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# Integrity Guidelines

## **DEval Standards and Guidelines**

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September 2021

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# 1. OUR UNDERSTANDING OF INTEGRITY

## 1.1 DEval's mandate and operating environment

Our institute's central task is the independent and scientifically sound evaluation of measures in German development cooperation (DC). Through the learning and accountability functions of evaluations and, in particular, the transparency of the results of these measures, we strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the development cooperation policy area as a whole. We provide our knowledge to those who are responsible for political and operational decisions in a tailored and applicable way and promote institutional learning as well as evidence-based policy design. In doing so, we support the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and other governmental and non-governmental actors<sup>1</sup> in improving German development cooperation. Furthermore, with our measures for strengthening Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD)<sup>2</sup>, we contribute to ensuring that actors in the partner countries of German development cooperation make greater use of evaluations – among other things for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Being funded by public means, we act in full compliance with the Federal Government's interests. Beyond this, our **understanding of integrity** is fed by three normative areas, as illustrated below.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 1: Our understanding of integrity



<sup>1</sup> The governmental implementing organisations are the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), KfW Development Bank (KfW), the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) and Engagement Global, see the Evaluation guidelines published by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, hereinafter referred to as the 'BMZ'.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the ECD project "Strengthening a Culture of Evaluation and Learning in Latin America with a Global Outlook" (Fomento de una cultura de evaluación y de aprendizaje en América Latina con proyección global, Focelac) promotes development capacities and evidence-based policy design through cooperation with governmental and non-governmental institutions in Costa Rica and other Latin American countries, among other things as a contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

<sup>3</sup> In reality, the three areas overlap at various points and have a number of principles in common, such as data protection and gender equality, which the employees proposed at an institute-wide event in October 2020.

**Compliance:** Compliance is often defined as the practice of obeying rules i.e. to comply with mandatory legal provisions and institutional guidelines. Based on our affiliation with the German Federal Government, these are primarily the Public Corporate Governance Codex, the German Government’s guidelines for preventing corruption, the General Data Protection Regulation of the European Union (GDPR), the German General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG) and the German Federal Equal Opportunities Act (BGleIG). We are also directed by relevant guidelines such as the BMZ evaluation guidelines as well as strategies and the quality features<sup>4</sup> of development cooperation such as human rights standards and the principle of economic efficiency.

**(Professional) Standards:** We are committed to the application of the given evaluation and research standards and regard interdisciplinarity and plurality of methods as well as impartiality and neutrality as the core principles of our work. Our own evaluation standards are explicitly defined as binding minimum standards that allow for deviations only in justified exceptional cases. More specifically, the DEval evaluation standards contain the following criteria:

- Usefulness,
- Evaluability,
- Fairness, independence and integrity
- Precision, scientific character and transparency, as well as
- Comparability.

In addition, to these fundamental standards for our evaluation work, we pertain to the quality standards of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC), Evaluation Society (DeGEval) as well as the German Research Foundation’s Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice<sup>5</sup>.

**Corporate culture:** Our way of working is team-oriented and characterised by appreciation and trust towards all internal and external actors as well as an open feedback culture. We consistently implement principles of equal treatment and gender equality and strive to improve the work-life balance of all our employees. We also view diversity as an opportunity and align our work to the Charta der Vielfalt (German Diversity Charta).<sup>6</sup> We understand intercultural sensitivity as a key component of communication skills. This view is, among other things, supported by the fact that we at DEval share a common interest in development cooperation and the ‘Global South’.

## 1.2 Evaluation ethics and integrity

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Since an evaluation “generally connects with the allocation of resources and distribution of power,”<sup>7</sup> not only every evaluation but also **every evaluation standard has a direct or indirect ethical component**. For example, the DeGEval standard of “fairness”<sup>8</sup> has an immediate and **direct ethical dimension**: “The fairness standards are intended to ensure that in the course of an evaluation all stakeholders are treated with respect and fairness”. Other standards, such as feasibility or usefulness, also have an **indirect** ethical dimension because they integrate the needs of various involved groups of actors (referred to hereinafter as persons involved in or affected by an evaluation) and do not (solely) focus on the evaluation team’s research interest.

The **OECD-DAC Quality Standards**<sup>9</sup> deal explicitly with **evaluation ethics** and specify in this regard: “Evaluation is undertaken with integrity and honesty. [Evaluators...] respect human rights and

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<sup>4</sup> Quality features have been developed for human rights, gender equality, inclusion, anti-corruption and integrity, and fighting poverty and conflict sensitivity (see Section 3).

<sup>5</sup> See German Research Foundation Code 2019 (source details in Section 3).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/en/>.

<sup>7</sup> In Evaluation: Standards in unterschiedlichen Handlungsfeldern, [Jan Ulrich Hense](#), [Wolfgang Böttcher](#), [Michael Kalman](#), [Wolfgang Meyer](#) (ed.), 2019 p. 87-102.

<sup>8</sup> See DeGEval: Standards für Evaluation, 2004, p.11.

<sup>9</sup> See OECD-DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation (2010), Section 1.3 Evaluation ethics.

differences in culture, customs, religious beliefs and practices of all stakeholders.” Accordingly, when designing and performing evaluations, we follow the principle of equal treatment and, where relevant and appropriate, take into account aspects of diversity such as gender roles, ethnicity, ability, age, sexual orientation and language.

In humanist philosophy, personal **integrity** is understood as the (widest possible) agreement between ideals and values on the one hand and actual (words and) actions on the other: Personal integrity is defined as having strong morals or values and following those principles in both your words and actions. There are different definitions of the underlying morals or values. Depending on the context, integrity is associated with contract compliance, incorruptibility and reliability. In the following, we define **acting with integrity as the responsible observance of legal, professional and ethical principles that are relevant for us**. These are described in more detail in Section 2.

## 2. OUR INTEGRITY PRINCIPLES

Below, we group our guiding integrity principles into four clusters and describe our understanding of the terms contained within them.

The DEval Integrity Clusters <sup>10</sup>			
<b>Cluster 1: Independence and neutrality</b>	<b>Cluster 2: Scientific character and usefulness</b>	<b>Cluster 3: Fairness and transparency</b>	<b>Cluster 4: Social, economic and environmental responsibility</b>

At the end of each section, examples for potential issues are provided e.g. conflicting goals and other issues that arise from following these principles. It is not possible to outline generic solutions for these challenges. Instead, the solutions must be weighed up in each individual case and developed in a manner appropriate to the subject matter.

### 2.1 Independence and neutrality

#### *Understanding*

*We are incorruptible, impartial and unbiased towards all groups of development cooperation actors.*

Our **scientific independence** is anchored in DEval’s Articles of Association and relates to the design and performance of our evaluation work. This is reflected among others:

- in our right of proposal and independent selection of the evaluation subjects for our multi-annual evaluation programme (MEP),
- in the wording of the evaluation questions and choice of evaluation design for us to answer them based on robust evidence and corresponding criteria, and
- in the independent and transparent drawing of (strategic) conclusions and recommendations.

<sup>10</sup> The division and content of the clusters differ slightly from the assignment of the terms in the DEval Evaluation Standards. Here, they serve solely as a simplified way of presenting the aspects to be taken into account from all three core areas: compliance, evaluation standards and institutional culture.

The BMZ Leitlinien Evaluierung (guidelines for evaluation)<sup>11</sup>, our institute strategy, the DEval evaluation standards and other policy documents attribute this independence as being of crucial importance to the credibility and success of our actions.

With regard to the important **accountability function that is enabled by** independent evaluations, independence also means that, as DEval employees, we are generally unbiased in the sense of impartiality and (scientific) neutrality. This relates, for example, to the criteria-based selection of proposals for the MEP, the clarification of the evaluation subject and research interest, the composition of the respective reference groups for our evaluation projects and the consideration of different perspectives of the involved actors. Naturally, our neutrality and objectivity also apply to the selection of employees, appraisers and service providers to perform our evaluations. As DEval workers, we pursue the aim of **unbiased and incorruptible action in every sense**.

### *Potential issues*

On the one hand, we are set up as an independent ministerial research institute. On the other hand, we are financed through grants from the BMZ budget and are subject to the supervision of our shareholder<sup>12</sup>. We do not work in isolation and aim to align our evaluations to the needs of our target audience and users. We require close coordination and consultation with BMZ and other actors involved in evaluations in order to receive information and work contacts from them, among other things. In individual cases, this can result in **practical dependence** or pressure to adapt in evaluations. These aspects are communicated transparently and discussed within the appropriate framework (for example between DEval and the affected actors or within the reference groups) in order to determine appropriate solutions for the specific circumstances.

Another challenge is the **impartiality of the employees** in the sense of the required objectivity in methods and assessments. Is this even possible in empirical research, for example in light of different experience backgrounds or values? And how can potential conflicts of interest be excluded if large numbers of employees have professional and personal contacts to other development cooperation actors, sometimes going back many years? We address these questions and risks in a transparent way, among other things, through our open and team-oriented working methods and the quality assurance process with internal and external peer reviewers.

## 2.2 Scientific research and practical usefulness

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### *Understanding*

*We follow the given quality criteria for research and implement the relevant professional and scientific standards in our work.*

Our evaluations are aligned to the valid **DEval-Evaluation Standards, the OECD-DAC and DeGEval standards** and the **DFG Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice**. One of the most important DEval and DeGEval standards is diligence,<sup>13</sup> which relates to the entire planning and performance of an evaluation. This includes context analyses of the subject, describing purposes, procedures and information sources and the appropriateness of the applied methods and data collection as well as understandable justifications of evaluations and conclusions.

**Scientific research and practical usefulness** are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, we understand our scientific working methods as an essential basis for the usefulness of evaluations.

<sup>11</sup> See BMZ Leitlinien Evaluierung, Chapter 4, (2).

<sup>12</sup> The shareholder is the Federal Republic of Germany, represented by BMZ.

<sup>13</sup> See DeGEval: Standards für Evaluation, 2004, p.12.

We take the interest of evaluation stakeholders and users into account and bear in mind the potential usefulness of future results. Accordingly, we generate recommendations that strive for concrete improvements in German development cooperation in the medium to long term. We systematically record the results and impacts of our work through our results-based monitoring of implementation of the recommendations from our evaluations.

#### *Potential issues*

Evaluations frequently involve highly diverse actors and complex evaluation subjects. Therefore scientific standards and the interests of different groups must be reconciled. Our **scientific, application-oriented working methods** must also be aligned **to the available resources** (finances, personnel, time). In particular, sufficient attention must be paid to data availability and the effort needed for data collection. On the other hand, the **desired or expected usefulness of the evaluations and their results** from a third-party perspective must also be considered. The fact that, usually, not all actors have the same research interests in an evaluation subject and often do not share a similar (expert or methodical) understanding is another challenge. The user-specific interests must be clarified in good time and pursued appropriately, not least through tailored preparation of the evaluation recommendations and results for the various target audiences.

Thus, for each new evaluation, it is necessary to once again establish an optimal relationship between the three objectives of scientific working methods, usefulness and economic efficiency.

## 2.3 Fairness and transparency

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### *Understanding*

*We incorporate all relevant perspectives, respect them and act fairly, appreciatively and transparently towards all those involved.*

**We operate in good partnership** with all development cooperation agencies, external service providers and cooperation partners of the institute and other individual parties involved in our evaluations. This is a core principle of our work and reflects, at the same time the diversity of the parties involved in development cooperation. Similarly, the DEval Advisory Board is composed of representatives from academia, the German parliament, civil society and the implementing organisations of German development cooperation.

We are committed to act fairly and appreciatively towards all actors and endeavour to incorporate all relevant perspectives – including those from the Global South – into our evaluation work as far as possible.

We understand the diversity of opinions as an opportunity to learn from one another and present our evaluation results in a balanced and objective way. As part of this, we also deal **transparently** with different perspectives and positions and publish our reports in a form that is comprehensible even for those who were not involved.

The principle of **fairness** relates to fair treatment of all those involved in and affected by an evaluation, for example in the sense of ensuring the greatest possible predictability and planning security for the actors in the evaluation process. For us, fairness also includes implementing the human-rights principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination as well as making an active commitment to gender equality and inclusion. In keeping with the “leave no one behind” principle of the 2030 Agenda, we are responsible for recording the perspectives of disadvantaged groups. This includes, among other things, acting in a conflict-sensitive manner, communicating objectively

on equal footing and in a way that is respectful of intercultural differences as well as allowing others to access us and our services with as few barriers as possible (see Chapter 2.4).

Fairness also includes following formal compliance rules, for example concluding formal agreements and protecting individual rights, especially in connection with data protection.

#### *Potential issues*

When it comes to the claim of practising fairness towards all actors, a rather practical question arises: **to what extent can equal treatment be fully ensured?** For example, in which form is meaningful representation of all actors involved in an evaluation possible? When does this become too time-consuming and expensive and who is taking the decision? Another question arising in this respect is to what extent an evaluation is based on an empirical and rational foundation or to what extent it is pointing **towards a more personal or moral position of the evaluator?** In the case of ethically focused questions, however, an explicit positioning in our evaluations can be justified. The important thing is that these considerations are openly discussed and made transparent in our reports.

Another issue is the required **confidentiality in data collection and processing** that may contradict the desired transparency and traceability of the evaluation results on the part of users. For example, legal provisions do not permit us to name interview partners or cite internal BMZ documents in our evaluation reports, which might prevent external readers from being able to fully connect the results with the underlying evidence in all instances.

Fairness also includes recognising that those involved in an evaluation may feel pressured due to extensive information requests and the setting of deadlines for participating in the evaluation. In accordance with the **principle of data minimisation**, we seek to claim an appropriate amount of our partners' time and communicate the objective and purpose of the requirements sensitively. In return, we hope to be treated in the same way.

## 2.4 Social, economic and environmental responsibility

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### *Understanding*

*We understand responsibility as an obligation to also do what is necessary and right from a social, environmental and economical standpoint.*

**Social responsibility** relates to respecting, protecting and ensuring human rights in Germany and in the partner countries of German development cooperation. Within the scope of our evaluations, we exclude human rights violations, for example by systematically monitoring related risks.

We also strive to strengthen human-rights principles in development cooperation outside of our project work, among other things by holding events on the subject together with actors from civil society and the evaluation community. We do not tolerate any sexual harassment or exploitation and are guided by the OECD-DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (see Chapter 3: Contact, links and documents).

Furthermore, we act in accordance with the due diligence obligations for employers, particularly the requirements regarding equal treatment and non-discrimination of our employees. Concrete objectives are laid down in our equal opportunities plan and backed up with implementing measures. We practice gender-appropriate communication. We endeavour to ensure that our



evaluation processes, the tangible evaluation results as well as related services are accessible<sup>14</sup> and barrier-free<sup>15</sup>. DEval ensures the protection of individual data and personal rights as well as taking maximum care when collecting and processing personal data in every respect. Here and in other areas, we are guided by the 2030 Agenda principle of do no harm.

When it comes to the **economic dimension of responsibility**, the most important factor is the awareness that we are a public institute financed through taxes. Accordingly, we are obligated to the principle of economic efficiency, meaning always dealing carefully and efficiently with the available financial and human resources. Naturally, this also includes complying with the related legal provisions, in particular competitive procurement of goods and services. Not only our managers, but all our staff, take individual responsibility for this based on their role.

Finally, we also reflect on our **environmental responsibility** and continuously implement measures to save resources and reduce our ecological footprint. In order to achieve climate neutrality in the long term, we plan to set ourselves further concrete objectives starting in 2022 and in agreement with the shareholder as part of our new institute strategy.

#### *Potential issues*

Potential issues often arise between social and environmental as well as economic perspectives. A basic question behind our actions is, on the one hand, how we can ensure the **evaluability** – in the sense of content-related, methodological and financial feasibility – and, at the same time, create the highest possible degree of **inclusion, accessibility and environmental sustainability**. The relationships to other integrity principles are obvious: the more an evaluation involves all affected groups, the more precise and useful it becomes. On the other hand, the time required increases disproportionately.

Furthermore, we want to allow the broad interested public access to our evaluation results and, accordingly, make our **reports** available to **the largest possible readership**. On the other hand, the available time and financial resources are limited, for example to translate the evaluations and complex analyses into easily understood formats such as simple language.

From an environmental perspective, the required precision of an evaluation – including conducting case studies in the partner countries of German development cooperation – may involve **high CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to flights** and **clashes with our environmental sustainability goals**. Here, too, it is important to balance general principles against justified and appropriate exceptions and to justify these transparently and understandably.

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<sup>14</sup> See UN Disability Rights Convention: <https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de>.

<sup>15</sup> In terms of construction, our office building largely takes into account the needs of persons with disabilities and our website has a barrier-free design.

## 3. CONTACT, LINKS AND DOCUMENTS

### 3.1 Contact at DEval

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If you have any questions on the topic of integrity at DEval, feel free to send an e-mail to [integritaet@deval.org](mailto:integritaet@deval.org), directly to the two responsible employees, the Integrity Officer **Amélie zu Eulenburg** ([amelie.eulenburg@deval.org](mailto:amelie.eulenburg@deval.org), phone: +49-(0)228 336907-930) and the Anti-Corruption Officer **Tobias Polak** ([tobias.polak@deval.org](mailto:tobias.polak@deval.org), phone: +49-(0)228 336907-967), or to Head of Communications and Publications **Jelana Vajen** ([jelana.vajen@deval.org](mailto:jelana.vajen@deval.org), phone: +49-(0)228 336907-980).

### 3.2 Related links and documents

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- Evaluation standards and guidelines for good scientific practice

**DEval: Evaluation standards, 2018**

<https://www.deval.org/en/methods-and-standards/our-evaluation-standards>

**German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ): Evaluation Guidelines 2021**

<https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/92884/08507d1204d093141b5f00bf5cbb8db7/bmz-leitlinien-evaluierung-2021.pdf> (only available in German)

**OECD DAC: Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, 2010**

<https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

**German Evaluation Society (DeGEval – Gesellschaft für Evaluation e.V.): Standards für Evaluation, 2016**

<https://www.degeval.org/de/degeval-standards/standards-fuer-evaluation/> (only available in German)

**German Research Foundation (DFG): Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice, Code of Conduct, 2019**

[https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/rechtliche\\_rahmenbedingungen/gute\\_wissenschaftliche\\_praxis/kodex\\_gwp\\_en.pdf](https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/rechtliche_rahmenbedingungen/gute_wissenschaftliche_praxis/kodex_gwp_en.pdf)

- Anti-corruption, compliance, code of conduct

**OECD: OECD Public Integrity Handbook, 2020**

<https://www.oecd.org/corruption-integrity/reports/oecd-public-integrity-handbook-ac8ed8e8-en.html>

**German Federal Government: Federal Government Directive Concerning the Prevention of Corruption in the Federal Administration, 2004**

[https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/themen/moderne-verwaltung/Richtlinie\\_zur\\_Korruptionspraevention\\_in\\_der\\_Bundesverwaltung\\_englisch.pdf;jsessionid=57882B9E6F4B182B1D29D90FABC9AE5C.2\\_cid295?\\_blob=publicationFile&v=1](https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/themen/moderne-verwaltung/Richtlinie_zur_Korruptionspraevention_in_der_Bundesverwaltung_englisch.pdf;jsessionid=57882B9E6F4B182B1D29D90FABC9AE5C.2_cid295?_blob=publicationFile&v=1)

**German Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI): Rules on integrity, 2014**

[https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/publikationen/2014/rules-on-integrity.pdf;jsessionid=1EAE11BB47B2171A7527589ED7BC79CE.2\\_cid295?\\_blob=publicationFile&v=3](https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/publikationen/2014/rules-on-integrity.pdf;jsessionid=1EAE11BB47B2171A7527589ED7BC79CE.2_cid295?_blob=publicationFile&v=3)

**Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community: Corruption prevention, 2021**

<https://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/topics/administrative-reform/corruption-prevention/integrity-node.html>

**German Federal Ministry of Justice (BMJ): German General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG), 2013**

[https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_agg/](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_agg/)

**Act on Equality between Women and Men in the Federal Administration and in Federal Enterprises and Courts (Federal Act on Gender Equality, BGlEiG), 2015**

[https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_bgleig/index.html](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_bgleig/index.html)

**German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, 2021**

<https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/EN/homepage/homepage-node.html;jsessionid=E81E48B6F2870B5A5FADD06E6485540A.intranet222>

**German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ): Anti-Corruption and Integrity in German Development Policy (brochure), 2012**

<https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/23488/6670408c26037dcf69ef5aefcfe87d60/strategiepapier318-4-2012-data.pdf> (only available in German)

**German Federal Government Commission (Regierungskommission) German Corporate Governance Code, Deutscher Corporate Governance Kodex: 2019**

<https://www.dcgk.de/en/code.html>

**German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ): Code of Conduct year**

<https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2020-en-code-of-conduct.pdf>

**German Investment and Development Bank (KfW): Code of conduct, 2020**

<https://kfw-capital.de/wp-content/uploads/Verhaltenskodex-1.pdf> (only available in German)

- Evaluation, ethics, gender

**Canadian Evaluation Society: Ethics, 2014**

<https://evaluationcanada.ca/ethics>

**OECD DAC: Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, Section 1.3, 2010**

<https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

**OECD DAC: DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response, 2019**

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-recommendation-on-ending-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment.htm>

**International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS): Code of Ethics, 2014**

<https://ideas-global.org/ideas-code-of-ethics/>

**United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG): Mapping and Review of Evaluation Ethics, 2019**

<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/2689>

**United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG): Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, 2014**

<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616>

- Human rights and civil society

**German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ): Guidelines on Human Rights, 2013**

<https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/78972/8b78a394bfd48113f858e102699b2a7c/leitfaden-menschenrechte-2013.pdf> (only available in German)

**MISEREOR: Leitlinien zu Transparenz und Integrität (Guidelines on Integrity and Transparency), 2020**

<https://www.misereor.de/ueber-uns/transparenz> (only available in German)

**Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs (VENRO) – Guidelines for Development Projects and Programmes, 2019**

<https://venro.org/publikationen/detail/venro-guidelines-for-development-projects-and-programmes>