

Editorial

Increased efforts in the development of GFA's work in monitoring and evaluation are closely linked to GFA's new business strategy MAPO 2020 which started this year. The strategy means Market Positioning and aims at improvements in GFA's strategic business areas. More specifically, it targets at further strengthening GFA's technical expertise and increasing market presence in all strategic business areas.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has always been an important part in the implementation of our projects in all regions and strategic business areas. By developing effective M&E tools and offering innovative M&E approaches, we take up our clients' demand for transparent and result-driven development project implementation. M&E is a cross-cutting issue throughout all GFA's departments.

Last July we established a specific unit focusing on M&E. This is to use synergies within GFA more effectively and to provide services in the M&E market in a consolidated package worldwide. The M&E unit is well positioned to meet the challenges of innovative thinking and the development of new tools and approaches that keep track of the results of our interventions.

The set-up of the new unit will ensure regular exchange on M&E related issues among all GFA consultants. This will combine existing sector expertise in ten strategic business areas with up-to-date methodological competence regarding M&E.



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Innovative approaches in Monitoring and Evaluation

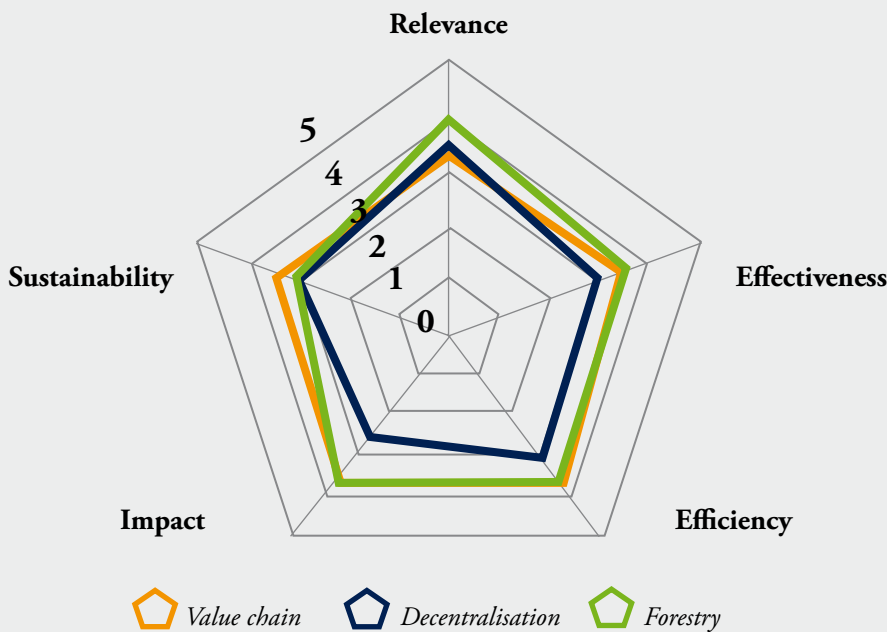
In recent years, the effectiveness and efficiency of development cooperation has been gaining center stage. It has become more and more important for donor organizations to ensure high-quality monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of projects and programs. In this context, the improvement of existing tools and approaches and the development of new ones is a key issue. Innovative tools and approaches should neither be an end in itself nor unrealistic and unmanageable. Instead the tools themselves should meet the criteria they refer to, in particular effectiveness and efficiency. Moreover, development practitioners and beneficiaries find the sheer diversity of M&E systems in development organizations worldwide a problem, and emphasize the need for streamlining and simplifying M&E processes. Therefore, new approaches should not make M&E more complicated but more standardized and easier to use. Internationally recognized criteria such as the OECD-DAC criteria were important milestones in this regard. But the need for regular improvement and adjustment remains.

New ROM handbook for EU external assistance

The work of GFA Consulting Group for the Quality and Results Unit at the Directorate General for Development and Cooperation (DEVCO) of the European Commission (EC) is a case in point for improvements of M&E methods. The EC unit works on new approaches related to result-oriented monitoring (ROM), internal monitoring and results reporting for projects and programs including budget support. GFA, in a consortium with OPM, SEE Policies and GFA B.I.S., provides technical support regarding quality monitoring systems and methodologies (SQ2M) to the EC unit.

The Brussels team of GFA supported the revision of the ROM handbook, which is applied since 2015. ROM services implemented by external contractors and experts are to support EC services in project monitoring and reporting. This includes ROM reviews with respect to projects and programs under implementation as well as missions to support end-of-project reporting on results. The latter feeds into





Spider diagram as a tool for evaluating a project according to OECD-DAC criteria

the new EU International Cooperation and Development Results Framework. The updated handbook introduces a focus on problematic, innovative or unvisited projects and programs that are subject to a ROM review.

The new system requires deeper sector expertise and longer field visits with the aim of improving the quality of ROM reviews. A test phase for ROM applied to budget support is still ongoing. Lessons will be drawn in early 2016 whether to expand ROM to this field or not. An additional element of the updated handbook is that ROM reviews and the ROM system as such will go through a quality assurance process.

The reforms incorporated in the new ROM system are part of a wider set of reorganizations regarding overall project and program monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems. The reforms are designed to enhance EC's accountability and management capacities. More emphasis is put on results at all levels, including EU's corporate level as a donor through the new EU International Cooperation and Development Results Framework.

M&E Mechanism for EU Framework Partnership Agreements

At the beginning of 2015, the EU has signed five Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) with Associations of Local

Authorities (ALAs) in the context of its Civil Society Organizations and Local Authorities thematic program (2014-2020). These ALAs are global and regional networks in areas such as advocacy for local governance, awareness raising concerning the role of local governments, and local governments' capacity development.

Establishing political partnerships with local authorities' networks is an EU innovation. Long-term FPAs are used as a delivery mechanism for this political partnership. Both the EU and this new type of partner agreed on a set of common objectives. The FPAs have an operational part, so-called Specific Grant Agreements (SGAs). These refer to activities carried out by ALAs and supported through an EC grant. This innovative approach implies a certain risk for all stakeholders.

In order to mitigate this risk, the DEVCO Unit Civil Society and Local Authorities has entrusted GFA with the development and application of a Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) for these FPAs. By 2018, the so-called MEM-FPA project is expected to have designed and tested the mechanism. The latter is intended to support and accompany the implementation of FPAs and related SGAs in order to facilitate smooth implementation. The mechanism is developed not only for this

particular context but will be suitable for future FPAs with other partners.

The project has three objectives. To begin with, a monitoring toolkit and method is to be designed, implemented and adapted. The GFA team of experts will do the same regarding an evaluation toolkit and method. Finally, GFA consultants will provide support to the respective DEVCO unit through aggregated information and analysis. As far as monitoring is concerned, the specific profile of the partners and the political dimension requires a non-standard approach. The monitoring responsibility will be shared between the MEM-FPA team and the ALAs. The associations will be responsible for selfmonitoring for which the MEM-FPA team provides a customized tool. A more standard monitoring according to DAC criteria will be carried out by the MEM-FPA team in order to accompany the implementation of SGAs as part of the FPAs. With respect to evaluation, the challenge is to evaluate a partnership, not a project or program. The evaluation process will feed aggregated information into the reflection on the usefulness of the FPA for the cooperation between the EU and ALAs. A mid-term and a final evaluation are foreseen in order to address a variety of questions: Does the FPA as delivery mechanism work? Is the partnership balanced? To what extent have common objectives been reached? To what extent have the FPAs enabled the ALAs to reach long-term objectives of their strategies?

GFA, in cooperation with DEVCO and the ALAs will develop and refine both methodologies and tools for evaluation and monitoring during the 36-months implementation period of the project. The first months of implementation have shown that flexibility and adaptation to partners' needs are key elements for the successful implementation of the MEM-FPA project.

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Ongoing GFA Monitoring & Evaluation projects



Vocational training and the labor market in the Palestinian Territories

Since 2011, GIZ and the Palestinian Ministries of Education and Labor promote integrated approaches to improve vocational training and employment, and labor market services. GFA Consulting Group was commissioned to conduct mid-term and final reviews for three delegated components, co-financed by EU in the West Bank and Gaza, and by Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) in the West Bank. Based on evaluation principles of these organizations, GFA evaluators reviewed key documents, interviewed stakeholders and target groups and visited relevant institutions. They used OECD-DAC criteria to discuss findings. In the West Bank, the reviews were implemented successfully. Due to the extremely difficult situation in Gaza, the final evaluation there is still pending. The focus of the evaluated components was facilitating partnerships between public and private stakeholders. Part of the EU program in the West Bank was supporting the creation of local employment and training councils. The SDC-financed component promoted the transformation of existing vocational training institutions into regional centers of competence. Other intervention areas were related to the quality of training in curricula development, equipment and training of trainers, and new quality management systems.

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Innovation Centers for the Agriculture and Food Sector

The GIZ Innovation Centers for the Agriculture and Food Sector (GIAE) program is part of BMZ's special initiative One World, No Hunger. GIAE aims at raising income and employment and improving food security by promoting agricultural innovation networks and know-how transfer for agricultural value chains in twelve countries in Africa and in India. In 2015-2017, GFA will implement components of GIAE projects in Kenya, Ethiopia and Togo, and will conduct a baseline study in ten countries to set up a standardized cross-country M&E system. The study entails secondary data collection, country-specific socio-economic household surveys at the level of small-scale farming enterprises, and focus group discussions. For a baseline status of global GIAE indicators, data will be collected on farming households' income, employment status and agricultural productivity. This will provide information on profit margins in various value chains and the state of regional food supply. The study is led by a GFA inhouse team from the Africa and EMENA department, supported by academics from the Kiel Institute for World Economy and the University of Hohenheim. The team will use mobile data collection, GPS referencing and online data management and storage as to ensure data quality, transparency, access and timely delivery.

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Supporting Public Health Institutes Monitoring Facility

The Supporting Public Health Institutes (SPHI) Monitoring Facility provides support to eight EU grant agreements with public health institutes in DR Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Laos and Haiti to strengthen evidence-based policy making in the health sector. GFA experts started supporting the efficient implementation of the grant agreements through M&E consulting services in 2015. The support is specifically provided regarding the review of logical frameworks and indicators. Guides on harmonized monitoring of SPHI projects and on reporting, information management and performance measurement by SPHI implementers are prepared. In addition, GFA experts advise on the preparation of individual monitoring plans, and organize and moderate seminars. They contribute to formulating objectives and clarifying the relations between objectives and verifiable indicators. All indicators should have clear time frames. The guide on harmonized monitoring will allow a comparison between projects, showing which projects are progressing well in achieving the SPHI overall goal. Due to a high demand for assistance in the realization of baseline surveys, GFA suggests adaptations of research objectives, methodology, and the use of research outcomes in project implementation. More information can be found at:

<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/sphip/>

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GFA at SAFRI's German-African Business Summit

"It is time to focus more clearly on Africa as a highly promising economic partner and future market", stated Heinz-Walter Große, chairman of the Sub-Saharan Africa Initiative of German Business at SAFRI's 1st German-African Business Summit staged in partnership with Deutsche Bank in Berlin. The opportunities and challenges on the African continent were discussed by Germany Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Gerd Müller, Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, and Jürgen Fitschen, co-chair of the board of Deutsche Bank. John Dramani Mahama, the President of Ghana, was welcomed as a guest of honour. "The interest of the German business community in Africa is growing," continued Große. Over the last ten years, exports have risen by 64 percent to around 23 billion euros. Even more impressively, German direct investment in the continent rose by almost 25 percent in 2009-2012. Große added, "Competition is becoming keener. We must continue to make every effort to stay in the race on the continent and not get elbowed to one side by rivals." Christoph Schaefer-Kehnert, managing director of GFA Consulting Group, chaired the panel on Future Trends in Africa. Panelists Fabian Guhl (AMPION) and Martin Stork (SAP) focused on the potentials of the promising IT market in many African countries while Samuel Muchiri (B.Braun) highlighted the demand for medical supplies and pharmaceuticals. Heike Bergmann (Voith) pitched in with a clear focus on the high rise in energy demand and the huge unexploited po-

tential of hydro power as a renewable energy source. SAFRI is a cooperative partnership supported by the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), the Federation of German Industries (BDI), the Federation of German Wholesale, Foreign Trade and Services (BGA) and the German-African Business Association (AV). The supporting organizations coordinate their activities in this regional initiative and are committed to intensifying economic relations between Germany and the countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

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GFA Certification launches IT platform timber-risk.com©

GFA Certification, one of the leading FSC® and PEFC™ certification bodies, has newly added an IT platform called timber-risk.com© to its wide range of services in sustainable forest management certification and legality verification for the forest wood and paper industry sector. timber-risk.com© is an IT portal to support companies in applying due diligence. The portal provides companies with an opportunity to receive a first estimate of potential risks by means of a simple IT-based query option. The options are based on wood species and origins independent from provisions and statutory regulations. In addition, timber-risk.com© offers suggestions on how to minimize potential risks. Business clients can access the English and German online portal at cost under www.timber-risk.com. The first query is free of charge once clients have registered through a test account. Users can buy single queries or packages of 10, 50

and more queries. Payment can be completed through PayPal or MasterCard and Visa credit cards. Output sheets of all queries are stored in the client's individual user portal and can be downloaded as a PDF file.

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Correction to GFA newsletter 09/2015

On page 2 and 3 of our last newsletter, dating from September 2015, a study and manual on Solar Powered Irrigation System were described. GFA wishes to correct three aspects with respect to this article: Firstly, the article missed to mention that this assignment is related to the international initiative Powering Agriculture: An Energy Grand Challenge for Development. PAEGC's founding partners are The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Duke Energy, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). Secondly, GIZ programs mentioned in the article were not correctly described. Manual and study were commissioned by the GIZ Program Powering Agriculture Sustainable Energy for Food and were also developed in close co-operation with the GIZ sector program Poverty-oriented Basic Energy Services (HERA). The GIZ teams provided a wealth of information besides facilitating a stakeholder workshop in March 2015 and a workshop at FAO headquarters in Rome in May 2015. Thirdly, we wish to mention, that the report and manual are currently under final revision and will be published only in the next months.

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GFA vision – to be the partner of choice for clients in our core service areas.

GFA mission – to improve the livelihood of beneficiaries through our professional services.

GFA core values – to offer high performance in service delivery, technical excellence in our main sectors, innovative approaches and products, and credibility with our clients when putting projects into practice.