" and "conflict" are dealt with separately. A direct linkage is only made in the area of "sexual violence against women during conflicts". The gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests go much further, however, and encompass such aspects as (new) income-earning opportunities, access to training, land or factors of production, and co-determination

⁷⁴ Under "BMZ 2030" the six quality criteria, including quality criterion 1 (Human rights, gender equality, inclusion), are intended as cross-cutting themes to ensure values-oriented, sustainable and forward-looking development cooperation. These are likely to place the same high demands on staff, so that having to consider several quality criteria simultaneously will remain a challenge.

at the municipal level. More recent strategies already demonstrate stronger interlinkages between the thematic area of “gender equality” and the theme of “peace and security”.

Given that strategies are binding upon the state implementing organisations, the evaluation concludes that – in order to achieve the goals of the German government and the BMZ in relation to the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda – the ministry should anchor the thematic area in key strategy documents when strategies are revised as part of the “BMZ 2030” reform process. This is of particular relevance for the drafting of the core area strategies and the performance profiles. Given the guidance that “performance profiles [are to] describe how focused measures on the respective quality criterion can be meaningfully designed and embedded as part of the work addressed to core areas”, it seems important that the gender-conflict nexus is reflected in the performance profiles for the quality criteria of “Conflict sensitivity” and “Human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion” (Doc. 162).

Recommendation 1:

As part of the “BMZ 2030” reform strategy, the BMZ should anchor the promotion of gender equality in post-conflict contexts and the implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda at the strategic level. To this end,

- the **strategy on the core area of “Peace and social cohesion”** should deal with the issue of “supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts” thematically and, as far as possible, operationalise it with a corresponding indicator, and
- the **performance profiles for the quality criteria “Conflict sensitivity” and “Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion”** should incorporate the gender-conflict nexus as an important theme.

Anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus in the country strategy on the basis of a countrywide gender analysis

Alongside the BMZ’s thematic strategies, the country strategies lay out the political and strategic framework for the respective partner countries and are recognised as important documents for operative guidance. The objectives of the country strategy must be reflected in the objectives of the programmes or modules. In the country strategies we studied, however, the anchoring of the thematic area of supporting gender equality against the backdrop of a recent conflict is often inadequate. Under the heading of “gender”, it is mainly women who are addressed, frequently as a disadvantaged group; also, the priority areas in the country strategies do not usually specify gender objectives or gender indicators that might serve as guidelines for the planning of the projects.

This is problematic for two reasons: firstly, as a result, it is barely possible to monitor or evaluate the contribution of German development cooperation to gender equality. This means that the BMZ is almost completely unable to supply information on this thematic area. Secondly, in view of the frequent rotation of country officers and the observation that interest in the theme is highly dependent on individuals, the lack of gender targets in the country strategy is problematic for the continuity of work on gender equality. Although the BMZ’s Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 (2016a) stipulates that gender analyses are to be taken into account when drafting country strategies and that gender-differentiated targets, indicators and timetables are to be defined in the priority areas, this was not the case in the countries included in our case study. In part, this may be explained by the fact that the country strategies have yet to be revised following the adoption of the Gender Action Plan.

The evaluation therefore concludes that it is conducive to the BMZ’s aims to put these points of the Gender Action Plan into practice and to ensure that the country strategies contain defined targets and indicators for the promotion of gender equality within the individual priority areas, with due regard to the post-conflict context. To increase the bindingness of targets, it is important to define how and when the achievement of targets will be reviewed at the same time as the indicators are agreed. One example that shows how gender targets and indicators can be anchored in a country strategy is the “New Country Strategy for Afghanistan 2014-2017” (BMZ, 2014b). Explicitly formulated gender equality targets in the priority areas would serve as guidance on relevant objectives to be pursued in the individual projects. The inclusion of gender objectives

in the country strategy would also influence the composition of the portfolio and would support the promotion of PS2/GE2 projects where needed.

For almost every project carried out under the auspices of German development cooperation, there are gender analyses (GIZ) or ZGBAs (KfW). Although the depth of analysis varies, they all contain information on the country situation pertaining to gender as well as analyses and recommendations for concrete projects. In the evaluation's assessment, this is low in efficiency and low in effectiveness. What would make sense, instead, is a countrywide gender analysis which reflects the countrywide framework and describes specific challenges of the post-conflict context such as SGBV and traumatisation of the population. It should serve as a basic foundation for differentiated gender analyses at module level. Gender analyses at module level should continue, but should only develop concrete recommendations focused on the given project.

Due to the multiplicity of gender analyses in existence, the EU Gender Expert Group is also discussing EU-commissioned country-specific gender analyses as a basis for a joint approach by the Member States as part of the new EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025. In view of donor coordination and the fact that the EU has a joint Gender Action Plan and is drafting another, it seems sensible and efficient to prepare overarching countrywide gender analyses for the purposes of EU donor coordination. This can likewise help with formulating a common understanding of the situation in a country and proceeding in a coordinated manner where possible, especially when it comes to dialogue with the political partners. Pre-existing gender analyses should be used in this process for reasons of efficiency.

In view of the finding that gender and conflict are conceptually separated in most cases, the evaluation recommends writing PCAs in gender-sensitive language and making it obligatory to integrate gender into them systematically. This would seem to be necessary because the options highlighted in the Annex for taking account of gender-related matters in PCAs are not being applied systematically.

The evaluation further concludes that countrywide gender analyses can make a positive contribution to the efficiency and effectiveness with which targets and indicators are anchored in the respective country strategy. In particular, they should generate recommendations on the extent to which gender transformative approaches are possible in the various priority areas, and how they can be put into practice.

The preceding conclusions lead us to make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 2:

The BMZ should consistently anchor the promotion of gender equality in its country strategies for post-conflict countries. In its priority areas (since "BMZ 2030": "core areas") it should define targets and indicators referring to gender equality. These should be suitable for monitoring and assessing the achievement of this objective.

Recommendation 3:

In post-conflict contexts, the BMZ should support the preparation of a countrywide gender analysis as a basis for defining gender targets in the individual priority areas (since "BMZ 2030": "core areas") of the country strategy. The countrywide gender analyses should be prepared in coordination with other EU donors where possible and used collectively for a better coordinated approach. They should serve as the starting point for more focused gender analyses at module level in future by reflecting the countrywide framework and addressing specific challenges of post-conflict contexts, such as sexual gender-based violence and traumatisation of the population.

Composition of the portfolio

In order to achieve the BMZ's self-imposed goals to advance the position of women in conflict-affected contexts and to meet the specific challenges of gender equality as well as peace and security in the countries we studied, it would seem necessary to support projects that combine both goals within the project's principal objective. However, in the portfolio of 11 post-conflict countries we analysed, there was only one

project with the PS2/GE2 marker during the period under review. As a consequence of this, the specific technical expertise at the interface of these topics is not ensured at country level. Other expertise is in demand in other sectors, whereas gender competence is considered to be a lower priority in many cases.

A clear need for more gender-and-conflict competence emerged from the interviews with project staff in the case study countries. Many of them expressed a need for more information and skills, so that they could more effectively plan and implement activities relating to the gender-conflict nexus in their concrete work context. These comments are applicable to their cooperation with political partners, with local implementing partners and with target groups. The latter group frequently includes traumatised people, whose situations were daunting for project staff. Interviewees also mention the importance of sensitising partner institutions to the gender-conflict nexus, because unless they take ownership of the issue, a sustainable change in gender norms is unachievable.

The evaluation therefore concludes that, due to the special challenges in post-conflict countries, supporting projects that pursue peacebuilding and gender equality as principal objectives (PS2/GE2 marker) is conducive to the achievement of the overall goal. On the one hand, such a project should help to enable women and men to participate appropriately and actively in reaching decisions, in implementing activities that promote peace processes and reconstruction, and in preventing conflicts. On the other hand, it should also address societal gender roles and norms and their implications for society in order to contribute to the elimination of institutionally embedded discrimination. This contributes in no small part to the implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda pursued by the BMZ and many partner countries. A PS2/GE2 project would serve to sensitise partners to the gender-conflict nexus and support them in realising UNSCR 1325. Attention to multiple discrimination as well as work with traumatised people are equally important aspects that should come to bear in this context.

However, there can be contexts in which the promotion of a PS2/GE2 project does not seem opportune due to the specific orientation of the German portfolio or because other donors are already active in the same area. Therefore, in countries with a post-conflict context, the idea of promoting such a project should be carefully examined, and the outcome documented in the event of a decision not to do so.

Recommendation 4:

In every post-conflict country the BMZ should examine whether to promote a PS2/GE2 project that pursues peace, security and the promotion of gender equality as its principal objectives and supports the implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda. If the outcome of this examination is negative, this should be documented, including the justification.

7.2 Structures and processes for planning and implementation

The evaluation finds that the formal process of planning, implementation and post-implementation is essentially adequate for anchoring the gender-conflict nexus in the projects. At the same time, it became clear that although the standards favour the integration of gender, how fully the relevant potential of projects is utilised also depends very heavily on individual members of staff, their skill-sets and their commitment to gender issues.

The process has a notably high density of regulation. In the following, we therefore highlight the points in the process which the evaluation considers particularly effective for anchoring the gender-conflict nexus in the projects: (1) when the preliminary appraisal is requested and discussed, (2) when module proposals are checked to ensure consistent inclusion of a gender perspective in the drafting of objectives and activities, bearing in mind the gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests of women and men, and (3) when the local implementing partners possess nexus competence. Since the risk of becoming a victim of sexual violence or exploitation is particularly high in post-conflict contexts, the evaluation further concludes that it is of great importance to anchor safeguards against sexual misconduct in the structures and processes of projects in such contexts.

Anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus at an early stage in the planning process

The analysis of the process for planning, implementation and post-implementation showed that the request for and subsequent discussion of the preliminary appraisal are an important gateway for the anchoring of the gender-conflict nexus in the projects. The reason is that during this phase adjustments are still being made and can be incorporated into the subsequent project appraisal. When the module proposal has been finalised and the project designed in detail, and once intensive discussions with the partners have taken place, it is very cumbersome to go back and make further substantive changes. However, this is exactly what might be necessary if questions about how the project will address the target groups' gender- and conflict-specific needs have not been included in the project concept from very start.

The evaluation therefore concludes that the decision-makers in the BMZ, usually the country officers, should make it clear from the outset when they request the preliminary appraisal, that it needs to outline how the project will address the gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests of the target groups. A countrywide gender analysis, as set out in Recommendations 2 and 3, as well as country strategies containing defined targets and indicators for the promotion of gender equality in the priority areas, would generate efficiency gains here, since this content could be referred to in the preliminary appraisals.

Recommendation 5:

When a preliminary appraisal is requested for projects in post-conflict contexts with a provisional GE1 or GE2 marker, the BMZ should insist that the implementing organisations clearly articulate the approach whereby a project will respond to the gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests of the target groups and contribute to gender equality.

Inclusion of the gender-conflict nexus in the module proposals

With regard to the internal quality assurance processes covering the preparation of module proposals, the two implementing organisations differ significantly in their institutionalisation of the "gender" theme. At GIZ, these are highly formalised (Safeguards + Gender Desk), whereas at KfW, the responsibility rests with the operational teams, which have greater latitude.

In our analysis of the module proposals – which constitute the binding framework for the BMZ's commissioning of the implementing organisations and form the basis for implementation, reporting and evaluation – we found that in most cases these only fulfil the minimum criteria regarding the anchoring of gender. This means that gender equality is mentioned in the relevant places, gender- and conflict-specific needs are discussed at least briefly, and gender-related indicators are formulated at the outcome and output levels. These mostly quantitative indicators often only specify women's participation in defined activities, although there is normally no obvious reason for specifying 30 per cent of women participants in a particular activity or training measure as standard. The evaluation concludes that the quality of gender indicators should be improved here. The BMZ has recognised this problem and commissioned a study in 2019 to develop proposals for improving the indicators; this was not yet available at the time of writing of this report.

While the module proposals do largely include the recommendations from analytical tools such as gender analysis or PCA, however, they rarely contain any elaboration of the linkage between gender and conflict. In order to ensure that activities are gender- and conflict-sensitive, however, in conflict settings it is essential that the context analysis – and particularly the analysis in the context of do-no-harm – should reflect gender dimensions and anticipate potential repercussions of development interventions on gender roles and gender relations in the given context. Furthermore, the gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests of women and men that have arisen from the conflict context should be named explicitly, so that they can inform the project planning.

The results matrix often proves unspecific when it comes to how the overall design of the project envisages making a contribution to gender equality. It is striking that the transformative potential of projects elaborated in the gender analyses is less frequently carried forward into project planning. Since gender analyses are normally only submitted at the request of the BMZ, often the BMZ country officers do not have the information to hand to assess the transformative potential of projects. Here, the evaluation concludes

that it would make sense for the implementing organisations to supply an accompanying list of recommendations from the analytical tools when submitting module proposals to the ministry for review.

The evaluation has shown that neither of the two organisations consistently bear the gender-conflict nexus in mind in their preparation of module proposals for projects in post-conflict countries. Hence, the potential for projects to incorporate the gender- and conflict-specific needs and interests of the target groups into project planning, and to resource these appropriately, is not being utilised. As a further consequence, some pressing post-conflict problems, such as the traumatisation of parts of the target groups, go unrecognised. Yet dealing with these can be a vital prerequisite that enables the target groups to participate in the project activities at all. The evaluation therefore concludes that the gender-conflict nexus should be an item for review when performing project appraisals. The implication is that review of the nexus should be listed as a task in the corresponding terms of reference, which in turn means that consultants with appropriate expertise should be part of the team.

In light of these findings, the evaluation concludes that the objectives pursued by the individual projects with regard to gender equality should be specified more clearly. A suitable method – as set out in Recommendation 2 – would be for the country strategies to define gender targets and indicators in the individual priority areas (since “BMZ 2030”: “core areas” or “fields of action”). The BMZ should monitor whether module proposals specify what a project (with a GE1 or GE2 marker) will contribute to the gender equality targets and indicators defined in the country strategy in the respective priority areas (since “BMZ 2030”: “core areas”), and which measures are intended to achieve this.

Recommendation 6:

The implementing organisations should ensure that the promotion of gender equality is coherently anchored in all sections of the module proposal for projects with a GE1 or GE2 marker, and should operationalise these objectives with one or more meaningful gender indicators. In order to allow the BMZ to monitor this anchoring, the two implementing organisations should routinely provide the responsible country officers with outlines of the recommendations from peace and conflict assessments and gender analyses.

Cooperation with political partners and implementing partners

The organisations and institutions with which the projects cooperate in the partner countries play an important part when it comes to the planning and implementation of activities. From our case studies, it emerged that gender roles and norms as well as power relations between women and men are also anchored in the institutions and organisations in the partner countries. At the same time, international agreements such as the SDGs, the women’s rights convention or UN Resolution 1325 provide a common normative foundation. The evaluation therefore considers it important from the viewpoint of sustainability that the BMZ and the implementing organisations communicate to the partners in situ that supporting gender equality is an important goal of German development cooperation, sensitise them to the thematic area and, where necessary, support them in making their work gender-sensitive. This is important so that the partners, too, internalise the concept of gender mainstreaming. Unless this is accomplished, the changes in gender norms and roles initiated by the projects are unlikely to be sustainable, as the partners will not continue the relevant activities once projects come to an end. The evaluation therefore concludes that work with the partner organisations on this thematic area is essential. The PS2/GE2 project identified in Recommendation 4 could support this work.

The evaluation further concludes that the gender- and conflict-specific knowledge of the implementing partners and their sensitivity are often crucial to the gender- and conflict-sensitive planning and implementation of activities at project level. Some projects select implementing partners according to these criteria (provided that there are viable options) and can then benefit themselves from the partners’ gender- and conflict competence. Others invest in developing the capacity of implementing partners to ensure that gender mainstreaming is put into practice successfully. The evaluation therefore concludes that the

implementing partners' gender-and-conflict competence is an important factor for the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts.

Recommendation 7:

The implementing organisations should include gender-and-conflict competence as a selection criterion when choosing local implementing partners for GE1 or GE2 projects in post-conflict contexts. If local implementing partners are suitable in principle but none of them possess such competence, the implementing organisations should raise their awareness of the thematic area and offer them opportunities to build and develop the requisite competence.

Safeguards against sexual misconduct

In post-conflict contexts, the risk of becoming a victim of sexual violence or exploitation is particularly high. At the same time, in these contexts especially, national structures for prevention or effective prosecution are often not (yet) in place. For that reason, it is all the more important for development organisations to perform a role model function and develop effective safeguards against sexual misconduct.

The projects we analysed for this evaluation do not (yet) fully live up to this aspiration. While prevention measures are quite widespread, in the form of sensitisation workshops, and the majority of staff members rate them positively, there are gaps in the provision of safeguarding mechanisms and in people's awareness of their existence. Above all, target groups are not sufficiently well informed about complaint mechanisms. Both GIZ in Germany and GIZ projects in the case study countries signalled that work on this is in progress. KfW, which does not deliver any projects itself, refers instead to the responsibility of the executing agencies or the implementing partners.

While some implementing partners have put in place functioning systems of their own, there are gaps along the chain of delegation between them, the BMZ and the two implementing organisations. The BMZ does not subsequently verify whether safeguards exist, since it sees this as the implementing organisations' responsibility rather than its own. This is not conducive to timely and consistent institutionalisation of such a system. Moreover, it leaves the BMZ insufficiently able to supply information on this thematic area. The evaluation therefore concludes that this should be remedied without delay, and that easily accessible complaint mechanisms with low barriers to use should be established for German development cooperation projects.

Recommendation 8:

German development cooperation (BMZ and the implementing organisations) should implement the OECD-DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance, adopted in 2019, with a view to systematically institutionalising protection and complaint mechanisms against sexual misconduct. The distribution of responsibilities between local implementing partners, implementing organisations and the federal ministries involved in implementing the German government's policy guidelines on "Preventing Crises, Resolving Conflicts, Building Peace" and the National Action Plan (NAP) should be clearly stated.

7.3 Knowledge and competence

Commitment and competence of staff in the title-holding BMZ divisions and of managers in the implementing organisations

The evaluation observed that the priority given to supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts in project planning and implementation depends heavily on the thematic commitment and interest demonstrated by the individual country officers in the BMZ and by the managers in the implementing organisations. Commitment to the issue is higher when the relevant individuals are aware of the gender-conflict nexus and are competent in dealing with it. When this is the case, staff actively ensure that the

gender-conflict nexus is addressed appropriately in the projects for which they are responsible. Overall, the evaluation finds that there are heterogeneous levels of competence at the gender-conflict nexus among BMZ country officers and GIZ and KfW managers.

The evaluation concludes that decision-making staff in the organisations working with or in post-conflict countries should possess a basic level of competence regarding the gender-conflict nexus. At the time of our data collection, the different organisations' offers of further training on the whole topic were dissimilar. At the BMZ, the topic of "gender equality" is part of the mandatory preparatory programme for new staff. At KfW, further training courses are offered on gender, which also cover the gender-conflict nexus. These are obligatory for new staff and for entrants coming from different careers, but not for individuals who have already been working at the bank for some time, who frequently hold decision-making roles or quality assurance responsibilities. Similarly at GIZ, which anchors the thematic area of "gender" comprehensively within its organisation and provides a broad range of training through the Academy for International Cooperation, participation in relevant course offerings is not mandatory. Moreover, these are not tailored to the specific challenges of working towards gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

The new quality criterion "Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion" provides an opportunity for the various organisations to offer a course concept with, ideally, mandatory further training for those with country and thematic responsibilities. It is important that, wherever possible, such training is specifically tailored to the work context of the staff, so that its usefulness is immediately obvious. For example, this might consist of a further training module that is only addressed to staff members working in post-conflict contexts. This further training module could include topics such as the "Women, Peace and Security" Agenda and Germany's associated commitments, and offer argumentation aids for the political dialogue with partners.

From the evaluation's point of view, it would be equally helpful to develop or expand sector-specific checklists as a tool for assessing the extent to which the quality criterion "Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion" is adequately anchored in a preliminary appraisal or a module proposal. In order to go into greater depth on the specificities of post-conflict contexts, it would also be useful to collaborate with the implementing organisations to organise a themed day or a similar format for staff working in post-conflict contexts. The aim would be to exchange experiences with each other and improve the flow of information between the BMZ and the implementing organisations.

Recommendation 9:

Under the further training concept for the quality criterion "Human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion", the BMZ and the implementing organisations should offer (ideally) mandatory continuing education courses for those with country, project or thematic responsibilities, which should include application-oriented guidance on supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts.

Systematic collation of knowledge and experience on the promotion of gender equality in post-conflict contexts

A great deal of experience has been gathered worldwide on the promotion of gender equality in post-conflict contexts, both by German development organisations and other bilateral and multilateral donors. There are also researchers dealing with this thematic area, who are not under the same pressure to implement a project successfully and can therefore identify and analyse failures and unsuccessful approaches with equanimity. However, information from these sources is diffuse, seldom collated, not easily accessible, and therefore often too obscure to be of use to staff.

The case studies in the various countries showed that, especially in the course of Technical Cooperation in the different contexts, projects often carry out more activities concerning the gender-conflict nexus than were planned at the outset. In this respect, projects have reacted to the exigencies of the situation. What made the critical difference in most of these cases was personal commitment and experience on the part of individual staff members or the local implementing organisations. As an additional factor, such "unplanned" activities call for a certain flexibility in the allocation of resources.

At the same time, the evaluation showed that project planners and staff within projects frequently lack knowledge and experience as to which approaches are most promising for supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts. For example, some commented that “chance” conversations with colleagues often turned out to be extremely helpful on the matter of integrating the gender-conflict nexus into a project.

The evaluation therefore concludes that this disparate information and experience acquired by different organisations and institutions should be collated, presented and made available specifically to decision-makers and staff in the partner countries. It is also important to keep up with the international discourse on the thematic area and to contribute to the discussion on the refinement of approaches moving forward. Due to the significant role of multilateral organisations and (international) civil society initiatives, it is essential to bring in their knowledge and experience as well. Systematic reviews, such as the review commissioned by the BMZ on the role of women in peace processes, are certainly valuable contributions in this area.

In addition, the BMZ should commission more representative or rigorous studies to investigate the effectiveness of transformative approaches on gender norms in society. The PS2/GE2 projects which this evaluation recommends in the various post-conflict countries (Recommendation 4) should then be involved as competence centres in the partner countries and for the purpose of piloting promising approaches.

Recommendation 10:

The BMZ (possibly in cooperation with the EU Gender Expert Group) should commission a highly application-oriented research project in order to synthesise knowledge and experience on supporting gender equality in post-conflict contexts. On the one hand, this knowledge should be incorporated into the BMZ’s strategy documents and decisions (strategic orientation/portfolio design/implementation of core and initiative areas); on the other hand, it should be made accessible to implementing organisations, civil society organisations, partners and other donors in a targeted manner, for example in the form of specialist conferences.

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9. ANNEX

9.1 Evaluation matrix

Evaluation questions	Assessment criteria	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data/Interview partners	OECD-DAC criteria
1. To what extent do the strategies, planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation of German development cooperation result in successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?				Relevance, effectiveness
1.1 To what extent do BMZ strategies on gender equality and peace and security reflect the requirements that ensue from the gender-conflict nexus?	BMZ strategies reflect commitments that the German government has entered into under multilateral agreements. BMZ strategies make reference to challenges for gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts and make provision for addressing gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests as part of German development cooperation.	Literature and document analysis	BMZ strategies: Gender Equality, Development Policy Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016–2020, Development for Peace and Security, Strategies on Transitional Development Assistance of 2013 and 2020 National guidelines: German Federal Government policy guidelines and accompanying operations manual International agreements: “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda (UNSCR 1325), UNSCR 2467, NAP I (2012–2016), NAP II (2017–2020) Answers to parliamentary questions (“minor interpellations”) on the strategies of the BMZ (e.g. Bundesregierung 2020b)	Relevance, coherence
1.2 To what extent do gender mainstreaming strategies, planning processes, guidelines and analytical tools lead to specific gender-related activities in post-conflict contexts?	Guidelines and instruments contain challenges and requirements for gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts. The recommendations and analytical tools relevant to gender and conflict are reflected in the preliminary appraisal, the module and programme proposals (module proposal or – the designation formerly used – offer; modification offer; programme proposal; appraisal report; module proposal) as well as the operational planning.	Document analysis Interviews Focus group discussions	BMZ standards and analytical tools (e.g. on planning procedures, brief politico-economic analyses) Both implementation organisations’ guidelines and analytical tools (e.g. Safeguards+Gender management system, gender analyses [GIZ], ZGBAs [KfW], PCAs) Country strategies, preliminary appraisals, module and programme proposals (module proposal or – the designation formerly used – offer; modification offer; programme proposal; appraisal report; module proposal), operational plans and monitoring data BMZ in Germany: BMZ country officers, “Human rights, gender equality and inclusion” division, “Peace and security, disaster risk management” division, “Tackling the root causes of displacement” division	Effectiveness, coherence, efficiency

Evaluation questions	Assessment criteria	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data/Interview partners	OECD-DAC criteria
			Implementing organisations in Germany: Gender Desk, SP Gender, SP Peace and Security, country officers Actors in the partner country: Implementing organisation country directorates, implementing organisation officers responsible for contracts and cooperation, gender focal points	
1.3 To what extent do the projects have effects with regard to gender equality in post-conflict contexts?	The activities take account of the target groups' gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests in a context-sensitive manner.	Document analysis	Monitoring data, project progress reports, evaluations	Effectiveness
		Focus group discussions Interviews Storytelling	Representatives of the target groups, civil society organisations, local experts, political partners, project staff, gender focal points, target groups	
1.4 To what extent do processes of gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts facilitate learning?	The monitoring and evaluation system supplies information on gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts that is systematically used for learning. Formal and informal feedback mechanisms exist and are used for learning.	Document analysis	Monitoring data, project progress reports, evaluations	Relevance, effectiveness, sustainability
		Interviews	BMZ in Germany: BMZ country officers, "Human rights, gender equality and inclusion" division, "Peace and security, disaster risk management" division, "Tackling the root causes of displacement" division Implementing organisations in Germany: Gender Desk, SP Gender, SP Peace and Security, country information managers (GIZ), country representatives, project managers (KfW) Actors in the partner country: embassy-based economic cooperation officers, ⁷⁵ implementing organisation country directorates, implementing organisation officers responsible for contracts and cooperation, gender focal points, project staff, political and implementing partners	

⁷⁵ An economic cooperation officer works in the partner country for the Federal Foreign Office, on secondment from the BMZ.

Evaluation questions	Assessment criteria	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data/Interview partners	OECD-DAC criteria
1.5 To what extent are the human rights principles of “participation”, “non-discrimination” and “do no harm” taken into account in the implementation of projects in post-conflict contexts?	Selection of the target groups is non-discriminatory. Actual practice reflects the principles of participation and non-discrimination.	Document analysis	BMZ standards and analytical tools (e.g. on planning procedures, brief politico-economic analysis) Implementation organisations’ guidelines and analytical tools (e.g. Safeguards+Gender management system, gender analyses [GIZ], ZGBAs [KfW], PCAs)	Relevance, sustainability
		Interviews Focus group discussions	Actors in the partner country: embassy-based economic cooperation officers, implementing organisation country directorates, implementing organisation officers responsible for contracts and cooperation, gender focal points, project staff, political and implementing partners, target groups	
1.6 To what extent are there safeguards against sexual misconduct in German development cooperation projects?	Existing mechanisms are known and accessible to the target groups. Appropriate awareness-raising and trainings are taking place for staff.	Document analysis	Documents on safeguards, code of conduct etc. Answer to a parliamentary question (“minor interpellation”) on this issue (cf. Bundesregierung 2018)	Effectiveness
		Interviews	BMZ and implementing organisations in Germany: country officers, staff responsible for safeguards against sexual harassment Actors in the partner country: embassy-based economic cooperation officers, implementing organisation country directorates, implementing organisation officers responsible for contracts and cooperation, gender focal points, project staff	
1.7 To what extent does the BMZ portfolio reflect the gender-conflict nexus?	The portfolio enables gender- and conflict-specific practical needs and strategic interests to be addressed. The portfolio is addressed to post-conflict contexts. Proportion of GE1 and GE2 and PS1 and PS2 markers The modalities/programmes used in post-conflict contexts	Portfolio analysis	BMZ data/CRS data	Relevance, effectiveness
		Interviews	BMZ in Germany: “Human rights, gender equality and inclusion” division, “Peace and security, disaster risk management” division, “Tackling the root causes of displacement” division Implementing organisations in Germany: Gender Desk, SP Gender, SP Peace and Security, country managers (GIZ), country representatives, project managers (KfW)	

Evaluation questions	Assessment criteria	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data/Interview partners	OECD-DAC criteria
			Actors in the partner country: embassy-based economic cooperation officers, implementing organisation country directorates	
2. To what extent do organisational and contextual factors influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?				Effectiveness
2.1 To what extent do the organisational factors “individuals”, “institutionalisation”, “gender climate” and “resources” influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?	exploratory (hierarchy of influencing factors, trade-offs and synergies between influencing factors)	<p>Document analysis</p> <p>Interviews Focus group discussions</p>	<p>Evaluations</p> <p>BMZ/implementing organisations: official planning documents and guidelines</p> <p>BMZ/implementing organisations: documents and analytical tools</p> <p>BMZ in Germany: “Human rights, gender equality and inclusion” division, “Peace and security, disaster risk management” division, “Tackling the root causes of displacement” division</p> <p>Implementing organisations in Germany: Gender Desk, SP Gender, SP Peace and Security, country managers (GIZ), country representatives, project managers (KfW)</p> <p>Actors in the partner country: embassy-based economic cooperation officers, implementing organisation country directorates, implementing organisation officers responsible for contracts and cooperation, gender focal points, project staff, political and implementing partners</p>	Effectiveness

Evaluation questions	Assessment criteria	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data/Interview partners	OECD-DAC criteria
<p>2.2 To what extent does the post-conflict context influence successful gender mainstreaming?</p>	Exploratory	Interviews Focus group discussions	<p>BMZ in Germany: “Human rights, gender equality and inclusion” division, “Peace and security, disaster risk management” division, “Tackling the root causes of displacement” division</p> <p>Implementing organisations in Germany: Gender Desk, SP Gender, SP Peace and Security, country managers (GIZ), country representatives, project managers (KfW)</p> <p>Actors in the partner country: embassy-based economic cooperation officers, implementing organisation country directorates, implementing organisation officers responsible for contracts and cooperation, gender focal points, project staff, political and implementing partners</p>	Relevance, effectiveness
<p>2.3 To what extent are there potential trade-offs or synergies between “supporting gender equality” and “peacebuilding”, which influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?</p>	Exploratory	Literature Interviews Focus group discussions	<p>GIZ and KfW evaluations</p> <p>BMZ in Germany: “Human rights, gender equality and inclusion” division, “Peace and security, disaster risk management” division, “Tackling the root causes of displacement” division</p> <p>Implementing organisations in Germany: Gender Desk, SP Gender, SP Peace and Security, country managers (GIZ), country representatives, project managers (KfW)</p> <p>Actors in the partner country: embassy-based economic cooperation officers, implementing organisation country directorates, implementing organisation officers responsible for contracts and cooperation, gender focal points, project staff, political and implementing partners, donors, gender working group, national and international civil society organisations, local gender and peace experts</p>	Effectiveness, coherence

Evaluation questions	Assessment criteria	Methods of data collection and analysis	Data/Interview partners	OECD-DAC criteria
3. To what extent do the stakeholders involved (BMZ, implementing organisations, political partners and implementing partners) influence successful gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?				Effectiveness, coherence
3.1 To what extent do the processes <i>theoretically</i> allow the stakeholders involved to influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?	Opportunities exist for the different stakeholders to contribute their wishes and ideas.	Document analysis	BMZ/implementing organisations: official planning documents and guidelines BMZ/implementing organisations: documents and analytical tools	Effectiveness, coherence
		Interviews	BMZ in Germany: BMZ country officers, “Human rights, gender equality and inclusion” division, “Peace and security, disaster risk management” division, “Tackling the root causes of displacement” division Implementing organisations in Germany: Gender Desk, SP Gender, SP Peace and Security, country managers (GIZ), country representatives, project managers (KfW) Actors in the partner country: embassy-based economic cooperation officers, implementing organisation country directorates, implementing organisation officers responsible for contracts and cooperation, gender focal points, project staff, political and implementing partners, representatives of target groups, civil society organisations	
3.2 To what extent do the stakeholders involved <i>actually</i> influence gender mainstreaming in post-conflict contexts?	Exploratory	Interviews	BMZ in Germany: BMZ country officers, “Human rights, gender equality and inclusion” division, “Peace and security, disaster risk management” division, “Tackling the root causes of displacement” division Implementing organisations in Germany: Gender Desk, SP Gender, SP Peace and Security, country managers (GIZ), country representatives, project managers (KfW) Actors in the partner country: embassy-based economic cooperation officers, implementing organisation country directorates, implementing organisation officers responsible for contracts and cooperation, gender focal points, project staff, political and implementing partners	Effectiveness, coherence

9.2 Definition of the post-conflict context

The “post-conflict context” is not a clearly defined term. For the purpose of delimiting its object of study, the evaluation defines the status of a post-conflict context in terms of two criteria:

- a country or a region within a country has been affected by a massive outbreak of violence or war (intensity)
- the last outbreak of widespread violence occurred (taking 2018 as the baseline year) at least three but no more than 18 years previously (time)

Aspects to consider when operationalising the term “conflict intensity” are the following:

1. Regional perspective: conflicts occur predominantly within a state and either affect an entire country or a localised region. Following the current academic discourse (De Juan, 2012; Shepherd et al., 2016), the number of combat deaths is aggregated at the first subnational level.
2. Relative perspective: conflict intensity is not determined solely by the absolute number of combat deaths, but is defined as the number of combat deaths per 100 inhabitants at the subnational level. The higher the intensity of a conflict, the higher the probability that social roles and norms will be disrupted as a consequence of the conflict. However, there is also a concurrent increase in the probability of a resurgence of the conflict. This in turn limits the options for working transformatively in development cooperation. Given the supranational nature of this evaluation, the focus on conflict intensity per 100,000 inhabitants is also important in order to establish better comparability across countries.
3. Categorical perspective: in order to differentiate categorically between conflict regions “in (severe) conflict” versus “not in (severe) conflict”, the first step was to apply the threshold value of 1,000 battle deaths (Doyle and Sambanis, 2000; Quinn et al., 2007; Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 2001; Walter, 2004) in all subnational regions. This is usually taken as the yardstick for defining a “war” (Pettersson and Wallensteen, 2015). Next, the conflict intensity (number of battle deaths per 100,000 inhabitants) for these identified conflict regions was calculated, and the first quartile taken as a threshold value for dividing the subnational regions into conflict and non-conflict regions. The calculated threshold value for differentiating between conflict and non-conflict was 48 battle deaths per 100 inhabitants per calendar year.

The temporal dimension of the definition of a post-conflict context is rooted in the assumption that the probability of a resurgence of violence is particularly high in the first five years after a conflict ends (Fiedler and Mroß, 2017; Langer and Brown, 2016; Shepherd et al., 2016). Moreover, particularly in the first two to three years after a conflict, a country’s absorption capacities are limited (Collier, 2008). It is therefore assumed that development cooperation can only commence effectively after three years. Hence, for a setting to be categorised as a post-conflict context, the last major outbreak of violence must have occurred at least three years prior to the year-2018 baseline. As time passes, there is a decline in the significance of the conflict for the transformation of social structures and norms. So although the effects of intense conflicts can persist for a long time afterwards, this evaluation only considers conflicts that occurred a maximum of 18 years previously (Fiedler and Mroß, 2017; Langer and Brown, 2016; Shepherd et al., 2016; Collier, 2008).

Applying this definition to partner countries of the BMZ⁷⁶ narrows down the selection of case study countries to 11 post-conflict countries. Numbers of battle deaths were calculated using data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Global Version 18.1 (Sundberg and Melander, 2013). Population figures for the subnational units were obtained from the Socioeconomic Data and Application Center at Columbia University (Center for International Earth Science Information Network-CIESIN-Columbia University et al., 2005).

⁷⁶ At the time of selection, the BMZ was cooperating with 50 developing countries (BMZ, 2017).

9.3 Evaluation schedule

Time frame	Tasks
07/2018	Reference group meeting to discuss the concept paper
08/2018 – 03/2019	Production of the inception report
03/2019	Implementation of the pilot case study – Sri Lanka
04/2019	Reference group meeting to discuss the inception report
06/2019	Implementation of the Colombia case study
10/2019	Implementation of the Liberia case study
11/2019	Implementation of the Pakistan case study
05/2019 – 01/2020	Data collection in Germany
02/2020 – 05/2020	Analysis and synthesis of findings
06/2020	Reference group meeting to discuss the initial findings and draft recommendations
06-10/2020	Production of the evaluation report
10/2020	Reference group meeting to discuss the draft report
04/2021	Conclusion of the evaluation after layout and printing

9.4 Evaluation team and contributors

Core team	Function
Dr Sabine Brüntrup-Seidemann	Evaluator – Team leader
Verena Gantner	Evaluator
Dr Angela Heucher	Evaluator
Ida Wiborg	Evaluator
Caroline Orth	Project administrator

Contributors	Function and field of responsibility
Dr Kim Lücking	Senior evaluator – Team leader (until 11/2017)
Dr Hanne Roggemann	Evaluator (04-05/2018)
Lena Ahrens	Evaluator (until 12/2018)
Solveig Gleser	Evaluator (until 01/2019)
Dr Raphael Nawrotzki	Evaluator (until 10/2020)
Cynthia Carrillo	External consultant (Colombia)
Adriana Gaviria Dugand	External consultant (Colombia)
Dr Catalina Nossa Ospina	External consultant (Colombia)
Oscar Bloh	External consultant (Liberia)
Laura Golakeh	External consultant (Liberia)
Dr Zahid Ahmed	External consultant (Pakistan)
Sidra Minhas	External consultant (Pakistan)
Monica Alfred	External consultant (Sri Lanka)
Dr Minna Thaheer	External consultant (Sri Lanka)
Alina Gerstenberger	External consultant
Dr Elin Bjarnegård	External peer reviewer
Dr Carlo Koos	External peer reviewer
Helge Roxin	Internal peer reviewer
Dr Ellen D. Lewis	External consultant (ISE4GEMs)
Dr Anne Stephens	External consultant (ISE4GEMs)
Leidy Kirley Rivera	External consultant (ISE4GEMs)
Nathalia Muñoz	External consultant (ISE4GEMs)
Nataly Salas-Rodríguez	DEval ECD team (Costa Rica)
Nicole Aretz	Intern
María Cristina García Marín	Intern
Christian Kloss Rojas	Intern
Lena Köhler	Intern

Alexandra Pfeifer	Intern
Surafel-Amanuel Abraha	Student assistant
Stella Köchling	Student assistant
Franziska Pradel	Student assistant