



GERMAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN SUPPORT OF DECENTRALISATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Evaluation report

Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The decentralisation of state functions in countries of the Global South has long been a relevant issue in international development cooperation (DC). At its core is a transfer of power, responsibilities, financial resources and taxation competences from the central state to the subnational level, guided by the principle of subsidiarity. Almost all states in Sub-Saharan Africa have undergone various forms of decentralisation over the past 30 years. Many of them have received sustained support through measures implemented under German DC.

Over time, both the decentralisation measures themselves and the support provided for them through German DC in Sub-Saharan Africa have changed considerably, reflecting a shift in thematic priorities. These ranged from efforts to streamline central government bureaucracies under structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s to the establishment of new subnational institutions and competences as part of state reforms during the democratisation wave of the 1990s and 2000s.

In recent years, however, progress in decentralisation has stagnated in many states in Sub-Saharan Africa. The transfer of competences to subnational institutions has been halted in most states, while there are considerable recentralisation tendencies in others.

As thematic priorities shifted, the objectives pursued by German DC in supporting decentralisation in Sub-Saharan Africa have also changed over time – from the fight against poverty and increased citizen participation through to contributions to private sector development. **A consistent focal point of German DC measures has remained the establishment of a service-oriented, capable and efficient state at the subnational level that involves its citizens and can contribute to both improved socio-economic and more democratic development.** To this end, various context-specific measures have been pursued to strengthen administrative, fiscal and political decentralisation.

During implementation over time, however, it became apparent that DC stakeholders and African governments do not share a common understanding of decentralisation. Central governments in Sub-Saharan Africa often formally support the transfer of competences and finances to subnational entities, yet many simultaneously seek to assert their own interests and maintain power through the respective decentralisation processes. This gives rise to a recurring tension: while German DC stakeholders clearly commit to political and fiscal decentralisation – and to broader mandates for subnational entities – central governments often prioritise maintaining control over the state territory.

Given the duration and the consistently high volume of German DC support measures, it was essential to conduct an initial comprehensive evaluation of this thematic field. Decentralisation measures to date have been examined almost exclusively with a focus on individual interventions and primarily in connection with other topics, such as poverty or conflict. A higher-level evaluation that also takes into account the sometimes far-reaching contextual changes of recent decades in Sub-Saharan Africa has so far been lacking. The present evaluation seeks to address this gap in evidence.

In contrast to the sometimes fragmented evaluation coverage of decentralisation measures by the state implementing organisations (IOs), the body of academic literature on this thematic field is extensive and well differentiated. Nevertheless, its focus lies less on DC measures than on the effects of decentralisation processes that have already been implemented. The academic findings point to many mixed – and in some cases even negative – effects of decentralisation, calling into question the widely held assumption that decentralisation inherently adds value. At the same time, the studies are often country-specific and limited to particular aspects, which restricts their validity and generalisability.

Evaluation subject, objectives and purpose

In light of the absence to date of a comprehensive evaluation of the field of decentralisation, the scope of this evaluation is defined broadly, extending from the 1990s to present day and spanning the entirety of Sub-Saharan Africa. In substantive terms, the evaluation encompasses a wide range of decentralisation measures, from core areas of support for decentralisation – such as capacity building and the financial resourcing of subnational entities – to sector-specific measures. The main limitations of the evaluation relate to regional and multilateral measures, which are examined only marginally, and to the less detailed consideration of the period prior to the 2000s. Nevertheless, the evaluation seeks in particular to trace long-term trajectories of decentralisation measures. Given its long-standing and prominent support, this thematic field is especially well suited to examining learning processes within German DC.

Against this backdrop of the broad time frame and the wide range of decentralisation measures in Africa, the evaluation pursues two main objectives:

- **First, the evaluation is assessing the efficacy of German DC support measures for decentralisation in African partner countries.** Through a systematic analysis and an in-depth assessment of German engagement in decentralisation, it aims to address existing gaps in knowledge and identify potential areas for improvement. Particular emphasis is placed on assessing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and sustainability, as well as the impact, of German DC support measures for decentralisation.

- **Second, the evaluation seeks to contribute to the identification of potential areas for improvement in the learning capacity of German DC, based on the findings on efficacy and the learning experiences identified in the field of decentralisation.**

The (development) policy changes described in African countries raise the question of the extent to which German DC has taken these changes into account and adapted its decentralisation approach accordingly. To this end, points in time and phases of potential change were identified, and evidence of possible adjustments in the strategies and portfolio of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the state IOs it commissions were collected and analysed.

With both components, the evaluation seeks to contribute to the strategic further development of the field by the BMZ and, subsequently, to improved implementation by the two state implementing organisations – the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). The addressee for the strategic further development is the BMZ, ranging from management level through division 210, responsible for coordinating operational cooperation with Africa, to the *governance* policy division, G12.

Evaluation questions

The evaluation addresses two overarching questions: 1. To what extent has German bilateral DC support for decentralisation efforts in African states been successful? This question is examined on the basis of the criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2021). 2. To what extent has German DC proven to be a “learning system” that takes relevant contextual factors and changes into account?

These considerations give rise to the following evaluation questions (EQs):

To what extent has German bilateral DC support for decentralisation efforts in African states been successful?

Evaluation Question 1: To what extent is German bilateral DC support for decentralisation efforts in African countries relevant? (Relevance)

Evaluation Question 2: To what extent is German bilateral DC support for decentralisation efforts in African countries internally coherent over time? (Internal coherence)

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent is German bilateral DC for decentralisation efforts in African countries coordinated with other donors within partner countries, (both conceptually and operationally)? (external coherence)

Evaluation Question 4: To what extent is German DC support for partner countries' decentralisation efforts effective? (Effectiveness and impact)

Evaluation Question 5: To what extent are the effects of German DC support sustainable? (Sustainability)

Evaluation Question 6: Which factors influence the efficiency of specific project types, and which sets of impact areas and mechanisms prove to be efficient? (Efficiency)

German DC as a “learning system”

Evaluation Question 7: To what extent has German DC proven to be a “learning system” that takes relevant contextual factors and changes into account?

Evaluation design and methods

A theory-based approach was selected for the evaluation. First, a generic causal logic for the wide range of decentralisation measures was developed based on strategy documents, expert interviews, workshops with members of the reference group, and an analysis of the German DC portfolio. Second, (development) policy changes over time that may have influenced the nature of decentralisation measures were traced.

The evaluation draws primarily on four analytical methods to address the evaluation questions:

1. A portfolio analysis of German DC, which serves to identify and delimit the scope of the evaluation. This is particularly important given the diversity of this thematic field, as the DC portfolio does not clearly predefine the scope of the evaluation.
2. An artificial intelligence (AI)-supported synthesis of global academic literature on this thematic field, complemented by an in-depth qualitative literature review. Both are used to assess whether the theory of change (ToC) is empirically supported and to identify gaps in knowledge.
3. An (AI-supported) evaluation synthesis of published evaluations conducted by the state IOs on decentralisation measures in Sub-Saharan Africa.
4. Five in-depth country case studies in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mozambique, Zambia and Senegal. These serve to conduct a theory-based review of the conceptual validity of the reconstructed causal logic and to identify new causal hypotheses.

The combination of these approaches enables not only the triangulation of evidence across different data sources, but also the complementary use of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Results

1) To what extent has German bilateral DC support for decentralisation efforts in African states been successful?

Relevance

German support measures for decentralisation are generally aligned with formal strategies and needs in partner countries and operate in a development policy-relevant field. At the same time, in their basic orientation towards more comprehensive decentralisation, they often do not fully reflect the understanding of partner governments, which primarily envisage a deconcentration of the state involving only limited transfers of mandates and financial resources to the local level. As a result, the measures are to be assessed as largely relevant. In principle, the measures target development policy-relevant reform areas in partner countries, although the academic evidence that decentralisation per se contributes to socio-economic development or the strengthening of democratic structures is mixed. In formal terms, the measures are almost without exception aligned with the strategies, priorities and needs of the partner countries. Project objectives in particular are often explicitly in the interest of partner countries and are highly valued. Substantively, however, the often limited political interest of central governments to relinquish power and resources means that key political and legislative framework conditions for the implementation of relevant measures in an otherwise development policy-relevant field are not put in place. The analysis of the academic literature in this thematic field indicates that this tension constrains not only the impact contributions of German DC, but also those of other cooperation partner countries.

The conflict of interest between German DC representatives and partner governments with regard to overarching political objectives has not been resolved over time and became increasingly visible after initial interim milestones had been reached from the late 2000s onwards: In almost all countries, decentralisation processes supported by German DC initially achieved not only administrative deconcentration, but also limited transfers of political mandates and financial resources.

While German DC has generally continued to adhere to elements of more far-reaching political decentralisation, such developments appear not to be feasible in most countries. To date, the German side has not found a strategic way of dealing with this characteristic but difficult-to-resolve tension. Adjustments to the lack of willingness to pursue political decentralisation – in the form of a retreat to the subnational level, for example – are frequently observed at project level, only rarely at country level, and not at all at the overarching strategic level.

Coherence

Overall, German support for decentralisation measures is internally and externally coherent. Measures are broadly complementary, implemented through a division of labour, and adaptively tailored to country-specific contexts. Internal coherence is achieved primarily at project level. The absence of an overarching programmatic strategy in this thematic field partially reduces coherence and has also been taken into account in the assessment of relevance. Within the German DC portfolio, there are no conflicts of objectives with other sectors. Coordination generally takes place, and synergies are used selectively – particularly in priority regions and pilot municipalities. Externally, coherence with other donors has fallen short of the previously high levels following the withdrawal of individual partners and declining budget support. Nevertheless, Germany continues to play a leading and well-regarded role within the international donor community in this thematic field.

Efficacy (effectiveness and impact)

German support measures for decentralisation are largely effective in making an impact at local level. In particular, results of varying magnitude can be demonstrated with regard to improvements in the resource endowment of municipal authorities, increased political participation at local level, the introduction of participatory planning processes, accountability, and improved service delivery at subnational level. Over time, measures in these areas have formed the core of German support.

A key feature of decentralisation as a thematic field is that threshold levels need to be attained in certain outcome areas before effectiveness can be achieved in others (impact sets). For example, accountability at subnational level only increases to a meaningful extent if subnational entities also have adequate financial resources and sufficient staffing capacity.

The analysis of higher-level outcomes reveals a diverse picture. In some cases, improvements can be observed in the performance of subnational authorities and in the provision of services; however, these outcomes are rarely broad-based and seldom demonstrable over longer periods of time. Other higher-level outcomes of the ToC, such as greater autonomy in local decision-making or increased political participation, were often observed in the early years of support, but subsequently stagnated or, in some cases, even declined.

Contributions to overarching development policy outcomes (impact) are only rarely demonstrable. While individual components, such as the introduction of performance-based funds, may have contributed to the socio-economic development of many countries, such contributions are difficult to measure. With few exceptions, decentralisation support measures have neither demonstrably reduced conflict nor led to the establishment of legal frameworks that are increasingly conducive to decentralisation. Overall contributions to the economic and social development of individual countries or to democratisation are only rarely evident. In several case study countries, decentralisation processes have in some instances even been used to curtail the political participation of subnational entities in favour of stronger control mechanisms exercised by central government (recentralisation tendencies in Ghana, Mozambique and, most recently, Burkina Faso). A potential contribution to economic development through performance-based funds disbursed to subnational entities appears plausible; however, given the large number of interacting variables, such contributions cannot be measured precisely or attributed with certainty.

Sustainability

The effects of German support measures for decentralisation are rarely sustainable. Institutional and legal anchoring of decentralisation through German contributions has been achieved only to a limited extent and not on a broad scale. A contribution by German support measures to improving the baseline conditions for the capacities and resources of subnational authorities can, however, be partially demonstrated. Overall, the sustainability of the measures is severely constrained, primarily because central government initiatives to provide the necessary resources for municipal authorities are largely lacking, as are the legal and institutional framework conditions for comprehensive decentralisation.

In almost all supported countries, a legislative framework for allocation formulas governing financial transfers was successfully established; however, the actual transfer volumes are consistently insufficient to equip subnational entities adequately in relation to the responsibilities assigned to them. In some cases, sustained engagement in legislative processes and decentralisation strategies also helped to foster a legal framework more supportive of decentralisation. Overall, however, most countries continue to lack adequate institutional anchoring, especially in the area of political decentralisation.

While capacity development is often successful in pilot regions that receive long-term support, efforts to establish self-sustaining structures regularly fall short. Institutions specifically intended to strengthen the capacities of municipal staff also generally remain dependent on external financing. Measures aimed at improving the locally generated revenues of subnational authorities are successful at times, but not sustainably across the board. Successes are observed primarily in results at local level relating to the introduction and adoption of processes, manuals or computer software.

Efficiency

A meaningful assessment of the efficiency of the identified portfolio as a whole is not possible, given the complexity of the evaluation object and the considerable diversity of the findings on outcomes. As a result, sources of inefficiency and potential efficiency gains in German DC measures supporting decentralisation efforts can only be identified at an aggregated level. These include opportunities to improve system-wide learning based on many years of experience in supporting decentralisation, as well as the bilateralisation of German DC over the evaluation period in a thematic field in which Germany now cooperates with only a small number of partners.

2) German DC as a “learning system”

Overall, the objectives of German support measures for decentralisation have adapted to major development policy shifts. From the democratisation wave of the 1990s onwards, the emphasis was initially on building subsidiarity-based, functioning state institutions aligned with principles of good governance and local participation. With the introduction of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the early 2000s, decentralisation measures were more strongly oriented towards the fight against poverty and vulnerable local communities. The effectiveness debate and the Paris–Accra–Busan Agenda (2005–2011) placed greater emphasis on partner-country ownership. As a result, decentralisation was often implemented as part of the performance assessment frameworks of general budget support and as a governance component of jointly agreed reforms. This embedding within a political dialogue between development partners and partner countries came to an end with the phasing-out of budget support in the 2010s. Since then, a clear break can be observed. Many development partners have withdrawn from the field of decentralisation, and the multilateral dialogue formats have not been replaced. At the same time, more recent developments point to a growing influence of authoritarian systems of government and a decline in democratic forms of governance. As a result, two former cornerstones of engagement in the field of decentralisation are eroding:

multilaterally coordinated approaches and the basic orientation of African governments towards the expansion of democratic institutions and rules. No strategic response to either development is discernible on the part of (German) DC in this thematic field to date.

Adjustments in response to changes in national contexts take place primarily at the level of individual projects; however, these adjustments have not been translated into longer-term country strategies or overarching strategies for the thematic field. In all case study countries, sometimes substantial interventions by the respective central governments became apparent over the course of implementation. These affected the macro, meso and micro levels of support measures (national, regional and local levels), ranging from the withdrawal of previously agreed measures to establish a conducive legal and financial framework for decentralisation, through unilateral changes to fund disbursement criteria, to the inappropriate adoption of individual project components. A pattern emerges in the way such implementation setbacks are addressed: only in rare cases did they result in political dialogue at higher level, and only then when problems arose at the meso or micro level of implementation. As a rule, persistent project-specific disillusionment with the respective central government led to a temporary refocusing of measures on support for subnational entities. There was no reflection on mutual expectations or approaches.

In BMZ strategies in the field of decentralisation, internal and external evidence is used only to a limited extent. Some of the major development policy changes described above were informed by academic evidence, as illustrated in particular by the effectiveness debate and the related introduction of new financial transfer mechanisms in the 2000s. In this sense, the adaptations within the thematic field permit an indirect conclusion that evidence has been used by German DC. Since the end of the 2000s, however, there has been no systematic, topic-specific processing of evidence, as reflected not least in the absence of a regional or global thematic strategy or a comparable BMZ concept.

Moreover, implementation experience from the past two decades has not been sufficiently processed. The thematic field has since ceased to be treated as a distinct sector, with the consequence that the otherwise standard substantive support provided by the state IOs through sector programmes has also largely fallen away. Such conceptual support now exists only under the umbrella of the Governance sector programme (GIZ) and the Governance competence centre (KfW). Furthermore, decentralisation measures are generally “under-evaluated” even at project level, and any extrapolation of project-specific evidence over this period is no longer possible. Learning formats that would enable exchange on accumulated evidence – for example at departmental level within the ministry and between regional divisions – have been scaled back.

Conclusions

Driven by the democratisation wave in Africa, German DC has sought to contribute to comprehensive decentralisation in African partner countries since the 1990s. While German DC addressed all three dimensions of decentralisation – administrative, fiscal and political – most partner governments primarily pursued administrative decentralisation. Questions concerning the transfer of political mandates to subnational authorities and their adequate financial resourcing initially remained unresolved. Nevertheless, this phase was characterised by considerable momentum, during which most African partner countries oriented themselves towards the perceived success models of Western democracies.

During the implementation of specific decentralisation measures, however, it quickly became apparent that dominant central states shaped by colonial legacies, while formally taking initial steps towards a framework conducive to decentralisation, simultaneously sought to avoid any loss of control over subnational offices, mandates and finances. As a result, political resistance and the lack of adequate financial resourcing for subnational authorities in the 2000s led German DC primarily to maintain a strategic focus on reforms of

state organisation law and to concentrate on supporting financial transfers to the subnational level as well as strengthening locally generated revenues.

Since that time, a strategic and conceptual orientation framework has been lacking in the field of decentralisation.

Systematic and strategic learning beyond individual countries and projects has not taken place to a sufficient extent for two decades. While many of the adjustments made within individual projects have been implemented carefully and in a context-appropriate manner, they simultaneously reveal that persistent implementation challenges have not led to a questioning of underlying assumptions and theories of change. Instead, follow-up projects have often responded to blocking on the part of partner governments at national level by focusing engagement on the local level.

Political ownership on the part of central governments in Sub-Saharan Africa for decentralisation reforms relating to state organisation law is an important precondition for effective support but is rarely sufficiently present.

In addition to political steps towards decentralisation that were not implemented over time in all case study countries (such as the absence of elections at subnational level or the lack of legal anchoring of decentralisation measures), there were also, in some cases, pronounced instances of political interference by central governments during the implementation of DC measures. While such resistance and setbacks are to be expected in the context of comprehensive reforms of government and administrative systems, as already anticipated in the BMZ decentralisation concept of 2002 (BMZ, 2002), the project-level focus on addressing these challenges has left a strategic approach unaddressed.

At the same time, international developments in recent years have made it more difficult for German DC to generate the political momentum for change required in the field of decentralisation. Firstly, autocratic system alternatives such as China have gained relevance as development partners

in the Sub-Saharan African context. China itself illustrates how extensive fiscal and administrative decentralisation can coexist with authoritarian stability, provided that the central leadership retains control over key levers of power. In this way, decentralisation can contribute to economic development but may also – at least temporarily – reinforce authoritarian control at all levels. Against the backdrop of decentralisation processes based on Western models stalling in many contexts, such alternative implementation options have generated interest among many African elites. Secondly, the growing geopolitical relevance of African states has reinforced the self-image of central governments as partners in bilateral development cooperation. Thirdly, cooperation relationships have increasingly been influenced by a stronger focus on partnership, emerging initially from effectiveness debates in DC and later from postcolonial discourses.

Against this backdrop, political dialogue among development partners is also more challenging, and efforts to promote dialogue among different societal actors aimed at advancing the far-reaching institutional change considered necessary by German DC encounter limits, too.

The evaluation also shows, however, that greater transfers of competences and mandates did occur at certain points and in isolated cases. In some instances, significant increases in funding at subnational level can be observed, as can an expansion of responsibilities. Despite extensive support measures by German DC, such windows of political opportunity on the part of partner governments were not converted into political capital. In addition to greater flexibility and more rapid capacity for action, this would have required a strategic orientation framework capable of identifying and making use of such opportunities.

A strategic orientation framework would need to include differentiation by country types and assessments of the state of decentralisation, reflecting the nature of cooperation to date. In the former BMZ priority area of good governance, different levels of governance in partner countries were already distinguished and cooperation was aligned accordingly. No comparable categorisation has taken place in the field of decentralisation. As a result, authoritarian systems that clearly allow only very limited reforms in the thematic field are supported through decentralisation measures in a manner comparable to more democratic systems in which far-reaching reforms are emerging. In concrete terms, this results in governments that are willing to reform being treated in much the same way as reform-averse governments with regard to decentralisation support. This, in turn, provides only limited incentives for reform.

German DC has repeatedly made justifiable country- and project-specific adjustments, which have often at least enabled the achievement of objectives at local level. Against the backdrop of increasing autocratisation tendencies and related fragility in many African countries, such adjustments will continue to be necessary, but will be less sufficient than ever to shape the thematic field. Higher-level adjustments within the field have generally been made on the basis of new DC priority settings, with decentralisation, as a long-established thematic field, being largely aligned with these new priorities without in-depth consideration of the findings on outcomes.

The absence of an overarching impact orientation led to an increasing lack of clarity in the decentralisation portfolio. As a result, the scope of impact was progressively expanded, as is also reflected in the causal logic of this evaluation. Furthermore, very different types of measures – ranging from those aimed at improving the legislative framework to the provision of basic services in fragile contexts – have come to be subsumed under decentralisation. Linkages with sectoral development at subnational level (decentralisation in the water sector, the education sector, etc.) have also meant that potentially more than half of the German portfolio could be attributed to decentralisation.

In recent years, the focus of German support measures has been primarily on outcomes in the social and economic spheres, while links to the strengthening of democracy have diminished over time. Although this shift did not result from a strategic decision, it reflects the central state-dominated character of partner countries and the erosion of democratic rules on the continent in recent years. Against this backdrop, the strategic question arises as to the extent to which elements of democracy promotion – and increasingly also democracy protection – should continue to constitute a cornerstone of German support for decentralisation processes in the context of promoting vertical separation of powers.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Based on the findings of the present evaluation, the BMZ should undertake a conceptual and strategic review of the thematic field of decentralisation – for example in the form of a thematic strategy – and align the existing portfolio accordingly. The revised approach should differentiate between country types on the basis of governance assessments and previous cooperation experience in the field. Such differentiation would allow for the prioritisation of partner countries while maintaining flexibility in concrete implementation. A possible basis for differentiation derived from this evaluation would be as follows:

- a. Countries that understand decentralisation as a comprehensive reform project and that, as value-based partners, continue to pursue a transparent and jointly agreed reform agenda. These countries should receive extensive support.
- b. Countries characterised by a strong central state and limited ownership of political decentralisation. In these contexts, greater emphasis should be placed on political dialogue. Pockets of effectiveness should also be identified and supported.
- c. Countries falling under category “b” that simultaneously display autocratic tendencies and have more frequently failed to comply with agreements in the field. In such cases, support for decentralisation processes may be maintained as part of democracy protection where this can plausibly contribute, for example, to strengthening vertical separation of powers. In this context, cooperation with agents of change and the identification and support of civic spaces play an important role.
- d. Countries with high levels of fragility and weak statehood, where the provision of basic services in rural areas takes precedence in support of stabilisation and socio-economic resilience. The more work in such contexts is carried out at a distance from government structures, the greater the need to ensure that these constitute only temporary solutions within the framework of decentralisation measures.

For all countries in categories “b” to “d”, in addition to an adapted form of engagement, the discontinuation of cooperation may also be considered if the level of efficacy achieved to date and expected in the future is deemed insufficient.

Recommendation 2: The state implementing organisations and the BMZ should regularly review the impacts of their decentralisation measures as a basis for cooperation, with a view to strengthening evidence-based management. To this end, efficacy in the thematic field should be reviewed on a regular basis using tailored causal logics and incorporating political and socio-economic context analyses. In addition to the systematic and project-level collection of outcomes, findings should also be aggregated to capture cross-country developments and support overarching, evidence-based management.

Recommendation 3: The BMZ and the state implementing organisations should establish learning formats that are geared towards both concrete implementation implications and the further development of the thematic field beyond individual projects. In this context, findings on outcomes and implementation experience from long-standing cooperation should be brought together on a regular basis. Action is required both in relation to the BMZ's steering function and with regard to GIZ and KfW engaging more proactively with their expertise in the field.

Recommendation 4: The BMZ should seek to strengthen joint donor engagement in the field. Externally set incentives for far-reaching institutional reforms in partner countries are likely to be successful only if they are supported by multiple donors. In this context, the extent to which support for decentralisation could form part of *Team Europe*-approaches, for example in combination with rule-of-law and good governance measures, should be actively examined to increase political leverage.

Recommendation 5: The BMZ should prioritise anchor projects to support decentralisation efforts that address multiple outcome areas – thereby reflecting the mutually reinforcing nature of outcomes within the thematic field – where this is appropriate in the country context (see Recommendation 1). Such anchor projects should, in particular, seek close alignment with other related projects (within German and international development cooperation). Implementation experience from these projects should be incorporated beyond the country level into the further development of country-specific theories of change and the thematic field as a whole.