



Promoting gender diversity at GIZ Viet Nam

Country	Viet Nam
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Category	Internal gender mainstreaming



1. Corporate culture (50% of marks)

Gender equality is a key value and part of how we see ourselves. Describe your contribution, i.e. the measures, processes and/or approaches with which your team represents gender equality as a goal in itself and as a guiding principle both internally and externally and makes it visible as part of our corporate culture.

In 2023, GIZ Viet Nam has taken different measures to promote gender diversity in the workplace to further foster a diverse, inclusive, open and respectful corporate culture both internally and externally.

Integration in process and procedures:

- Setting one objective in the Country Planning 2023: “Promoting gender & diversity in the spirit of feminist development policy by strengthening country specific operational and analytical capacities” was one of objectives in the Viet Nam and Laos Country Planning 2023. This reflects the strong commitment of the country management team to make diversity an even more integral part of our culture and work.
- Integrating gender & diversity aspects in the national personnel recruitment process: In late 2022, gender focal points worked with the senior HR officer to develop [a checklist for integrating gender and diversity in the national personnel recruitment process](#). The checklist provides recommendation for hiring managers. Following that, in early 2023, mandatory [HR recruitment forms](#) (including job description, job advertisement, candidate assessment etc.) were updated. They now better include aspects of gender and diversity facilitating changes in perspective. For example, in the job advertisement, it clearly states that “GIZ is committed to create an appreciative work environment, irrespective of age, ethnic background and nationality, gender and gender identity, physical and mental abilities, religion and worldview, sexual orientation and social background. We ensure human resource processes live up to the diverse competencies and talents of all employees, as well as satisfy our performance expectations”^[1]. This informs potential candidates of GIZ’s position on promoting a diverse workforce.
- Integrating the Diversity Group into the Gender & Diversity Working Group: In 2022, an informal Diversity Group was established by 6 LGBTIQ+ colleagues. In early 2023, Gender Circle and Diversity Group were merged into the Gender & Diversity Working Group. Now, members of the Group work jointly to organize awareness raising activities on gender and diversity within GIZ Viet Nam expanding colleagues views even further.

Facilitate diversity conversations and actions in the workplace

- Celebrating the International Women’s Day 2023: A hybrid talk show titled “[What does gender equality mean to men](#)” was organised. In total 121 colleagues participated and they were interested in men’s exchange on gender equality and diversity. The panelists and moderators were all men and three of them were in management positions. This talk show was a platform for male colleagues to exchange and share their personal perspectives on gender and diversity issues as well as their roles in promoting those in the workplace.
- Celebrating the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) and Pride Month: The pride flag was hung at the entrance of GIZ Viet Nam’s country and project offices from the IDAHOBIT event (May 17) until the end of Pride Month (June 30, 2023) to reaffirm our position on promoting LGBTIQ+ rights as inalienable human rights. Many colleagues of different projects took group photos to show the support for the LGBTIQ+ community, which were then posted on GIZ Viet Nam’s social media pages (Facebook and LinkedIn) and IDA^[2]. All staff were also encouraged to change the background of their MS team with pride flag and slogan during Pride Month. In addition, the Gender & Diversity Working Group organized a hybrid talk show titled “A diverse and inclusive workplace pays off”, attracting 136 participants. The speakers included a Vietnamese LGBTIQ+ rights activist, a LGBTIQ+ colleague as well as the Gender Focal Point of GIZ India. They exchanged and discussed on how to create a diverse and safe-for-all workplace. GIZ Viet Nam’s activities in Pride Month were highlighted on [GIZ Wir:News](#) as one of GIZ’s internal good practices.
- Participating in Hanoi Pride Event: Hanoi Pride is an annual event for the LGBTIQ+ community in Viet Nam and in Hanoi in particular, to celebrate the diversity, freedom, and rights of all LGBTIQ+ persons. Hanoi Pride is an opportunity for GIZ staff to unite with the LGBTIQ+ community and make our pledges of support to this community. On 24 September 2023, the Gender & Diversity Working Group teamed up with Corporate Health Management (CHM) to organize the initiative “[Riding4Pride](#)” activity in the framework of the Hanoi Pride Rally & Festival Event. More than 50 GIZ Viet Nam’s employees, their family members and friends participated in cycling across streets in Hanoi City with pride flags and slogans. By joining this activity, they not only had a chance to stand in solidarity with LGBTIQ+ community but also enhanced their health and well-being through cycling.

[1] See an example of job advertisement: [Project Officer on the EU deforestation-free regulation | VUFO - NGO Resource Centre Vietnam \(ngocentre.org.vn\)](#)

[2] IDA: [Together always, united in diversity! \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GIZinVIETNAM/posts/627302836109313>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7064441927999385601>



- Submitting the idea “think diversely, act inclusively” to the GIZ Innovation Fund: The idea was selected as one of the [10 winning ideas from community voting](#) and was able to participate in the launchpad program. The idea was developed by four members of Gender & Diversity Working Group and one potential partner. It focused on developing an online training for businesses to create an inclusive working environment for LGBTIQ+ people that is aligned with legal requirements in Viet Nam and international standards. Unfortunately, the idea was not selected as one of 6 ideas among 20 ones for the Accelerator Program.

2. Gender competence (30% of marks)

Describe the context, your organisational unit and the challenges faced by your organisational unit or country and explain how you contributed to enhancing gender competence among your colleagues or in your organisational unit, a specific team or the company. Share the approaches that have proven successful.

Context:

Over the last decade, there were remarkable changes in the legal framework related to LGBTIQ+ rights in Viet Nam. However, LGBTIQ+ people still face different forms of discrimination in society, especially at the school and workplace. For example, a study found that nearly 30% of LGBTIQ+ individuals have been rejected for job applications because they are LGBTIQ+ while 50% of the LGBTIQ+ people reported experiencing discrimination or harassment at work . This is due to the fact that employers and co-workers generally do not have enough information and knowledge about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) as well as LGBTIQ+ rights. Besides, there is no provision in the Labour Code to prevent discrimination based on SOGI. Against this context, GIZ Viet Nam itself needs to sensitize staff on this topic to create a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Approaches:

In 2023, GIZ Viet Nam applied two key approaches of enhancing gender and diversity competences of its staff through training for national staff and awareness raising activities. The two-day training was conducted for national staff with an aim of enhancing their knowledge and understanding on promoting gender equality within the organization and service delivery. Participants learned about the theoretical foundation of gender theories (essentialism, neutrality, social construction, gender diversity), gender analytical frameworks as well as the cultural and social construction of gender in Viet Nam’s history. They were then guided to use these theories and the analytical framework to analyze the application and feasibility of German Feminist Development Policy in the context of Viet Nam. Participants also used the gender continuum to identify the levels and gaps of gender mainstreaming in their projects. Intersectionality and cultural diversity were also integrated into the training content. In the meantime, the key concepts of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and gender characteristics (SOGIESC) and LGBTIQ+ rights were also integrated into games and discussions with the speakers in the talk shows as mentioned in Part 1.

Initial results

Pre- and post-test results showed an improvement in participants’ gender knowledge, including intersectionality, SOGIESC after participation in the two-day training.

More importantly, LGBTIQ+ colleagues feel motivated and inspired by the support of managers and colleagues. For example, one of them decided to come out to their team members during Pride Month. In the meantime, the country’s management team has shown more commitment and support for an inclusive and tolerant workplace, while other colleagues’ awareness of gender diversity has increased (see stories of change in page 4).

DESCRIPTION	BEFORE TRAINING (Mean)	AFTER TRAINING (Mean)	Mean difference
Gender Norm	2.32	3.86	1.54
Substantive Gender Equality	1.79	3.62	1.83
Intersectionality	1.53	3.76	2.24
Gender construction in Vietnam culture	1.79	3.57	1.78
Women position in different period of Vietnam culture	2.47	3.62	1.15

Table 1. Average score of attendees’ understanding of gender concepts on a 4-point scale.

DESCRIPTION	BEFORE TRAINING	AFTER TRAINING	Mean difference
Gender Essentialism	1.21	3.19	1.98
Gender Neutrality	1.26	3.10	1.83
Social Construction of Gender	1.53	3.14	1.62
Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC)	2.00	3.14	1.14

Table 2. Average score of participants’ understanding of gender theories on a 4-point scale



3. Cooperation (20% of marks)

Gender equality cannot be achieved by individuals alone. It is a joint task – how did you go about it? Who did you cooperate with? What were the major challenges you encountered individually or together? What were the three key success factors? What were the outcomes?



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I, being queer myself, was genuinely amazed by the broad, enthusiastic, and joyful participation of so many colleagues in the pride activities in June, the Pride Month. Colleagues have sent a strong signal for diversity and increasing visibility of LGBTIQ+ in GIZ Viet Nam.

Daniel Herrmann,
Chief Technical Advisor, GIZ Viet Nam



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"As an openly queer person, I feel heartwarming to see the whole organisation support the spirit of IDAHOBIT by hanging flags and taking group photos with broad smiles. It is a sign saying that I am safe and welcome here."

Dang Thuy Duong
Former Project officer, GIZ Viet Nam



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I'm happy to see that in my team people can freely express who they are including their gender identities & sexual orientation. It is the evidence of mutual trust and understanding and it opens up to meaningful relationships, within and beyond our workplace.

Nguyen Thi Phuong Lan,
Project Officer, GIZ Viet Nam



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"A workplace characterized by diversity and tolerance feels safe and is, in my opinion, more inclusive, more inspiring, more creative, and therefore more appealing and rewarding for both employer and employee."

Regina Ecker
Country Director GIZ Viet Nam

With strong support and steering of the country management team, especially the country director, the promotion of gender equality and diversity has become an essential part of everyone's responsibility. For example, the country's Gender Focal Points worked with HR to update relevant HR documents in terms of gender and diversity. They also teamed up with the Corporate Health Management (CHM) Group to organize the "Riding4Pride" to stand in solidarity with LGBTIQ+ community and enhance our health and well-being through cycling. PR/communication focal points supported to design and production of communication products for gender and diversity activities.

What challenge remains is that colleagues are often overburdened with their daily tasks while they still have limited knowledge on specific gender equality and diversity aspects. Thus, they are not really keen on gender & diversity topic.

Three key success factors:

- *Bottom-up initiative meets top-down directive:* During the country planning, the Country Gender Focal Point shared the needs of staff, especially LGBTIQ+ colleagues to include diversity as a specific topic into the Country Plan. This recommendation was recognized and supported by the country management team. The Country Director regularly emphasizes the importance of gender equality and diversity. During remarks for events, in written communication like emails, she motivates and inspires all staff to firmly integrate gender equality and diversity into the work of GIZ Viet Nam. A small amount of budget was allocated for organizing internal gender and diversity activities.
- *Complementarity of gender and diversity with other topics:* As gender & diversity is a cross-cutting issue, it should be integrated into all work. However, it can be seen as an additional workload as people do not recognize its importance and necessity. It is therefore important to demonstrate the complementarity of Gender & Diversity activities with other work. For example, the 'Riding4Pride' activity helps to achieve the twin goals of promoting gender diversity and well-being. Or gender responsive and diverse HR recruitment process can contribute to achievement of equal opportunity within the organization.
- *Diversity without inclusion is not enough:* In addition to increasing the visibility of LGBTIQ+ colleagues by setting up a Gender & Diversity Working Group and updating HR documents, it is important to make them feel included and safe in the workplace. Collective actions of hanging pride flags, group photos and cycling for pride are the first step in showing solidarity with LGBTIQ+ colleagues. In addition, they have co-organized activities such as hosting talk shows and being speakers so that can raise their voices to create a diverse and inclusive workplace.