

Dear APLAC colleagues,

Today I am addressing all of you in Asia, Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and sending you warm greetings from Eschborn!

We are now in the middle of the year and our dynamic and innovative sector is buzzing as usual. Our figures clearly show how active you were in the 1st half of the year. Cash management is going well - thank you for that! Please continue to keep up the good work so that we can achieve a solid result together at the end of the year.

A few weeks ago, I was able to see the intensity and resilience with which our colleagues on the ground are driving innovations with our partners in Vietnam and Indonesia. Feeling their commitment, heart and soul on the ground shows me anew the importance of our work. It is exciting to see how topics are implemented in an integrated way: In Vietnam, for example, vocational training/TVET is being combined with climate approaches. Moreover, I was also to visit the Dominican Republic and Mexico last week, where I was able to get to know various projects in the field of climate change, tourism and cooperation with the private sector. I am impressed to see how we are improving the situation on the ground for the local population, creating new sources of income and at the same time better protecting the regions from extreme weather events. In addition to exchanging ideas with partners and GIZ colleagues, I was also able to help with a mangrove reforestation and take part in the [Climate Finance Festival](#) in Mexico City!



And it is not only me who is traveling, but also many of the German ministers, state secretaries and other governmental representatives who are visiting our regions. I am sure that you have noticed it already: Germany and the EU are increasingly interested in cooperating with Asia and Latin America. Due to the changed geopolitical situation, alliances with partner countries are to be further strengthened. The political attention paid to our regions shows us that we can only tackle global challenges together with our partner countries. And even if our partners and clients do not always agree, we as GIZ can often help build bridges and promote dialogue.

Back from the stage of global politics to our everyday work, from which I know that the shoe often pinches in the countries when it comes to digitalization. Precisely for this reason, I would like to share very good news with you: With the rollout being completed in early July 2023, [Common Portal 2.0](#) will support administrative processes as a digital solution in more than 95 GIZ partner countries worldwide and significantly simplify communication between country offices and project offices in the field structure. The original version programmed by a small team of developers in the country office in India has been further developed in collaboration with APLAC and DIGITS. I am proud that this technical solution was developed in our department, and I am sure that Common Portal will relieve your daily work in the countries.

For me, the keyword innovation is one that characterizes our APLAC department. Therefore, I am particularly proud that over 100 colleagues from APLAC submitted more than 50 contributions to the [GIZ Innovation Fund](#) on various topics such as Just Transition and feminist development policy. The following seven proposals from APLAC won, and I would like to congratulate them:

- [Wellness Online -App for Women \(WOW\)](#)
- [Improving access to geothermal information for decision makers \(Geomap\)](#)
- [FINKOOL: Financial culture and education program](#)
- [D♀ IT!](#)
- [Think diversely, act inclusively!](#)
- [For more inclusive sport: question gender stereotypes & prevent its reproduction](#)
- [FemPact: A Digital Hub for Amplifying Feminist Development Cooperation Impact](#)

Information from [TuLPe](#), on [digitization](#), [quality in implementation](#) and other topics is summarized below. And as always, please feel free to send your suggestions, comments or questions to Bereichsberatung-APLAK@giz.de.

Kind regards

Matthias Giegerich

News from TuLPe

In 2023, TuLPe is dedicated to a new topic of great relevance in many of our partner countries, the "decarbonization of industry". As a case provider, we have initiated a new business development project (GEP), in close cooperation with GloBe, FMB, the regional departments as well as InS. The GEP aims to improve and modernize our service portfolio on the topic of decarbonization of industry - tailored to new challenges and expectations of our clients. Several products and services will be developed within the framework of the GEP, which target the needs of our partner countries.

Digitization in APLAC

Above I already mentioned the good news about Common Portal. However, much more is happening in the company: the digital transformation of GIZ continues to progress and is seen as a key to achieve our destination GIZ 2028. The effects of the digital transformation are also tangible in the APLAC department. In order to inform our colleagues about digitization processes or digital literacy offerings in the field, the new IDA page on [digitization in APLAC](#) has now been published. It picks up on the company wide transformation paths *Digital at Heart* and *Digital for Development* and provides up-to-date information on digital transformation for the APLAC department:

- With the [APLAC Digitalization Strategy 2022 - 2024](#), the department is taking an inclusive approach to strengthening the digital skills of all employees in APLAC. Other focus points of the strategy are internal transformation, business development and service delivery of the department.
- Ongoing digitization processes in APLAC are the focus under [Digital at Heart](#). This includes up-to-date information around ISO 27001 certification as well as the representation of digital topics in the department.
- For contemporary project concepts and the use of digital approaches, our approaches to scaling and shaping digital transformation are highlighted under [Digital for Development](#) where selected digital project examples are presented.
- The department takes the promotion of digital literacy very seriously and has created an action plan as part of the digitization strategy. This can be found under [Digital Literacy](#). In addition, you can find easy access to trainings and learning resources in GIZ to promote your own digital skills under this link. There is one new learning offering that we particularly recommend: the [Data-Based Working Learning Space at GIZ](#). With the digital learning time that we are continuing in APLAC, every employee should be given the opportunity to further educate their digital skills.

Information security for new and follow-up projects

With the global introduction of an information security management system (ISMS) at GIZ, our projects must also be taken into account. The aim is to identify particularly high-risk projects as early as possible, to plan mitigation measures and to provide more intensive support during implementation. To this end, the [InfoSec checklist](#) is to be used during the audit mission as off 1st of January 2023. Further information and contacts can be found in the information sheet [Information security for new and follow-up projects](#).

Quality in implementation

"Excellence in implementation" is an important feature of GIZ's corporate strategy. To ensure that we submit high-quality bids to our clients, we use central quality assurance processes such as ZUK and ZAK or the quality review (QP) during contract preparation. In the implementation phase, we ensure the content-related technical and commercial quality of our work through quality assurance in line (QsiL). This regularly involves compliance with the quality standards agreed with our clients as part of the management dialog.

In order to further strengthen QsiL in APLAC, we reviewed submitted KOMP-required project progress reports to the BMZ as part of the department's internal content-related and financial quality monitoring and reported the results back to the responsible AV and next-higher

managers. This created valuable learning moments. We have collected the most important needs for action and best practices [here](#). Our positive experience in implementing this measure has encouraged us to continue monitoring the quality of our reports to the BMZ, with a particular focus on this year's financial reporting.

Quality assurance processes have also been established for projects outside BMZ business. An evaluation of the ZUG feedback on our submitted annual progress reports in the IKI business, which consist of both a content-related technical and a legal/commercial part, has taken place. This enabled us to identify frequently repeated sources of error. The overall aim was to reduce the number of revisions and improve our overall quality. The results can be found [here](#).

Adaptation of the DMS documentation structure for all co-financing projects

Since the end of February, an adjustment to the DMS documentation structure has been in effect for all current and future co-financed projects, regardless of the third-party funding source: a new folder has been added to the A order folder, in which the documents for initiating co-financing and also the final contracts are to be filed. The changes are intended to lead to an improved and more uniform filing of co-financing documents, which must be submitted during audits (internal/external). Detailed information such as the updated overview on "Documentation Structure GnB Project" can be found in [P+R Rule 262](#). In addition, you can inform the responsible contact person in the Finance Department Harald Edling.

EH/IF focus countries in APLAC

In order to counteract the continuous downward trend of EH and IF assignments within the company, the department has adopted a new strategic direction for the future handling of EH/IF assignments. In addition to department wide efforts to advance instrument placements wherever appropriate, APLAC will focus specifically on select locations for EH and IF instrument placements in the future. The goal of this strategy is to focus on instrument deployment in these priority countries in the future with appropriate measures.

- Vietnam, Mongolia, Ecuador, Nepal, Pakistan, and Cambodia have been identified as EH focus countries in APLAC.
- Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Mongolia, Thailand, and Peru were identified as IF focus countries in APLAC.

In the EH priority countries, we will make a special effort in the future to look more deeply at the EH instrument and strengthen it depending on the context. Specifically, this means that support structures will be further expanded and the framework conditions in these priority countries will be analyzed in a targeted manner. In addition, the TC instrument concept will be given greater consideration in country planning, as well as ZUKs and ZAKs, and critically examined for the applicability of development workers. APLAC will continue to work on the promotion of attractive job profiles with a high applicability for the EH instrument (e.g. [Digital Ambassadors](#)). Analogous strengthening measures will be implemented in IF priority countries. For example, in the context of the Management Response RALF, the strengths and possible uses of the instruments will be examined and networking with proven partners and suitable

outreach organizations such as chambers of commerce will be intensified. We also refer to further information on deployment opportunities for [development workers](#) and [integrated experts](#).

Onboarding materials on human rights

The Sustainability Office, together with other units, has produced [training materials](#) for the decentralized onboarding of our national employees (and also all other interested parties) on the topic of human rights. The aim of this training is to provide employees with information on human rights, especially with regard to the importance of the [Supply Chain Sourcing Obligations Act](#) (LkSG), which has recently come into force in Germany. This legally obligates us as GIZ to be particularly careful in our own business activities (as well as in our supply chains) and to conduct appropriate training. Please feel free to use these documents for your onboardings in the countries.