

## Development Cooperation from a Partner Perspective: How can Germany and other donors perform better in the eyes of their partner countries?

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# DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FROM A PARTNER PERSPECTIVE

*How can Germany and other donors perform better in  
the eyes of their partner countries?*

2020

## Abstract

Partner perspectives are of particular relevance for Germany and the international donor community, because partner countries can increasingly select with whom they cooperate. Thus, favourable donor assessments by partners will become important for a donor to stay in the game and to be able to eventually contribute to the achievement of development outcomes in countries of the Global South. In addition, donors should have an interest in knowing how their support for internal policy processes in their partner countries is assessed by those countries' policymakers and practitioners, because these partner-country stakeholders can be expected to be among the best judges of the quality of the support provided.

Even as partner countries play an increasingly important role in development cooperation over the last decade, research about partner assessments of donors remains rare. This study fills this research gap by asking how partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess Germany's and other donors' support and what donors can do to improve the quality of their support in the eyes of their partners. It builds on an earlier joint study by AidData and DEval that focused on analysing assessments of Germany's official development cooperation.

This study is a collaboration and is based on AidData's 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey, involving nearly 2,400 partner-country policymakers and representatives of civil society and the private sector. We complement the survey with 136 qualitative interviews involving 193 partner-country policymakers and practitioners in four country case studies (Albania, Cambodia, Colombia, and Malawi). Based on a conceptual framework that draws on the policy cycle model, we analyse two measures of partner assessment: donors' perceived influence in agenda setting and perceived helpfulness in policy implementation.

The aim of this study is to inform donors about how to improve their support for internal policy processes in the eyes of partners. Results show that action can be taken at three levels: partner-country selection and resource allocation (macro level), adherence to aid effectiveness principles (meso level), and donor-partner interactions (micro level).

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## Imprint

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## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Im vorliegenden Bericht wird der Frage nachgegangen, wie lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen in Entwicklungs- und Schwellenländern die Unterstützungsleistung Deutschlands und anderer Geber<sup>1</sup> für lokale Politikprozesse bewerten. Darüber hinaus wird aufgezeigt, welche Maßnahmen Geber ergreifen können, um ihre Unterstützungsleistungen aus Sicht ihrer Partner zu verbessern.

### Warum die Einschätzungen der Partner wichtig sind

Im Wesentlichen lassen sich zwei Gründe anführen, warum es wichtig ist, wie politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen die Unterstützungsleistung der Geber in Politikprozessen in Partnerländern – konkret beim Agenda-Setting und bei der Implementierung nationaler Politiken – einschätzen.

Erstens führen die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in vielen Entwicklungs- und Schwellenländern sowie die steigende Anzahl an Gebern dazu, dass sich das Angebot an Finanzmitteln und Politikideen für Partnerländer kontinuierlich erweitert (Janus et al., 2015; Klingebiel et al., 2016; Parks et al., 2015). In einem solchen „Zeitalter der Wahlmöglichkeiten“ („age of choice“) (Prizzon et al., 2016) können Partnerländer zunehmend entscheiden, mit wem sie zusammenarbeiten wollen und wen sie in Verhandlungen über nationale Entwicklungsschwerpunkte und politische Agenden einbeziehen. In den kommenden Jahren wird dies voraussichtlich den Wettbewerb unter den Gebern als Anbieter von Politikideen und Implementierungsunterstützung weiter verstärken (Acharya et al., 2006; Frot und Santiso, 2010; Gonsior und Klingebiel, 2019; Mawdsley, 2015; Morris, 2018). Damit ein Geber „im Spiel bleiben“ und zur Erreichung von Entwicklungszielen in den Ländern des globalen Südens beitragen kann, wird eine positive Bewertung seiner Unterstützungsleistung durch politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen in Partnerländern an Bedeutung gewinnen.

Zweitens kann angenommen werden, dass lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen die Qualität der Unterstützungsleistung für lokale Politikprozesse der Geber mit am besten einschätzen können. Im Hinblick auf ein Verständnis von Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (EZ) als „Katalysator“ für eine in den Partnerländern selbst verursachte Entwicklungsdynamik (Pronk, 2001) birgt der Ansatz, die Wirksamkeit von EZ lediglich direkt an Entwicklungsergebnissen wie dem Wirtschaftswachstum zu ermessen, beachtliche Herausforderungen. Vielmehr kann der Zusammenhang zwischen der EZ-Unterstützungsleistung für lokale Politikprozesse und Entwicklungsergebnissen als indirekter Wirkungsmechanismus betrachtet werden. Deshalb werden der bewertete Einfluss und die bewertete Nützlichkeit der Geberunterstützung für lokale Politikprozesse in Partnerländern herangezogen (beziehungsweise gemessen), um den Beitrag der Geber in geeigneter Weise widerzuspiegeln.

Angesichts des Wettbewerbs zwischen Gebern ist die Wahrnehmung ihres Image durch die Partner hinreichend bedeutsam für sie, um diesbezüglich gut abzuschneiden. Im *Listening to Leaders Survey* werden allerdings nicht nur die Wahrnehmungen (*perceptions*) untersucht. Der Survey bildet zudem die erfahrungsbasierten Bewertungen der Geberunterstützungsleistung durch diejenigen ab, die diese Leistung mit am besten einschätzen können sollten. Dementsprechend sollten diese Bewertungen der Partner ernst genommen werden. Ausgehend davon, werden in diesem Bericht die beiden Begriffe „Wahrnehmungen“ und „Bewertungen“ verwendet, um die im Survey gemessenen Items zu beschreiben.

### Leitfragen und empirischer Ansatz

Vor dem Hintergrund des Stellenwerts der Partnerperspektive wird in der vorliegenden Studie die Unterstützungsleistung der Geber in den Phasen des Agenda-Settings und der Politikimplementierung der lokalen Politikprozesse aus Sicht politischer Entscheidungstragender und Praktiker\*innen aus 126 Entwicklungs- und

<sup>1</sup> Der Begriff "Geber" wurde im Kontext der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit überwiegend zugunsten des Wortes "Entwicklungspartner" abgelöst, um eine Beziehung auf Augenhöhe und von gemeinsamem Interesse auszudrücken. Aus dem gleichen Grund wurde der Begriff "Empfänger" weitgehend durch „Partner“ ersetzt. Zur besseren Lesbarkeit verwendet dieser Bericht den Begriff "Geber", um auf Anbieter von Unterstützungsleistungen in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit zu verweisen und "Partner" oder "Partnerland", um die „Empfänger“ zu benennen.

Schwellenländern untersucht. Darüber hinaus werden Faktoren identifiziert, die die Bewertung der Geberunterstützung durch ihre Partner erklären. Diese Faktoren können drei Handlungsebenen zugeordnet werden: 1. strategische Entscheidungen über die Vergabe von EZ-Mitteln und die Auswahl der Partnerländer (Makroebene), 2. Einhaltung der Grundprinzipien wirksamer EZ durch die Geber (Mesoebene) und 3. Interaktionen zwischen Partnern und Gebern vor Ort (Mikroebene).

Im vorliegenden gemeinsamen Bericht von DEval und AidData werden die Partnerbewertungen der Geberunterstützung für bi- und multilaterale Geber im Allgemeinen sowie für die deutsche staatliche EZ im Besonderen untersucht. Die Leitfragen des Berichts sind wie folgt:

#### **Bewertungen der bi- und multilateralen Geber**

1. Wie bewerten lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen die Unterstützungsleistung der Geber in den Phasen des Agenda-Settings und der Politikimplementierung?
2. Welche Faktoren erklären die Unterschiede in der Bewertung der Unterstützungsleistung der Geber durch lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen in den Phasen des Agenda-Settings und der Politikimplementierung?

#### **Bewertung der deutschen staatlichen EZ**

3. Wie bewerten lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen die Unterstützungsleistung der deutschen staatlichen EZ in den Phasen des Agenda-Settings und der Politikimplementierung?
4. Welche Faktoren erklären die unterschiedliche Bewertung der Unterstützungsleistung durch die deutsche EZ seitens lokaler politischer Entscheidungstragender und Praktiker\*innen in den Phasen des Agenda-Settings und der Politikimplementierung?

Basierend auf dem im Jahr 2017 von AidData durchgeführten *Listening to Leaders Survey*, werden in der Studie Daten zur Bewertung der Geberunterstützung im Agenda-Setting und bei der Politikimplementierung analysiert. Diese beiden entscheidenden Phasen im Politikprozess eines Partnerlandes können von Gebern genutzt werden, um zur Realisierung von Entwicklungszielen beizutragen. Im Jahr 2017 beteiligten sich fast 2.400 lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen aus Regierung (62,6 %), Zivilgesellschaft (29,8 %) und Privatwirtschaft (7,6 %) an der Studie und informierten über ihre Erfahrungen in der Zusammenarbeit mit bi- und multilateralen Gebern. Zu einem der drei deutschen Akteure – Botschaften, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) oder Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) – gaben 375 Befragte Bewertungen ab.

Im Rahmen dieser Studie werden die Umfragedaten mit Erkenntnissen aus vier Länderfallstudien (Albanien, Kambodscha, Kolumbien und Malawi) ergänzt. Insgesamt wurden in den Länderfallstudien Interviews mit 193 Personen aus dem In- und Ausland durchgeführt (davon 101 lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen: 69,3 % aus Regierung und dem öffentlichen Sektor, 24,8 % aus der Zivilgesellschaft und 5,9 % aus der Privatwirtschaft).

Die Länderfallstudien sind in zweierlei Hinsicht von Bedeutung. Erstens untersuchen sie, wie politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen die Begriffe „Einflussnahme auf das Agenda-Setting“ und „Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung“ verstehen. Zweitens liefern sie ein besseres Verständnis zu den vorab angenommenen Erklärungsfaktoren, durch die Geber als einflussreicher und nützlicher bewertet werden könnten, und erschließen neue Erklärungsfaktoren, die vor der Durchführung der Fallstudien nicht identifiziert wurden.

### **Wie bewerten politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen in Partnerländern die Unterstützungsleistung der Geber?**

#### **Hauptergebnisse I: bi- und multilaterale Geber**

- Bi- und multilaterale Geber erreichen im Durchschnitt Werte zwischen 2,5 und 3,5 auf einer Skala von 1 (überhaupt nicht einflussreich/überhaupt nicht nützlich) bis 4 (sehr einflussreich/sehr nützlich) und werden damit als „ziemlich einflussreich“ und „ziemlich nützlich“ bewertet. Dabei sind jedoch deutliche Unterschiede zwischen einzelnen Gebern zu erkennen. Beispielsweise werden multilaterale Geber im



Durchschnitt als einflussreicher beim Agenda-Setting und nützlicher bei der Politikimplementierung bewertet als bilaterale Geber.

- Die vier Länderfallstudien zeigen, dass der Einfluss der Geber auf das Agenda-Setting und ihre Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung im Großen und Ganzen positiv bewertet werden.
- Die Befragten schätzen Geber, die Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting haben, auch als nützlich bei der Politikimplementierung ein. Während die Bewertung der Nützlichkeit der Geber ebenso mit höherem Fortschritt bei Politikinitiativen zusammenhängt, besteht zwischen bewertetem Fortschritt und der Bewertung des Einflusses der Geber kein Zusammenhang.

**Bi- und multilaterale Geber werden im Durchschnitt als „ziemlich einflussreich“ beim Agenda-Setting und „ziemlich nützlich“ bei der Politikimplementierung in Entwicklungs- und Schwellenländern eingeschätzt.**

**Relativ gesehen bewerten die Befragten multilaterale Organisationen als einflussreicher und nützlicher als bilaterale Geber.** Multilaterale Geber werden als einflussreicher (Durchschnittsbewertung: 3,00) und nützlicher (Durchschnittsbewertung: 3,28) als bilaterale Geber eingestuft (Durchschnittsbewertung Einfluss: 2,85; Durchschnittsbewertung Nützlichkeit: 3,15). In unserer Erhebung zu 43 bi- und multilateralen Gebern bilden die Top Ten in Bezug auf den bewerteten Einfluss und ihre Nützlichkeit eine gemischte Gruppe von Gebern. Der Internationale Währungsfonds, die Weltbank, die USA, die Europäische Union (EU) und das Kinderhilfswerk der Vereinten Nationen (UNICEF) werden im Vergleich zum Durchschnittswert aller bewerteten Geber als einflussreicher und nützlicher eingeschätzt. Andere Geber haben in der Regel einen Vorsprung in Bezug auf eine der beiden Bewertungsgrößen. Die drei bilateralen Geber, die in der Umfrage unter den zehn einflussreichsten Gebern platziert sind, sind die USA und Großbritannien als zwei große Geber des Development Assistance Committee (DAC) sowie Dänemark als eher kleiner und spezialisierter Geber. Dieses Ergebnis zeigt, dass ein hohes Gesamtvolumen an bereitgestellter öffentlicher EZ (Official Development Assistance, ODA) oder ein umfangreiches Projektportfolio nicht zwangsläufig zu höheren Einflusswerten führt. Der einzige bilaterale Geber unter den Top Ten der nützlichsten Geber sind die USA.

**In den Länderfallstudien zeigt sich, dass lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen im Allgemeinen den Einfluss der Geber als Input bewerten, der sie bei der Bewältigung ihrer Entwicklungsherausforderungen unterstützt. Dementsprechend wird Einfluss als eine positive Unterstützungsleistung interpretiert. Dennoch gibt es einige Fallbeispiele, in denen Einfluss negativ eingeschätzt wird, zum Beispiel, wenn Geber partnerseitige Interessen missachten.** Lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen beschreiben die Einflussnahme der Geber auf das Agenda-Setting in den Länderfallstudien vorwiegend als die Ausarbeitung neuer politischer Agenden beziehungsweise als ein Beisteuern relevanter Beiträge zu diesen, als Unterstützungsleistung bei der Modifizierung bereits vorliegender Agenden oder als Engagement zur Aufrechterhaltung politischer Prioritäten im Falle von Regierungswechseln. In den Länderfallstudien wird der Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting im Allgemeinen positiv eingeschätzt, das heißt als ein Beitrag zur Lösung der Entwicklungsherausforderungen der Partnerländer. In einigen wenigen Fällen äußern jedoch lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen in Bezug auf die Einflussnahme auch Kritik. Einerseits merken einige wenige Regierungsvertreter\*innen an, dass „Einfluss“ nicht der richtige Begriff sei, um die Art ihrer Partnerschaft mit den Gebern zu beschreiben. Ihrer Ansicht nach impliziert Zusammenarbeit vorwiegend gegenseitigen Respekt. Dabei gehe es weniger um den Einfluss der Geber als vielmehr um die Unterstützungsleistung der Entscheidungsprozesse der Partner. Andererseits wird Einfluss in einigen wenigen Beispielen negativ gewertet, und zwar dann, wenn die Geber ihre eigenen Interessen zu stark in den Vordergrund stellen und die Präferenzen oder Argumente der Partner nicht berücksichtigen.

**Die qualitative Analyse legt nahe, dass die Befragten eine nützliche Unterstützungsleistung besonders mit der Einführung sektorweiter Lösungsansätze und dem Aufbau lokaler Kapazitäten verbinden.** In den vier Fallstudien verstehen lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen die Nützlichkeit von Gebern bei der Politikimplementierung hauptsächlich als verschiedene Formen nützlicher Unterstützung, die sie im Bereich der technischen, aber auch der finanziellen Zusammenarbeit erhalten. Da die Nützlichkeit ausschließlich positiv bewertet wird, ist das Fazit, dass eine hohe Bewertung in diesem Bereich ein wünschenswertes Ergebnis ist. In den Länderfallstudien fallen zwei Aspekte auf, die bei der Politikimplementierung als nützlich eingeschätzt werden: der Einsatz sektorweiter Ansätze und der Aufbau lokaler Kapazitäten.

**Geber, die Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting haben, werden von den Befragten auch als nützlich bei der Politikimplementierung eingeschätzt.** In Entwicklungs- und Schwellenländern zeigt die Befragung, dass als einflussreich eingestufte Geber in der Regel auch als nützlich wahrgenommen werden, und umgekehrt. Dennoch sollten Geber nicht davon ausgehen, dass dieser positive Zusammenhang automatisch gegeben ist. In den Länderfallstudien werden Faktoren aufgezeigt, die diesem positiven Zusammenhang entgegenwirken könnten. Erstens, wenn ein Geber größtenteils seine eigenen politischen Zielsetzungen durchzusetzen versucht: In diesem Fall stimmen die Partner möglicherweise zu, diese in ihre politischen Strategiepapiere zu integrieren, werden deren Umsetzung im Anschluss jedoch gegebenenfalls nicht priorisieren. Zweitens, im Falle eines Regierungswechsels im Partnerland (zum Beispiel nach Wahlen), bei dem die neue Regierung möglicherweise keine Prioritäten auf die Verpflichtungen der vorigen setzt. In beiden Fällen könnten die Partner folglich einen Geber als einflussreich einschätzen, zum Beispiel, weil der Geber ein wichtiges Thema erfolgreich in die Agenda eingebracht hat, aber dennoch nicht als nützlich in der Politikimplementierung, da die Projekte nicht umgesetzt werden.

**Es besteht ein positiver Zusammenhang zwischen der Fortschrittsbewertung von Politikinitiativen und der Bewertung der Nützlichkeit von Gebern.** Wir nehmen an, dass eine positivere Bewertung der Geber in Bezug auf Einfluss und Nützlichkeit mit der Wahrnehmung von größerem Fortschritt einer Politikinitiative verbunden ist. Die Umfrageergebnisse zeigen eine positive Korrelation zwischen dem wahrgenommenen Fortschritt von Politikinitiativen und der bewerteten Nützlichkeit der Geber, nicht aber zwischen dem wahrgenommenen Fortschritt von Politikinitiativen und dem bewerteten Einfluss der Geber. Allerdings gibt es auch keinen negativen Zusammenhang zwischen dem bewerteten Einfluss der Geber und dem bewerteten Fortschritt einer Politikinitiative. Diese Korrelationen zwischen bewertetem Einfluss, Nützlichkeit und Fortschritt weisen somit darauf hin, dass der Ansatz von Gebern, sich um Einfluss auf das politische Agenda-Setting der Partner zu bemühen und sie anschließend bei der Implementierung dieser Politiken zu unterstützen, um Entwicklungsziele zu erreichen, durchaus erfolgreich sein kann.

### Was erklärt die Bewertung der Geberunterstützung aus Sicht ihrer Partner?

#### Hauptergebnisse II: bi- und multilaterale Geber

- Faktoren, die eine Bewertung des Einflusses und der Nützlichkeit eines Gebers durch lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen beeinflussen können, wurden auf drei Handlungsebenen ermittelt: 1. strategische Entscheidungen über die Vergabe von EZ-Mitteln und die Auswahl der Partnerländer (Makroebene), 2. Einhaltung der Grundprinzipien wirksamer EZ durch die Geber (Mesoebene) und 3. Interaktionen zwischen Partnern und Gebern vor Ort (Mikroebene).
  - Makroebene: Der Anteil der bereitgestellten EZ-Mittel eines Gebers am Gesamtvolumen der EZ-Mittel aller Geber für ein bestimmtes Partnerland hängt positiv mit dem bewerteten Einfluss dieses Gebers auf das Agenda-Setting und mit seiner bewerteten Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung zusammen.
  - Mesoebene: Die Einhaltung verschiedener Grundprinzipien wirksamer EZ durch die Geber steht in einem positiven Zusammenhang mit der Bewertung des Einflusses und/oder der Nützlichkeit der Geber durch lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen.
  - Mikroebene: Lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen heben Aspekte der Geber-Partner-Beziehung hervor, die die Nützlichkeit der Geber in ihren Augen erhöht. Dies sind beispielsweise die Expertise der Geber, ihre Flexibilität in Unterstützungsprozessen, kooperative Partnerschaften und die Qualität der Beziehungen.

### ***Faktoren, die strategische Entscheidungen über die Vergabe von EZ-Mitteln und die Auswahl der Partnerländer betreffen (Makroebene)***

**Die Umfrageanalyse ergab, dass der Anteil der bereitgestellten EZ-Mittel eines Gebers am Gesamtvolumen der EZ-Mittel aller Geber für ein Partnerland positiv mit dem bewerteten Einfluss dieses Gebers auf das Agenda-Setting und mit seiner bewerteten Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung zusammenhängt.** Dieses Ergebnis ergänzt Faust et al. (2016), die auch einen positiven Effekt der geleisteten EZ-Mittel eines Gebers (wie in dieser Studie ebenfalls gemessen als länderprogrammierbare EZ [Country Programmable Aid, CPA]) im Vergleich zum Gesamtvolumen der geleisteten EZ in einem Partnerland auf den bewerteten Einfluss der deutschen EZ feststellten. Allerdings wurde in der Vorgängerstudie kein Effekt auf die bewertete Nützlichkeit konstatiert. Das Analyseergebnis bestätigt ebenso, dass EZ als Mittel genutzt werden kann, um Einfluss auf politische Initiativen zu erzielen; dies deckt sich mit anderen Veröffentlichungen (Dietrich and Wright, 2012; Molenaers et al., 2015).

**Die Analyse zeigt einen negativen Zusammenhang zwischen der Fragmentierung der EZ und der eingeschätzten Nützlichkeit der Geber.** In Ländern mit einer hohen Fragmentierung der EZ bewerten lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen die Geber als weniger nützlich bei der Politikimplementierung. Ein robuster Zusammenhang zwischen der Fragmentierung der EZ und dem bewerteten Einfluss beim Agenda-Setting lässt sich zwar nicht nachweisen, der Zusammenhang deutet aber in dieselbe Richtung.

**Es wurden keine Effekte des Demokratie- beziehungsweise Autokratieniveaus und der Abhängigkeit von EZ eines Partnerlandes auf die Bewertung des Einflusses der Geber beim Agenda-Setting und ihrer Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung festgestellt.** Das Demokratie- beziehungsweise Autokratieniveau eines Partnerlandes hat keinen direkten Einfluss auf die Einschätzung des Einflusses und der Nützlichkeit der Geber. Obgleich das Demokratieniveau für viele Geber ein wichtiger Aspekt bei der Vergabe von EZ-Mitteln ist, steht es erneut – wie auch im ersten AidData-DEval-Bericht (Faust et al., 2016) – in keinem direkten Zusammenhang mit den Partnerbewertungen der Geberunterstützung im lokalen Politikprozess. Darüber hinaus wird aufgrund der Erkenntnisse aus den Länderfallstudien angenommen, dass die Einschätzung des Einflusses und der Nützlichkeit eines Gebers umso besser ist, je höher die Abhängigkeit eines Partnerlandes von der EZ ist. Im Gegensatz dazu zeigen jedoch die statistischen Korrelationsanalysen keinen robusten Effekt der Abhängigkeit von EZ auf die Bewertung der Geberunterstützung durch die Partner.

### ***Faktoren in Bezug auf die Einhaltung der Grundprinzipien wirksamer EZ durch die Geber (Mesoebene)***

**Die Bereitstellung eines höheren Anteils an EZ-Mitteln, die über den Haushalt der Partnerländer erfasst werden (*aid on budget*), oder eines höheren Anteils allgemeiner Budgethilfe steht in einem positiven Zusammenhang mit der Bewertung des Gebereinflusses auf das Agenda-Setting. *Aid on budget* korreliert zudem positiv mit der Bewertung der Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung.** Unsere anfänglichen Erwartungen bestätigten sich und die Bereitstellung allgemeiner Budgethilfe steht in Zusammenhang mit einer positiveren Bewertung der Geber in Bezug auf ihren Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting. Ein höherer Anteil an EZ-Mitteln, der über den Haushalt der Partnerländer erfasst wird (*aid on budget*), führt zudem aus Partner-sicht zu einer Bewertung der Geber sowohl als einflussreicher als auch als nützlicher. Da diese Art von EZ-Mitteln Budgetprozesse erleichtern und eine umfassendere Rechenschaftspflicht unterstützen sollen, lässt sich dies als ein entscheidender Schritt in Richtung Partnerausrichtung (Alignment) interpretieren (CABRI, 2014; OECD, 2012). Letzteres gilt auch für die Budgethilfe, von der ebenfalls eine Förderung der nationalen Rechenschaftspflicht (Frantz, 2004), eine Verbesserung der öffentlichen Verwaltungssysteme (Lawson, 2015) und eine Erhöhung der Haushaltstransparenz (Schmitt, 2017) sowie potenziell eine stärkere Harmonisierung unter den Gebern erwartet wird (Orth et al., 2017). In den Länderfallstudien heben politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen die generelle Bedeutung von Alignment der Geber ebenfalls hervor. Im Gegensatz dazu zeigt unsere Analyse, dass die Nutzung von länderspezifischen Haushaltsausführungs-, Finanzberichterstattungs-, Prüfungs- und Beschaffungssystemen (*use of country systems*) nicht positiv mit der Einschätzung des Einflusses und der Nützlichkeit von Gebern verbunden ist.

**Geberkoordinierung, die mit dem Einsatz von *pooled funding* einhergeht, steht in Zusammenhang mit positiver bewertetem Einfluss und positiver bewerteter Nützlichkeit der Geber.** Obwohl es viele Möglichkeiten für eine bessere Koordinierung der Geber gibt, fokussiert die Studie auf eine Vorgehensweise, nämlich

den Einsatz von Korbfinanzierungskonzepten (*pooled funding*). Unsere Ergebnisse zeigen, dass in den Ländern, in denen Geber einen höheren Anteil der EZ durch Korbfinanzierungskonzepte bereitstellen, die Befragten die Geber als einflussreicher und nützlicher bewerten. Interessanterweise scheint die Frage, ob ein einzelner Geber seine Mittel mit anderen Gebern in einem bestimmten Land in einem Pool zusammenlegt, keinen Einfluss auf die Bewertung seiner eigenen Unterstützungsleistung zu haben. Vielmehr wird dadurch ein förderliches Umfeld geschaffen, in dem die Geber generell als einflussreicher und nützlicher eingeschätzt werden. Politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen in drei der vier Fallstudien (Albanien, Kambodscha und Malawi) betonen die Notwendigkeit einer verbesserten Zusammenarbeit und Kommunikation zwischen den Gebern und betrachten deren Kooperation als nützlich.

**Gemäß der Analyse besteht ein positiver Zusammenhang zwischen der Planbarkeit von EZ für das laufende Jahr und der Einschätzung des Einflusses der Geber und ihrer Nützlichkeit durch die Partner.** Wie angenommen, wurden Geber als einflussreicher und nützlicher bewertet, wenn ihre EZ für das laufende Jahr planbarer ist. Anders als die Umfrage, die als Indikator die Planbarkeit für das laufende Jahr enthält, wird in den Länderfallstudien hauptsächlich eine Verbindung zwischen Planbarkeit und einem oft plötzlichen Ausstieg von Gebern oder Veränderungen der Geberverpflichtungen hergestellt.

**Die Analyse der Umfrage zeigt, dass „Berücksichtigung von Ownership“ in einem positiven Zusammenhang mit der Bewertung des Einflusses der Geber auf das Agenda-Setting und der Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung steht.** Befragte, die berichteten, dass die Politikinitiativen, in denen sie arbeiteten, breite lokale Unterstützung erhielten – also von mehreren lokalen Akteuren unterstützt wurden (zum Beispiel durch Staatsführung, Parlament, Justiz und zivilgesellschaftliche Gruppen) –, bewerteten Geber als einflussreicher und nützlicher. Ähnliche Effekte zeigten sich bereits im ersten AidData-DEval-Bericht, in dem ein positiver Zusammenhang festgestellt wurde zwischen lokaler Unterstützung und dem wahrgenommenen Einfluss Deutschlands auf das Agenda-Setting sowie seiner wahrgenommenen Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung (Faust et al., 2016). Des Weiteren steht diese Feststellung im Einklang mit Befunden von Keijzer und Black (2020: 1–2), die zeigen, dass lokales Ownership für eine effektive Nutzung der Entwicklungsfinanzierung wichtig ist. Obwohl wir nicht mit Sicherheit von einer kausalen Beziehung ausgehen können, ist die lokale Unterstützung ein relevanter Faktor, den man künftig näher untersuchen sollte – besonders vor dem Hintergrund des Nachhaltigkeitsziels 17 „Partnerschaften zur Erreichung der Ziele“.

### **Faktoren der Geber-Partner-Interaktion vor Ort (Mikroebene)**

**In den Länderfallstudien gibt es Hinweise, dass politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen diejenigen Geber als nützlich erachten, die Expertise einbringen und Flexibilität in ihren Arbeitsprozessen zeigen.** Politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen in den Fallstudienländern bewerten Expertise bei Gebern als nützlich, besonders wenn wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse und Analysen eingebracht werden, technisches Know-how bereitgestellt wird und länderspezifische Erfahrungen vorhanden sind. In allen vier Fallstudienländern schätzen Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen zudem flexible Arbeitsprozesse. Sie betrachten starre Prozesse bei der Projektplanung (zum Beispiel lange Konzeptionsphasen, komplizierte Verfahren und Fristen) als hinderlich, da diese sich ändernden politischen Dynamiken und Akteurskonstellationen spezifischer Reformprozesse nicht gerecht werden können.

**Die Ergebnisse der Länderfallstudien legen den Schluss nahe, dass kooperative Partnerschaften, die sich durch Aufgeschlossenheit für Ideen, Vertrauen und kulturelle Sensibilität auszeichnen, die Nützlichkeit der Geber bei der Politikimplementierung aus Sicht ihrer Partner erhöhen.** Solche kooperativen Partnerschaften umfassen unterschiedliche Aspekte, die alle auf einer Beziehung basieren, in der Partner und Geber als gleichwertig angesehen werden: Zusammenarbeit (zum Beispiel gemeinsame Beteiligung an Konzeption, Umsetzung, Ausbau und Problemlösung), Vertrauen, respektvolle und ehrliche Kommunikation, langjährige Beziehungen, kulturelle Sensibilität, Nähe, Zuhören und Wertschätzung der Ideen der Partner.

**Die qualitative Analyse zeigt, dass persönliche Beziehungen für die Geber wichtig sind, denn diese erhöhen aus Sicht der lokalen Partner die Bewertung des Einflusses von Gebern auf das Agenda-Setting und ihrer Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung.** In den Fallstudien betonen lokale und internationale Stakeholder (Mitarbeitende der Geber in den jeweiligen Ländern sowie Expert\*innen), dass der Einfluss und die Nütz-

lichkeit eines Gebers mit einzelnen Mitarbeitenden zusammenhängen können, zum Beispiel mit ihren technischen und sozialen Kompetenzen. Andere Aspekte, die in Bezug auf einzelne Mitarbeitende als relevant erscheinen, sind unter anderem Fachkenntnisse, Verantwortungsbewusstsein und Unkompliziertheit, das Aufweisen von Führungsqualitäten und Engagement sowie die Pflege guter zwischenmenschlicher Beziehungen.

### **Wie bewerten lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen die Unterstützungsleistung Deutschlands in den BMZ-Partnerländern?**

In der Studie wird ein besonderer Fokus darauf gelegt, wie die drei in den Partnerländern präsenten deutschen Akteure (Botschaften sowie die Durchführungsorganisationen GIZ und KfW) und die deutsche staatliche EZ insgesamt (gemessen als Aggregat der drei Akteure) im Vergleich zu einer relevanten Peergroup von Gebern hinsichtlich ihres Einflusses auf das Agenda-Setting und ihrer Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung in den 85 Partnerländern des Bundesministeriums für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) abschneiden. Die Peergroup besteht aus vier großen multilateralen Gebern (EU, United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], UNICEF, Weltbank) und den vier größten bilateralen DAC-Gebern neben Deutschland (Großbritannien, Frankreich, Japan, USA), China als wichtigem Nicht-DAC-Geber und schließlich vier eher kleinen und spezialisierten Gebern (Dänemark, Niederlande, Norwegen, Schweden). Letztere wurden aufgenommen, da sie hinsichtlich Einfluss und Nützlichkeit in der ersten AidData-DEval-Studie gut abgeschnitten hatten (Faust et al., 2016). Darüber hinaus wird aufgezeigt, wie einflussreich und nützlich die deutsche staatliche EZ insgesamt und die drei deutschen Akteure nach Stakeholdergruppen (aus Regierung, Nichtregierungsorganisationen/zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen und Privatwirtschaft), Regionen und Politikbereichen in den Augen ihrer Partner abschneiden. Hierbei soll darauf hingewiesen werden, dass aufgrund der geringen Anzahl von Beobachtungsdaten für die deutschen Akteure nicht jede Stakeholdergruppe, jede Region sowie jeder Politikbereich berechnet werden konnten.

## **Hauptergebnisse I: deutsche staatliche EZ**

### **Das Gesamtergebnis für die deutsche staatliche EZ**

- Das Gesamtergebnis der deutschen staatlichen EZ beträgt auf einer Skala von 1 (überhaupt nicht einflussreich/überhaupt nicht nützlich) bis 4 (sehr einflussreich/sehr nützlich) 2,93 für den Einfluss und 3,18 für die Nützlichkeit. Dies deutet darauf hin, dass die deutsche staatliche EZ von lokalen Entscheidungstragenden und Praktiker\*innen als „ziemlich einflussreich“ beim Agenda-Setting und „ziemlich nützlich“ bei der Politikimplementierung eingestuft wird. Deutschlands Gesamtwerte liegen damit auf dem gleichen Niveau wie der Durchschnitt der Peergroup (13 bi- und multilaterale Geber) für die Nützlichkeit und darunter für den Einfluss.
- Aufgeschlüsselt nach Politikbereichen, Regionen und Stakeholdergruppen bewegt sich das deutsche Gesamtergebnis für Nützlichkeit und Einfluss zwischen Werten von 2,68 bis 3,37. Dies zeigt, dass die deutsche staatliche EZ auch in diesen Bereichen als „ziemlich einflussreich“ und „ziemlich nützlich“ bewertet wird. Das Gesamtergebnis liegt überwiegend im selben Bereich wie der Durchschnitt der Peergroup. Nur in Bezug auf den Politikbereich „Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft und öffentliche Verwaltung“ sind die deutschen Gesamtwerte für Einfluss und Nützlichkeit unterdurchschnittlich.

### **Bewertung der Unterstützungsleistung der drei deutschen Akteure**

- Die drei deutschen EZ-Akteure werden unterschiedlich bewertet. Die positiveren Bewertungen der Botschaften hinsichtlich des Einflusses sowie der Durchführungsorganisationen (GIZ und KfW) bezüglich ihrer Nützlichkeit könnten auf ihre unterschiedlichen Mandate zurückzuführen sein.
  - Die deutschen Botschaften liegen hinsichtlich des bewerteten Einflusses auf dem Niveau des Peergroup-Durchschnitts und bei der bewerteten Nützlichkeit darunter.
  - Die GIZ schneidet bei der bewerteten Nützlichkeit auf dem gleichen Niveau ab wie der Durchschnitt der Peergroup und beim Einfluss darunter.
  - Die KfW liegt beim bewerteten Einfluss auf dem Durchschnittsniveau der Peergroup und bei der bewerteten Nützlichkeit darüber. Entsprechend ihrer Aufgabenteilung erzielen GIZ und KfW im

direkten Vergleich zu den Botschaften bei der Einschätzung der Nützlichkeit eine positivere Bewertung.

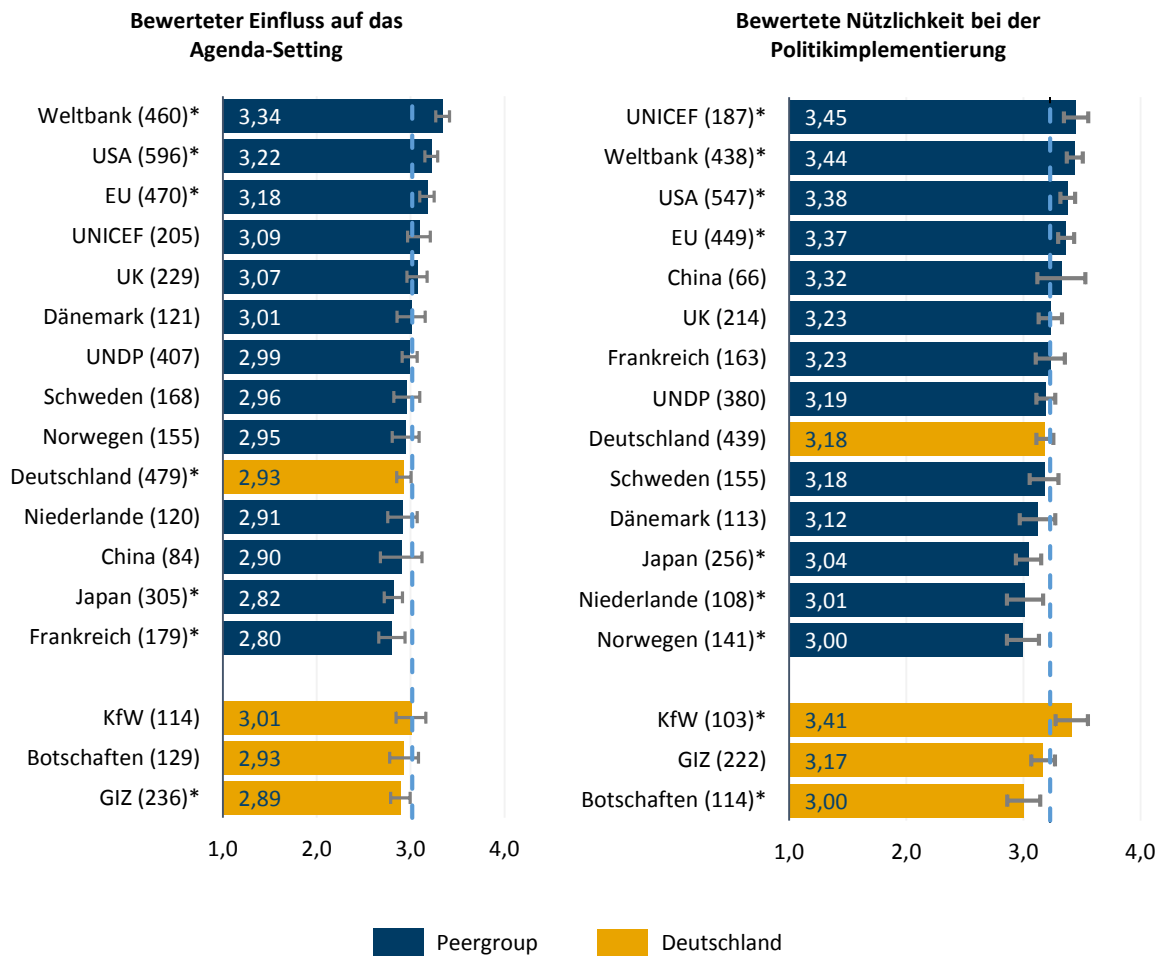
- Die disaggregierten Analysen ergeben, dass alle drei Akteure bei einzelnen Stakeholdergruppen und in verschiedenen Politikbereichen und Regionen im Allgemeinen auf dem gleichen Niveau wie die Peergroup bewertet werden. Nur in einzelnen Bereichen liegen sie über oder unter dem Durchschnitt der Peergroup:
  - Die deutschen Botschaften erhalten im Politikbereich „Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft und öffentliche Verwaltung“ von „Regierungsvertreter\*innen“ und in der Region „Subsahara-Afrika“ geringere Bewertungen zur Nützlichkeit. Dies könnte, wie in der übergeordneten Analyse, auf ihr Mandat zurückzuführen sein.
  - Die GIZ erreicht im Politikbereich „Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft und öffentliche Verwaltung“ bei der Einschätzung des Einflusses und der Nützlichkeit im Peergroup-Vergleich unterdurchschnittliche Werte.
  - Die KfW wird im Vergleich zum Durchschnitt der Peergroup von „Regierungsvertreter\*innen“ und in der Region „Subsahara-Afrika“ als besonders nützlich bewertet.

### **Das Gesamtergebnis für die deutsche staatliche EZ**

**Die deutsche staatliche EZ wird als „ziemlich einflussreich“ beim Agenda-Setting und „ziemlich nützlich“ bei der Politikimplementierung eingestuft. Relativ gesehen liegen Deutschlands Gesamtwerte auf dem gleichen Niveau wie der Durchschnitt der Peergroup (13 bi- und multilaterale Geber) für die Nützlichkeit und darunter für den Einfluss.** Die Einzelbewertungen der drei deutschen EZ-Akteure befinden sich bezüglich bewerteten Einfluss und bewerteter Nützlichkeit auf einer Skala von 1 bis 4 zwischen 2,89 und 3,41. Daraus ergibt sich für die deutsche staatliche EZ ein Gesamtergebnis von 2,93 für Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting und 3,18 für Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung. Beim Einfluss rangiert Deutschland auf Platz 10, wobei alle multilateralen Geber (Weltbank, EU, UNICEF und UNDP) sowie einige große (USA und Großbritannien) und kleine (Dänemark, Schweden und Norwegen) bilaterale DAC-Geber besser abschneiden (siehe Abbildung 1). China steht beim Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting hinter Deutschland. In Bezug auf die Nützlichkeit liegt Deutschland auf Platz 9; auch hier werden alle multilateralen und die meisten großen bilateralen DAC-Geber (USA, Großbritannien und Frankreich) höher bewertet. Ebenso schneidet China bei der Bewertung der Nützlichkeit besser ab als Deutschland, wohingegen alle kleinen DAC-Geber niedriger bewertet werden.

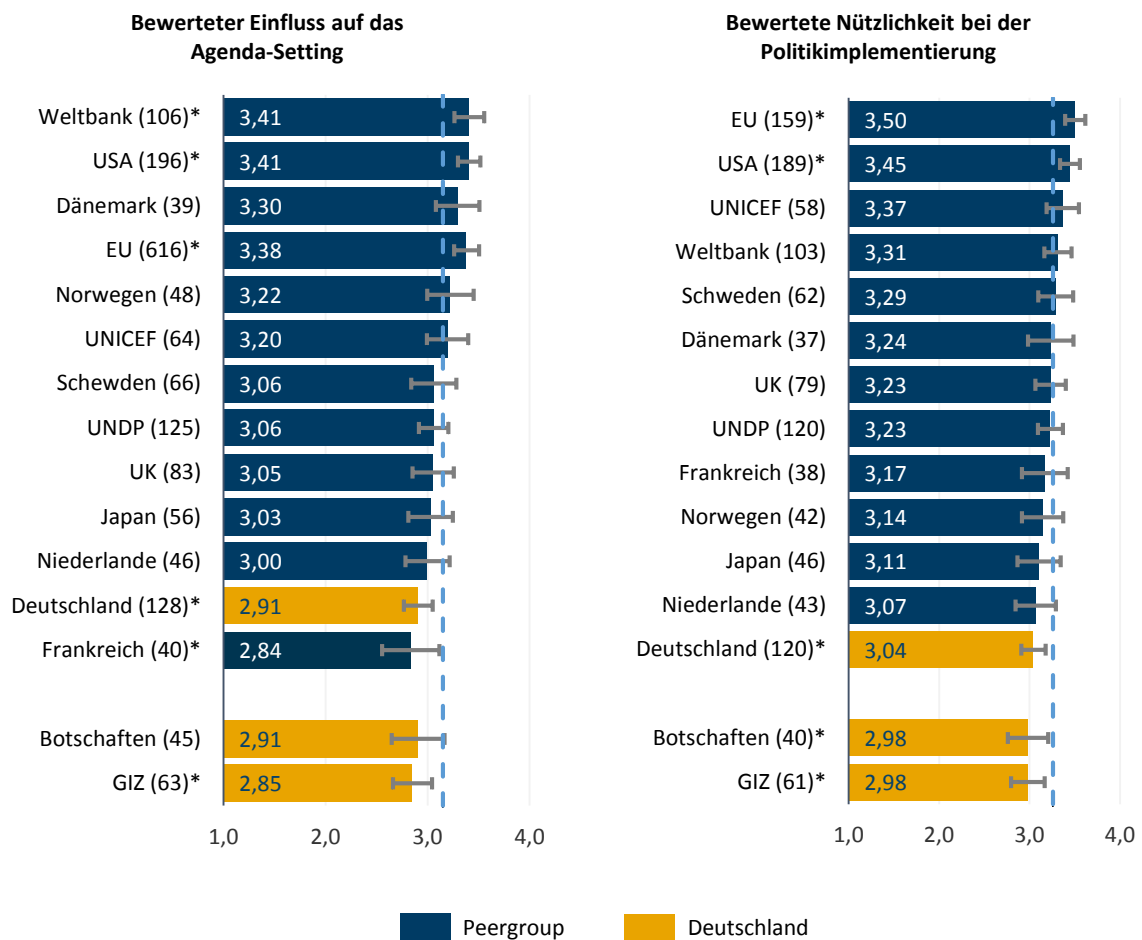
**Die Analysen über Stakeholdergruppen, Regionen und Politikbereiche hinweg zeigen, dass das Gesamtergebnis der deutschen staatlichen EZ in Bezug auf den Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting und die Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung im Großen und Ganzen auf dem Durchschnittsniveau der Peergroup rangiert.** Aufgrund der geringen Anzahl von Beobachtungsdaten für deutsche Akteure konnten nicht jede Stakeholdergruppe, jede Region sowie jeder Politikbereich analysiert werden. In allen durchgeführten Analysen bewegt sich das Gesamtergebnis der deutschen staatlichen EZ in Bezug auf Einfluss und Nützlichkeit zwischen 2,68 und 3,37. Hinsichtlich der absoluten Zahlen gilt Deutschland als „ziemlich einflussreich“ und „ziemlich nützlich“. Allein das Gesamtergebnis im Politikbereich „Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft und öffentliche Verwaltung“ fällt mit 2,91 für den Einfluss und 3,04 für die Nützlichkeit niedriger aus als der Durchschnitt der Peergroup (Einfluss: 3,15, Nützlichkeit: 3,26; siehe Abbildung 2).

**Abbildung 1 Einfluss und Nützlichkeit der Geber aus Sicht der Partner in BMZ-Partnerländern**



Anmerkungen: Skala: 1 = überhaupt nicht einflussreich/überhaupt nicht nützlich, 2 = geringfügig einflussreich/geringfügig nützlich, 3 = ziemlich einflussreich/ziemlich nützlich, 4 = sehr einflussreich/sehr nützlich. Blau gestrichelte Linie = Peergroup-Durchschnitt (Durchschnittswerte aller Geber mit  $N \geq 30$  werden summiert und durch die Gesamtzahl der Geber geteilt), durchschnittliche/r Einfluss/Nützlichkeit = 3,02/3,23. Die Zahlen in Klammern beziehen sich auf die Anzahl an Antworten. Graue Linien = 95 %-Konfidenzintervalle, \* zeigt eine signifikant vom Peergroup-Durchschnitt abweichende Geberbewertung an ( $p < 0,05$ ).  
 Quelle: 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey.

**Abbildung 2 Einfluss und Nützlichkeit der Geber aus Sicht der Partner im Politikbereich „Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft und öffentliche Verwaltung“ in BMZ-Partnerländern**



Anmerkungen: Skala: 1 = überhaupt nicht einflussreich/überhaupt nicht nützlich, 2 = geringfügig einflussreich/geringfügig nützlich, 3 = ziemlich einflussreich/ziemlich nützlich, 4 = sehr einflussreich/sehr nützlich. Blau gestrichelte Linie = Peergroup-Durchschnitt (Durchschnittswerte aller Geber mit  $N \geq 15$  werden summiert und durch die Gesamtzahl der Geber geteilt), durchschnittliche/r Einfluss/Nützlichkeit = 3,15/3,26. Die Zahlen in Klammern beziehen sich auf die Anzahl an Antworten. Graue Linien = 95 %-Konfidenzintervalle, \* zeigt eine signifikant vom Peergroup-Durchschnitt abweichende Geberbewertung an ( $p < 0,05$ ). Die Abbildung zeigt alle EZ-Akteure der Peergroup mit mehr als 30 Antworten, das heißt, China (Einfluss: 3,00 [15], Nützlichkeit: 3,28 [11]) und die KfW (Einfluss: 3,08 [20], Nützlichkeit: 3,33 [19]) sind nicht einbezogen.

Quelle: 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey.

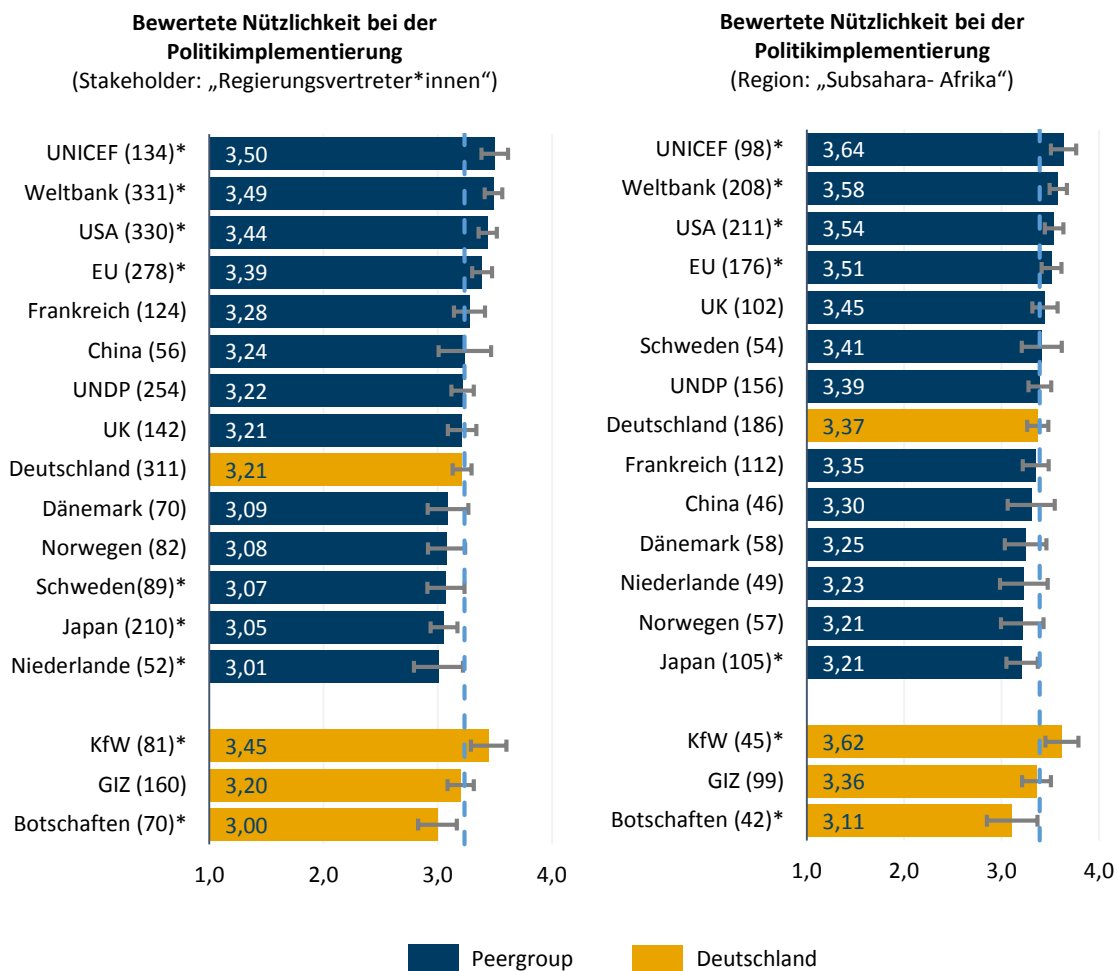
### Individuelle Unterstützungsleistungen der deutschen EZ-Akteure

Die deutschen Botschaften liegen bei der Bewertung ihres Einflusses auf das Agenda-Setting auf dem Durchschnittsniveau der Peergroup und bei der Bewertung ihrer Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung darunter. Auf der Skala von 1 bis 4 erreichen die deutschen Botschaften bei der Einflussbewertung 2,93 und bei der Nützlichkeitsbewertung 3,00. Sie gelten somit als „ziemlich einflussreich“ und „ziemlich nützlich“ (siehe Abbildung 1). Im Vergleich zum Durchschnitt der Peergroup (3,23) sowie zur GIZ (3,17) und zur KfW (3,41) werden die Botschaften hinsichtlich ihrer Nützlichkeit durch die lokalen politischen Entscheidungstragenden und Praktiker\*innen geringer bewertet. Dies lässt sich durch die Aufgabenteilung zwischen den drei deutschen Akteuren erklären. Demnach sind die GIZ und die KfW mandatiert, einen Großteil der technischen und finanziellen Unterstützungsleistung der deutschen EZ zu implementieren. Die Botschaften (insbesondere die an die deutschen Botschaften abgeordneten Mitarbeitenden des BMZ) arbeiten hingegen im politischen Bereich der EZ und sind nicht direkt an der Umsetzung von Politikinitiativen beteiligt.



Die disaggregierten Analysen über Stakeholdergruppen, Regionen und Politikbereiche hinweg zeigen, dass sich die Botschaften im Wesentlichen auf dem Niveau des Durchschnitts der Peergroup befinden. In einigen Bereichen erhalten sie geringere Bewertungen hinsichtlich der Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung. Dies könnte, wie in der übergeordneten Analyse, auf ihr Mandat zurückzuführen sein. Auf einer disaggregierten Analyseebene werden die Botschaften von der Stakeholdergruppe „Regierungsvertreter\*innen“, in der Region „Subsahara-Afrika“ und im Politikbereich „Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft und öffentliche Verwaltung“ in Bezug auf ihre Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung niedriger bewertet (siehe Abbildungen 2 und 3). In der Region „Europa und Zentralasien“ und bei den Einschätzungen der Stakeholdergruppe „Nichtregierungsorganisationen/zivilgesellschaftliche Organisationen“ liegen sie bezüglich des bewerteten Einflusses und der eingeschätzten Nützlichkeit auf dem Durchschnittsniveau der Peergroup. Für den Politikbereich „nachhaltige Wirtschaftsentwicklung“ erreichen die Botschaften beim Einfluss ebenfalls die gleiche Bewertung wie die Peergroup.

**Abbildung 3 Nützlichkeit der Geber aus der Sicht der Partner in BMZ-Partnerländern mit Fokus auf „Regierungsvertreter\*innen“ und die Region „Subsahara-Afrika“**



Anmerkungen: Skala: 1 = überhaupt nicht nützlich, 2 = geringfügig nützlich, 3 = ziemlich nützlich, 4 = sehr nützlich. Blau gestrichelte Linie = Peergroup-Durchschnitt (Durchschnittswerte aller Geber mit N ≥ 15 werden summiert und durch die Gesamtzahl der Geber geteilt), Durchschnitt „Regierungsvertreter\*innen“ = 3,24, Durchschnitt „Subsahara-Afrika“ = 3,39. Die Zahlen in Klammern beziehen sich auf die Anzahl an Antworten. Graue Linien = 95 %-Konfidenzintervalle, \* zeigt eine signifikant vom Peergroup-Durchschnitt abweichende Geberbewertung an (p < 0,05).

Quelle: 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey.

Die GIZ erzielt in Bezug auf die bewertete Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung die gleiche Bewertung wie der Durchschnitt der Peergroup und in Bezug auf den bewerteten Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting einen Wert darunter. Auf einer Skala von 1 bis 4 erhält die GIZ für die Bewertung ihres Einflusses und ihrer Nützlichkeit 2,89 beziehungsweise 3,17 und wird somit als „ziemlich einflussreich“ und „ziemlich nützlich“

eingestuft. Im Vergleich liegt die GIZ bei der Bewertung der Nützlichkeit auf dem gleichen Niveau wie der Peergroup-Durchschnitt (Bewertung: 3,02) und bei der Bewertung des Einflusses (Bewertung: 3,23) darunter (siehe Abbildung 1). Analog zur Aufgabenteilung zwischen den deutschen Akteuren erhält die GIZ (und die KfW) im direkten Vergleich zu den Botschaften hinsichtlich ihrer bewerteten Nützlichkeit eine positive Bewertung. Die hingegen geringere Bewertung des Einflusses könnte auf ihr Mandat zurückzuführen sein.

**Die disaggregierten Analysen zeigen, dass die GIZ in fast allen Stakeholdergruppen, Politikbereichen und Regionen auf dem Niveau des Durchschnitts der Peergroup abschneidet. Nur im Politikbereich „Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft und öffentliche Verwaltung“ erreicht sie ein unterdurchschnittliches Ergebnis.** In den Regionen „Europa/Zentralasien“ und „Subsahara-Afrika“, im Politikbereich „Nachhaltige Wirtschaftsentwicklung“ sowie bei den Stakeholdergruppen „Regierungsvertreter\*innen“ und „Nichtregierungsorganisationen/zivilgesellschaftliche Organisationen“ befindet sich die GIZ bei der Bewertung des Einflusses und der Nützlichkeit auf dem Niveau des Peergroup-Durchschnitts. Im Gegensatz dazu liegt sie im Politikbereich „Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft und öffentliche Verwaltung“ für beide Bewertungsgrößen darunter (siehe Abbildung 2).

**Die KfW übertrifft den Durchschnitt der Peergroup in Bezug auf die bewertete Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung und schneidet gleichrangig in Bezug auf den bewerteten Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting ab.** Auf der Skala von 1 bis 4 erreicht die KfW 3,01 und 3,41 für bewerteten Einfluss beziehungsweise für Nützlichkeit. Bei Letzter liegt sie damit über dem Durchschnitt der Peergroup (3,23; siehe Abbildung 1). Insgesamt nimmt die KfW beim Einfluss den sechsten und bei der Nützlichkeit den dritten Rang ein. Nur UNICEF und die Weltbank schneiden diesbezüglich besser ab. Da die KfW hauptsächlich auf der Implementierungsebene tätig ist, spiegelt der hohe Wert ihr Mandat wider (BMZ, 2008).

**Die disaggregierten Analysen verdeutlichen, dass die KfW von der Stakeholdergruppe „Regierungsvertreter\*innen“ und in der Region „Subsahara-Afrika“ als nützlicher eingestuft wird als der Durchschnitt der Peergroup.** Besonders hoch fällt die Bewertung der Nützlichkeit der KfW bei der Stakeholdergruppe „Regierungsvertreter\*innen“ und in der Region „Subsahara-Afrika“ aus. Auf einer Skala von 1 bis 4 erhält sie bei der Einschätzung der Nützlichkeit durch „Regierungsvertreter\*innen“ 3,45 (Peergroup-Durchschnitt: 3,24). Nur UNICEF, die Weltbank und die USA werden als nützlicher bewertet. In „Subsahara-Afrika“ erzielt die KfW bei der Bewertung der Nützlichkeit 3,63 (Peergroup-Durchschnitt: 3,39); nur UNICEF liegt vor ihr (siehe Abbildung 3).

### Wie lässt sich die Bewertung der Unterstützungsleistung der deutschen EZ erklären?

#### Hauptergebnisse II: deutsche staatliche EZ

- Für die meisten Einflussfaktoren, für die bei der Analyse aller Geber kein oder ein Zusammenhang mit der Bewertung der Unterstützungsleistung von Gebern gefunden werden konnte, zeigt sich ebenfalls kein beziehungsweise ein ähnlicher Zusammenhang in der deutschlandspezifischen Analyse. Insbesondere zeigt sich, dass der Faktor „Berücksichtigung von Ownership“ erneut in positivem Zusammenhang mit dem bewerteten Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting steht.
- Die Survey-Ergebnisse zeigen keine positiven oder negativen Effekte der meisten untersuchten deutschlandspezifischen Faktoren (zum Beispiel Anzahl der Mitarbeitenden im Ausland oder Intensität und Dauer der Kooperationsbeziehungen) auf den Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting und die Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung.
- 2011 führte die deutsche staatliche EZ umfassende Reformen an der Architektur der staatlichen EZ mit dem Ziel durch, effizienter und effektiver zu operieren. In der Studie finden sich keine Hinweise, dass das Gesamtergebnis der deutschen EZ für Einfluss und Nützlichkeit aus Sicht der Partner nach den Reformen höher war als davor.

### ***Relevanz von Einflussfaktoren aus der Analyse aller Geber für Bewertungen der deutschen staatlichen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit***

**Übereinstimmend mit den Ergebnissen für alle Geber zeigen sich keine Belege dafür, dass das Demokratie-niveau und die Abhängigkeit eines Partnerlandes von EZ mit dem Einfluss- und dem Nützlichkeitsergebnis der deutschen staatlichen EZ zusammenhängen. Gleiches gilt für Länder, in denen sich Deutschland eng mit anderen Gebern abstimmt. Es gibt hingegen Hinweise auf einen negativen Zusammenhang zwischen der Fragmentierung von EZ und dem Gesamtergebnis der deutschen staatlichen EZ für Nützlichkeit.** Konsistent mit der Analyse für alle Geber und dem ersten gemeinsamen AidData-DEval-Bericht (Faust et al., 2016) wird festgestellt, dass das Demokratie- beziehungsweise Autokratieniveau in keinem Zusammenhang mit dem Einfluss- und dem Nützlichkeitsergebnis der deutschen staatlichen EZ steht. Ebenfalls konsistent mit der Analyse für alle Geber wird festgestellt, dass die Abhängigkeit eines Partnerlandes von EZ nicht mit der Bewertung des Einflusses und der Nützlichkeits der deutschen staatlichen EZ zusammenhängt. Gleiches gilt für Länder, in denen – gemessen anhand der deutschen Beteiligung an „EU Joint Programming“-Initiativen – eine enge Koordinierung Deutschlands mit anderen Gebern stattfindet. Dieses Ergebnis bestätigt die Analyse für alle Geber insofern, als dass sie zeigt, dass Geberkoordinierung offenbar nicht in Zusammenhang mit der Bewertung der Unterstützungsleistung eines einzelnen Gebers steht. Darüber hinaus finden sich Anhaltspunkte für einen negativen Zusammenhang zwischen der Fragmentierung der EZ und dem Gesamtergebnis Deutschlands für Nützlichkeit. Dieses Ergebnis weist in die gleiche Richtung wie der erste gemeinsame AidData-DEval-Bericht (Faust et al., 2016).

**Ebenfalls konsistent mit der Analyse für alle Geber zeigt sich, dass sich die lokale Unterstützung für Politik-initiativen in Partnerländern und die Relevanz von Projekten der GIZ und der KfW in einem Partnerland darauf auswirken, wie der Einfluss der deutschen staatlichen EZ insgesamt wahrgenommen wird.** Beide Ergebnisse – die Effekte der lokalen Unterstützung und der Relevanz von Projekten – geben Hinweise darauf, dass das Berücksichtigen von Ownership seitens der Geber positiv mit den Partnerbewertungen ihres Einflusses auf das Agenda-Setting zusammenhängt.

**Anders als in der Analyse für alle Geber konnte kein Zusammenhang zwischen dem Anteil deutscher staatlicher EZ-Mittel in einem Partnerland und dem Gesamtergebnis für die deutsche staatliche EZ für Einfluss und Nützlichkeit nachgewiesen werden.** Es findet sich in den Daten keine statistisch signifikante Korrelation zwischen dem relativen Anteil Deutschlands an bereitgestellten EZ-Mitteln (gemessen als länderprogrammierbare EZ [CPA]) in einem Partnerland und dem Gesamtergebnis Deutschlands in Bezug auf den bewerteten Einfluss und die bewertete Nützlichkeit. Obwohl der Zusammenhang für die deutschlandsspezifische EZ nicht gefunden wurde (was mit der geringen Fallzahl in der entsprechenden Analyse zusammenhängen könnte), gibt es keinen Grund anzunehmen, dass die Erkenntnisse aus der Untersuchung aller Geber nicht für Deutschland gelten. Zudem stimmen die Ergebnisse der Analyse aller Geber (bereitgestellter Geberanteil an EZ-Mitteln ist mit einer höheren Bewertung von Einfluss und Nützlichkeits verknüpft) mit den Ergebnissen des ersten AidData-DEval-Berichts überein, in dem ein positiver Zusammenhang zwischen Deutschlands Anteil an den in einem Land bereitgestellten EZ-Mitteln und seiner Einflussbewertung festgestellt wurde (Faust et al., 2016).

### ***Zusammenhang zwischen deutschlandsspezifischen Faktoren und Bewertungen der deutschen staatlichen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit***

**Die Auswertung der Umfrage zeigt für die meisten der untersuchten deutschlandsspezifischen Faktoren (zum Beispiel Kooperationsdauer der bilateralen deutschen staatlichen EZ-Beziehungen, Anzahl der Mitarbeitenden im Ausland) weder positive noch negative Zusammenhänge mit dem Gesamtergebnis der deutschen staatlichen EZ für Einfluss und Nützlichkeit. Lediglich für den Faktor „Berücksichtigung von Ownership“ findet sich ein positiver Zusammenhang mit dem Gesamtergebnis der deutschen staatlichen EZ für Einfluss.** Zwischen staatlicher Fragilität und dem Gesamtergebnis zur Unterstützungsleistung Deutschlands in Bezug auf den Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting wird kein robuster positiver oder negativer Zusammenhang gefunden. Es gibt somit Hinweise, dass Deutschlands bilaterale staatliche EZ in fragileren Staaten nicht schlechter abschneidet als in weniger fragilen. Darüber hinaus liegen keine Belege vor, dass die Intensität der EZ zwischen Deutschland und seinen Partnern in einem positiven Zusammenhang mit dem

Einfluss der deutschen EZ und ihrer Nützlichkeit aus Sicht der Partner steht. Des Weiteren wird in der Studie kein positiver Zusammenhang zwischen der Kooperationsdauer der bilateralen staatlichen EZ-Beziehungen Deutschlands in den BMZ-Partnerländern und dem deutschen Gesamtergebnis in Bezug auf Einfluss und Nützlichkeit festgestellt. Die Ergebnisse der Fallstudien verweisen hingegen darauf, dass die Länge der bilateralen staatlichen Kooperationsbeziehungen ein wichtiger Faktor für Partner ist. Somit scheint die Länge der Kooperationsbeziehungen zwar in einigen bestimmten Kontexten relevant zu sein, sie steht jedoch nicht mit Partnerbewertungen bezüglich des deutschen Einflusses beziehungsweise der Nützlichkeit über alle BMZ-Partnerländer hinweg in Zusammenhang.

Zusätzlich konnte kein positiver Zusammenhang zwischen der Anzahl an Mitarbeitenden des BMZ (die an deutsche Botschaften abgeordnet sind und formell dem Auswärtigen Amt unterstehen), der KfW oder der GIZ in einem Partnerland und dem Gesamtergebnis der Unterstützungsleistung Deutschlands hinsichtlich des Einflusses auf das Agenda-Setting und der Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung festgestellt werden. Interessanterweise gilt dies für alle drei deutschen EZ-Akteure, unabhängig von den deutlichen Unterschieden in der Zahl ihrer Beschäftigten im Ausland.

**Es finden sich keine Belege dafür, dass die Reformen der deutschen staatlichen EZ im Jahr 2011 das Gesamtergebnis der deutschen EZ in Bezug auf den Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting oder die Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung verbessert haben.** In der Studie wurde auf Basis von vier Analysen untersucht, ob die Reformen ein höheres Gesamtergebnis für Deutschland mit Bezug auf Einfluss oder Nützlichkeit mit sich bringen. In allen vier Fällen gibt es keinen entsprechenden Beleg.

### Schlussfolgerungen für bi- und multilaterale Geber

- Der verbreitete Ansatz bi- und multilateraler Geber, zunächst politische Ideen und Konzepte in die Politiken eines Partnerlandes einzubringen und im Anschluss die Umsetzung dieser Partnerpolitiken zu unterstützen, kann in den Augen lokaler politischer Entscheidungstragender und Praktiker\*innen Fortschritte in den Politikinitiativen begünstigen und wird im Großen und Ganzen als positiv bewertet.
- Obwohl die meisten Geber als „ziemlich einflussreich“ beim Agenda-Setting und „ziemlich nützlich“ bei der Politikimplementierung eingeschätzt werden, unterscheiden lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen in ihren Bewertungen zwischen einzelnen Gebern erheblich. Einige Geber werden im Vergleich zum Durchschnitt als deutlich mehr und andere als weniger einflussreich und nützlich eingeschätzt. Beispielsweise werden einige multilaterale Geber als bedeutend einflussreicher und nützlicher bewertet als der Durchschnitt aller Geber.
- Neben dem deutlichen Unterschied zwischen bilateralen und (einigen) multilateralen Gebern hängen Abweichungen in der Bewertung der Unterstützungsleistung von Gebern mit Faktoren zusammen, die auf drei Ebenen verortet werden können: 1. der Ebene der strategischen Entscheidungen über die Vergabe von EZ-Mitteln und der Länderauswahl (Makroebene), 2. der Ebene der Einhaltung der Grundprinzipien wirksamer EZ (Mesoebene) und 3. der Ebene der Geber-Partner-Interaktionen im Partnerland (Mikroebene). Demnach können sowohl multilaterale als auch bilaterale Geber auf allen drei Ebenen Maßnahmen ergreifen, um ihre Unterstützungsleistungen in den Augen ihrer Partner zu verbessern. Aufgrund der Vielfalt der Geber sind für sie je unterschiedliche Maßnahmen angemessen, die von den jeweiligen Ressourcen, Mandaten, der Organisationsstruktur oder dem Dezentralisierungsgrad der Entscheidungsfindung sowie spezifischen Geber-Partner-Interaktionen in jedem Land abhängen.

### Schlussfolgerungen für Akteure der deutschen staatlichen EZ

- Absolut gesehen wird die Unterstützungsleistung der drei einzelnen deutschen Akteure (Botschaften, GIZ, KfW) als „ziemlich einflussreich“ beim Agenda-Setting und „ziemlich nützlich“ bei der Politikimplementierung bewertet.
- Im Vergleich zum Durchschnitt der Peergroup aus bi- und multilateralen Gebern liegt das Gesamtergebnis für Deutschland in Bezug auf die Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung auf dem gleichen Niveau und in Bezug auf den Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting unter dem Durchschnitt der Peergroup. Dieses Ergebnis bestätigt die Erkenntnisse der Vorgängerstudie von AidData und DEval (Faust et al., 2016). Die

aktuelle Studie zeigt darüber hinaus, dass Deutschland in den Analysen über verschiedene Stakeholdergruppen, Regionen und Politikbereiche hinweg sowohl beim Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting als auch bei der Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung überwiegend durchschnittlich abschneidet.

- Deutschland ist zweitgrößter bilateraler Geber weltweit und verfügt über ein institutionell wie auch instrumentell stark ausdifferenziertes EZ-System. Vor diesem Hintergrund sollten die Akteure der deutschen staatlichen EZ dieses durchschnittliche Ergebnis reflektieren und sich mit den in dieser Studie identifizierten Handlungsoptionen auseinandersetzen, um ihren Einfluss und ihre Nützlichkeit aus Sicht der Partner zu verbessern. Dies zumal die Analyse keinen Beleg dafür findet, dass die besonderen Charakteristika des deutschen EZ-Systems, beispielweise der hohe Personaleinsatz vor Ort, aus Sicht der Partner notwendigerweise ein besonders nutzenstiftendes Alleinstellungsmerkmal in Bezug auf den Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting und die Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung darstellen. Es scheint daher angemessen anzunehmen, dass die für alle Geber ermittelten Ergebnisse und Handlungsoptionen gleichermaßen für Deutschland relevant sind. Gleichfalls ist davon auszugehen, dass die deutschen staatlichen EZ-Akteure ihre Unterstützungsleistung aus Sicht ihrer Partner verbessern können, indem sie den nachstehend aufgeführten, an alle Geber gerichteten Empfehlungen folgen. Diesbezüglich erscheinen die fortlaufenden Anstrengungen, das deutsche EZ-System weiter zu optimieren (zuletzt im Rahmen der BMZ-Strategie Entwicklungspolitik 2030), durch die Ergebnisse dieser Studie gestützt.

## Empfehlungen

Jede Geber-Partner-Interaktion ist unterschiedlich, da sowohl Gebersysteme als auch die Länderkontexte sehr verschieden sind. Dementsprechend können die Ergebnisse und Schlussfolgerungen dieser Studie nicht gleichwertig auf jede dieser individuellen Situationen angewendet werden. Es kann keine Einheitsstrategie geben, wie Geber ihren Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting und ihre Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung aus der Sicht ihrer Partner verbessern können.

Wir formulieren daher nur eine übergreifende Empfehlung, die prinzipiell für alle Geber gilt. Anschließend ermitteln wir Handlungsoptionen, die jeder Geber sorgfältig prüfen kann, um festzustellen, ob sie eine umsetzbare Möglichkeit darstellen, die Wahrnehmung seiner Partner zu verbessern. Da sich diese Studie speziell auf Deutschland konzentriert, wird jede Handlungsoption vor dem Hintergrund der Besonderheiten Deutschlands als bilateraler Geber und des aktuellen Rahmens der BMZ-2030-Strategie reflektiert. Zudem wird eine spezifische Empfehlung für die deutsche staatliche EZ dahingehend formuliert, ihr Engagement im Politikbereich „Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft, öffentliche Verwaltung“ zu überprüfen.

### Empfehlung für alle Geber

**Bi- und multilaterale Geber sollten prüfen, ob sie geeignete Strategien oder Maßnahmen identifizieren können, um ihre Unterstützungsleistung für Politikprozesse in Partnerländern aus Partnersicht zu verbessern, wobei sie Handlungsoptionen auf der Makro-, Meso- und Mikroebene berücksichtigen sollten.**

Fast alle Geber, die in der Stichprobe des Surveys untersucht wurden, werden als „ziemlich einflussreich“ und „ziemlich nützlich“ bewertet (auf einer Skala von „überhaupt nicht einflussreich/nützlich“ bis „sehr einflussreich/ nützlich“). Unterschiede zwischen den Gebern deuten jedoch daraufhin, dass sie ihre Leistung aus Sicht der Partner verbessern können, und in dieser Studie werden Faktoren identifiziert, um dies zu tun.

Angesichts der begrenzten Ressourcen der Geber, der Vielfalt der Mandate der einzelnen EZ-Akteure, ihrer Organisationsstruktur, des Dezentralisierungsgrades bei der Entscheidungsfindung und der unterschiedlichen Kontexte sowie spezifischer Geber-Partner-Interaktionen ist es jedoch nicht möglich, eine Einheitsstrategie oder universell anwendbare Maßnahmen für alle Geber und Kontexte zu empfehlen. Stattdessen müssen die Geber sorgfältig aus einer Reihe von Handlungsoptionen auf drei verschiedenen Ebenen auswählen und entscheiden, welche am besten zu ihnen passen: 1. strategische Entscheidungen über die Vergabe von EZ-Mitteln und der Länderauswahl (Makroebene), 2. Einhaltung der Grundprinzipien wirksamer EZ (Mesoebene) und 3. Geber-Partner-Interaktionen im Partnerland (Mikroebene).

**Spezifizierung für Deutschland:** Im Verhältnis zur Peergroup aus bi- und multilateralen Gebern schneidet Deutschland (als weltweit zweitgrößter bilateraler Geber; BMZ, 2019b) in Bezug auf den Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting und die Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung aus der Sicht seiner Partner insgesamt eher mittelmäßig ab. Demzufolge sollten die Akteure der deutschen staatlichen EZ, insbesondere das BMZ, die nachstehend aufgeführten Handlungsoptionen prüfen, um festzustellen, ob diese im Einklang mit der BMZ-2030-Strategie Möglichkeiten bieten, sodass aus der Sicht der Partner die deutsche Unterstützungsleistung für deren Politikprozesse weiterhin verbessert werden kann.

*Handlungsoptionen auf der Makroebene: strategische Entscheidungen über die Vergabe von EZ-Mitteln und die Auswahl der Partnerländer (Makroebene)*

Die Geber sollten abwägen, ob sie höhere EZ-Mittel vergeben könnten oder – falls sie über ein (über-) diversifiziertes Portfolio von Partnerländern verfügen – ihre Ressourcen eher auf eine kleinere Anzahl von Ländern konzentrieren sollten. Dies würde den individuellen EZ-Anteil eines Gebers am EZ-Gesamtbudget seiner Partnerländer erhöhen, was aus Sicht der Partner mit einem stärkeren Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting und einer erhöhten Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung verbunden ist.

Der relative Anteil eines Gebers am EZ-Gesamtbudget eines Partnerlandes (länderprogrammierbare EZ) hängt mit einer positiveren Bewertung dieses Gebers in Bezug auf den Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting und die Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung zusammen. Angesichts begrenzter Ressourcen ist eine Erhöhung des relativen Anteils eines Gebers am EZ-Gesamtbudget eines Partnerlandes in den meisten Fällen nur durch eine Konzentration seiner Unterstützungsleistung möglich. Damit die Umsetzung dieser Empfehlung jedoch nicht kontraproduktiv wirkt und vermieden wird, dass sich die Unterstützungsleistung auf eine Handvoll Länder (*donor darlings*) zulasten anderer (*aid orphans*) konzentriert, sollten solche Konzentrationsprozesse unter den Gebern sorgfältig koordiniert werden (siehe auch die Handlungsoptionen zur Geberkoordination auf der Mesoebene).

**Spezifizierung für Deutschland:** Während das Budget des BMZ in den letzten Jahren erheblich gestiegen ist (BMZ, 2019a), sind die Diversifizierung und die Fragmentierung der deutschen bilateralen EZ weiterhin ein Diskussionsthema (OECD, 2010, 2015). Im Rahmen der BMZ-2030-Strategie konzentriert das BMZ derzeit (sowohl thematisch als auch geografisch) seine bilateralen ODA-Mittel weiter, indem es die Anzahl der Themen und Partnerländer für seine bilaterale EZ verringert (BMZ, 2020a: 25). Diese Strategie wird durch die Ergebnisse dieser Studie befürwortet. Die Erfahrung zeigt, dass solche Prozesse sorgfältig mit anderen Gebern koordiniert werden sollten und geplante Ausstiege von Gebern gründlich verwaltet werden müssen. Damit kann vermieden werden, dass bisher Erreichtes beeinträchtigt wird oder bilaterale Beziehungen beschädigt werden.<sup>2</sup>

Bilaterale Geber sollten prüfen, ob sie multilaterale Kanäle zur Unterstützung der politischen Maßnahmen der Partnerländer wirksamer nutzen können.

Wie in der ersten gemeinsamen Studie von AidData und DEval (Faust et al., 2016) stellen wir fest, dass multilaterale Geber von lokalen politischen Entscheidungstragenden und Praktiker\*innen hinsichtlich ihres Einflusses auf das Agenda-Setting und ihrer Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung im Durchschnitt besser bewertet werden als bilaterale Geber. Wie in der Literatur häufig diskutiert, kann dies damit zusammenhängen, dass multilaterale Zusammenarbeit als weniger politisiert, selektiver in Bezug auf Armutskriterien, stärker nachfrageorientiert (Gulrajani, 2016: 15) und weniger fragmentiert wahrgenommen wird als bilaterale Kooperation.

<sup>2</sup> Das DEval führt derzeit eine Synthesestudie durch, in der Erkenntnisse über Konzentrations- und Austrittsprozesse der Geber in der Vergangenheit behandelt werden.

Bilaterale Geber sollten daher prüfen, ob sie einen größeren strategischen Nutzen aus dem Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting und der Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung einzelner multilateraler Geber ziehen können, indem sie beispielsweise ihre Beiträge erhöhen, um mehr Einfluss auf die Politik multilateraler Geber auszuüben, und ihre Zusammenarbeit mit multilateralen Akteuren verbessern. Ob dies jedoch realisierbare Optionen für einen bestimmten bilateralen Geber sind, muss unter Berücksichtigung der tatsächlichen Gegebenheiten geprüft werden, beispielsweise der Übereinstimmung der Strategien und Ziele zwischen dem jeweiligen multilateralen und bilateralen Geber oder der Möglichkeit, dass ein bilateraler Geber innerhalb einer multilateralen Organisation mitreden kann und somit in der Lage ist, Entscheidungsprozesse innerhalb dieser Organisationen zu beeinflussen. Darüber hinaus ist zu beachten, dass die herausragende Leistung multilateraler Geber nicht für alle multilateralen Geber in gleichem Maße (oder überhaupt) gilt. Außerdem kann die Verlagerung auf multilaterale Kanäle mit einer eingeschränkten Sichtbarkeit bilateraler Geber einhergehen (Michaelowa et al., 2018) und verringerte Ressourcen für die bilaterale Zusammenarbeit nach sich ziehen.

**Spezifizierung für Deutschland:** Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie sowie der Vorgängerstudie von Faust et al. (2016) befürworten die Bemühungen des BMZ im Rahmen der BMZ-2030-Strategie zur Stärkung und wirksameren Nutzung des multilateralen Systems, um globale Herausforderungen in Abstimmung mit bilateralen Bemühungen zu bewältigen (BMZ, 2018: 6). Die BMZ-2030-Strategie sieht eine engere Zusammenarbeit mit der Europäischen Union und anderen multilateralen Organisationen vor, wie UNICEF oder UNDP. Die Strategie erfordert eine effektivere Einbindung in diese Institutionen und in ihr strategisches Agenda-Setting (insbesondere durch die aktivere, strukturiertere und kontinuierliche Nutzung des entsandten Personals als Ressource, um die Zusammenarbeit mit diesen Institutionen beim internationalen Agenda-Setting zu stärken). Darüber hinaus zielt die Strategie darauf ab, die Koordinierung mit diesen Akteuren zu verbessern, beispielsweise durch eine Arbeitsteilung in bestimmten Bereichen (Doc. 11).<sup>3</sup> Das BMZ plant, sich auf jene multilateralen Institutionen zu konzentrieren, die den politischen Willen zeigen, internationale Reform- und Entwicklungssagenden voranzutreiben, und die Möglichkeit bieten, dass Deutschland einen entscheidenden Einfluss ausüben kann (zum Beispiel aufgrund erheblicher finanzieller Beiträge oder hochrangiger entsandter Mitarbeitender) (Doc. 11). Diese Strategie deckt sich mit der oben formulierten Empfehlung an bilaterale Geber, für das Agenda-Setting verstärkt multilaterale Kanäle in Betracht zu ziehen. Ob es für das BMZ eine nützliche Option wäre, mehr seiner ODA-Mittel durch das multilaterale System zu lenken als bisher, ist jedoch vor dem Hintergrund einer notwendigen Übereinstimmung der politischen Ziele zwischen Deutschland und einer bestimmten multilateralen Organisation, dem Ausmaß von Deutschlands Einfluss auf eine bestimmte multilaterale Organisation, einer möglichen Notwendigkeit bilateraler Sichtbarkeit etc. abzuwägen. In den Jahren 2015–2017 lag der multilaterale Anteil der deutschen ODA-Mittel bei 21 Prozent. Für das Budget des BMZ sind es rund 30 Prozent (BMZ, 2019a, 2019b; Doc. 12).

#### *Handlungsoptionen auf der Mesoebene: Einhaltung der Grundprinzipien wirksamer EZ*

Um die Partnerbewertungen hinsichtlich des Einflusses auf das Agenda-Setting und der Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung zu verbessern, sollten die Geber prüfen, inwiefern sie die Einhaltung von Grundprinzipien wirksamer EZ weiter stärken können. Dies gilt insbesondere im Hinblick auf Koordinierung, Alignment und Planbarkeit ihrer Unterstützungsleistung.

**Koordinierung der Geberbeiträge:** In der Studie wird gezeigt, dass eine enge Koordinierung der Finanzbeiträge Einfluss darauf hat, wie Partner die Unterstützungsleistung der Geber für ihren politischen Prozess bewerten. Im Allgemeinen bewerten politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen in Entwicklungs- und

<sup>3</sup> Um die Vertraulichkeit unveröffentlichter Dokumente zu wahren, die dem DEval zur Verfügung gestellt wurden, werden diese im Text in der Form „Doc.“ sowie einer fortlaufenden Nummer zitiert und erscheinen nicht in den Referenzen.

Schwellenländern, in denen die Geber ihre Aktivitäten besser koordinieren (zum Beispiel durch Korbfinanzierungskonzepte), diese Geber eher als einflussreich und nützlich. Dieser Vorteil kommt nicht den einzelnen Gebern zugute, sondern scheint in den Ländern kollektiv zu gelten, in denen eine solche Koordination stattfindet. Diese Ergebnisse stimmen mit der Literatur überein, in der Effizienzgewinne und reduzierte Transaktionskosten als positive Aspekte der Geberkoordination hervorgehoben werden (Anderson, 2011; Bourguignon und Platteau, 2015; Bigsten und Tengstam, 2015; Klingebiel et al., 2017). Die Ergebnisse stimmen auch mit der Literatur überein, die die Bedeutung der Geberkoordination trotz bestehender Nachteile, die mit dieser einhergehen könnten, hervorhebt, beispielsweise potenzielle politische Kosten und verminderte Sichtbarkeit als bilateraler Geber (Bourguignon und Platteau, 2015; Carbone, 2017).

**Spezifizierung für Deutschland:** Obwohl kein direkter Zusammenhang besteht zwischen den Bemühungen eines einzelnen Gebers, die eigene Unterstützungsleistung mit anderen Entwicklungspartnern zu koordinieren, und der Bewertung des Einflusses und der Nützlichkeit dieses Gebers durch lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen, werden Geber in den Ländern, in denen sie ihre Aktivitäten gut koordinieren (zum Beispiel durch Vereinbarungen über Korbfinanzierungskonzepte), insgesamt als einflussreicher und nützlicher eingestuft. Das derzeitige Bestreben Deutschlands, die Koordination mit anderen Entwicklungspartnern durch Ko- und Korbfinanzierungsmechanismen wie auch die EU Joint Implementation (und nicht nur das EU Joint Programming) unter den EU-Gebern zu fördern (Doc. 11), wird daher von den Ergebnissen dieser Studie unterstützt. Es sollte geprüft werden, ob dies in den bilateralen Portfolios Deutschlands weiter ausgebaut werden kann.

*Nutzung von Ländersystemen und Alignment an den Prioritäten der Partner:* In der Studie wird gezeigt, dass ein größerer Anteil an EZ-Mitteln, die über den Haushalt der Partnerländer erfasst werden (*aid on budget*), positiv mit der Wahrnehmung des Einflusses und der Nützlichkeit der Geber aus Sicht der Partner verbunden ist. Darüber hinaus wird deutlich, dass die Bereitstellung allgemeiner Budgethilfe mit der Wahrnehmung eines höheren Einflusses der Geber verbunden ist. Die Studienergebnisse deuten zudem darauf hin, dass die Unterstützungsleistung der Geber für Maßnahmen, die eine breite lokale Unterstützung (*Ownership*) im Partnerland genießen, mit positiven Bewertungen durch lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen verbunden ist. Indem Geber ihre Unterstützungsleistung durch die Haushaltssysteme der Partnerländer zur Verfügung stellen (oder diese im Haushalt zumindest nachrichtlich erfasst wird) und an den Prioritäten der Partnerländer ausrichten (*Alignment*) (Birdsall und Kharas, 2010; OECD, 2008a: 9; OECD und UNDP, 2016: 38; Prizzon, 2016), können sie dazu beitragen, als einflussreicher beim Agenda-Setting und nützlicher bei der Politikimplementierung wahrgenommen zu werden. Die Bereitstellung von Unterstützungsleistungen auf diese Weise muss allerdings gegen andere relevante Aspekte für die strategische Entscheidungsfindung der Geber abgewogen beziehungsweise geprüft werden; das betrifft beispielsweise die eigenen Prioritäten und strategischen Ziele der Geber und ihr Vertrauen in Partnerregierungen und Treuhandssysteme.

**Spezifizierung für Deutschland:** Unsere Ergebnisse legen nahe, dass die Bereitstellung von EZ-Mitteln durch den Haushalt der Partnerländer (oder zumindest deren nachrichtliche Erfassung) – und damit einhergehend eine Anpassung der Unterstützungsleistung an die Systeme und Prioritäten der Partnerländer – eine Rolle dafür spielt, wie einflussreich und nützlich diese Geberunterstützung von lokalen politischen Entscheidungstragenden und **Praktiker**\*innen bewertet wird. Der zumindest nachrichtlich in den Haushalten der Partnerländer erfasste Anteil der deutschen EZ-Mittel (*aid on budget*) beträgt laut Monitoring der Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) 2019 lediglich 52,7 Prozent (2016: 48 Prozent; GPEDC, 2020), weit entfernt von den 85 Prozent, die 2015 von der Globalen Partnerschaft für wirksame Entwicklungskooperation (OECD und UNDP, 2016: 38) als Ziel formuliert wurden.

Besonders deutlich zeigt sich der positive Zusammenhang zwischen der Nutzung partnereigener Haushaltssysteme und dem durch die Partner wahrgenommenen Einfluss eines Gebers auf das Agenda-Setting am Instrument der allgemeinen Budgethilfe. Dieses Ergebnis bestätigt sich auch für Deutschland. Deutschland hat während des letzten Jahrzehnts den Gebrauch der Budgethilfe als Modalität zunehmend eingestellt, dann aber im Rahmen seiner „Reformpartnerschaften“ begonnen, einer Handvoll ausgewählter



Länder Anreizkredite für politische Reformen anzubieten. Die Ergebnisse sind insofern im Einklang mit der BMZ-2030-Strategie, die vorsieht, dem strategischen Einsatz von Modalitäten wie (politischen) Reformkrediten, mehr Gewicht zu verleihen, sofern die Bedingungen dies zulassen (Doc. 11). Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie unterstützen diese Strategie mit Blick auf eine positivere Wahrnehmung des Einflusses und der Nützlichkeit der deutschen staatlichen EZ durch ihre Partner.

*Bereitstellung einer planbaren EZ:* In der Studie wird gezeigt, dass die Planbarkeit der Unterstützungsleistung (gemessen als Anteil der EZ-Mittel an einem Politikbereich der Regierung, die in dem Jahr ausgezahlt werden, für das sie geplant waren; GPEDC, 2020) damit zusammenhängt, wie lokale politische Entscheidungstragende und Praktiker\*innen die Geber in Bezug auf Einfluss und Nützlichkeit wahrnehmen. Um folglich ihre entsprechende Unterstützungsleistung aus Sicht ihrer Partner zu verbessern (unter anderen guten Gründen), sollten die Geber prüfen, ob sie ihre Bemühungen um planbare Unterstützungsleistung verstärken können.

**Spezifizierung für Deutschland:** In der GPEDC-Monitoring-Runde 2018 wird eine jährliche Planbarkeit der durch die deutsche EZ bereitgestellten Ressourcen mit starken 91,1 Prozent angegeben. Zwar gibt es noch Verbesserungspotenzial, aber die deutsche staatliche EZ wird wahrscheinlich ihren Einfluss und ihre Nützlichkeit, wie sie von den Partnern wahrgenommen werden, nicht wesentlich steigern können, indem die Planbarkeit ihrer Auszahlungen weiter verbessert wird. Etwas anders sieht es auf der Ebene der transparenten und vorausschauenden Planung aus, für die Deutschland in der GPEDC-Monitoring-Runde 2018 nur 75,1 Prozent erreicht. Obwohl dieser Indikator für die Planbarkeit in der Analyse dieser Studie nicht verwendet wurde, scheint es, als ob die deutsche staatliche EZ in dieser Hinsicht besser abschneiden und möglicherweise die Wahrnehmung der Partner hinsichtlich ihres Einflusses und ihrer Nützlichkeit verbessern könnte. Dies spiegelt die Empfehlungen des jüngsten DAC-Peer-Review der Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) wider, in dem empfohlen wird, dass Deutschland die Planbarkeit seiner Programme und seiner strategischen Planung stärkt (OECD, 2015: 19).

#### *Handlungsoptionen auf der Mikroebene: Partner-Geber-Interaktionen vor Ort*

Die Geber sollten prüfen, inwieweit sie noch weiter auf Kompetenzen ihrer Mitarbeitenden aufbauen und ihre Flexibilität in der Geber-Partner-Interaktion auf der Mikroebene ausbauen können, um die Nützlichkeit aus Sicht ihrer Partner zu verbessern.

Während die meisten Aspekte der direkten Geber-Partner-Interaktion auf der Mikroebene der EZ nicht greifbar sind und sich daher nicht ohne Weiteres für quantitative Analysen eignen, liefern die für diese Studie durchgeführten qualitativen Fallstudien starke Hinweise auf die Wichtigkeit der täglichen EZ-Aktivitäten für die Bewertung der Nützlichkeit der Geber durch die Partner. Auf persönlicher Ebene zählen zu den Faktoren, die sich auf die Wahrnehmung einzelner Geber durch die Partner auswirken, das spezifische Fachwissen und die Soft Skills der Mitarbeitenden sowie eine aufrichtige kooperative Partnerschaft, die durch Vertrauen, Respekt und ehrliche Kommunikation gekennzeichnet ist. Auf der institutionellen Ebene wirken sich Faktoren wie Flexibilität und die Fähigkeit, schnell auf Partnerbedürfnisse zu reagieren, besonders auf die Wahrnehmung von Gebern durch Partner aus.

**Spezifizierung für Deutschland:** Die deutsche staatliche EZ ist gekennzeichnet durch eine vergleichsweise große Anzahl an Mitarbeitenden auf Länderebene (siehe Kapitel 5). Während die für diese Studie durchgeführte quantitative Analyse keinen Beleg dafür liefert, dass die Anzahl der Mitarbeitenden in einem Land Einfluss darauf hat, wie nützlich Partner die deutsche Unterstützungsleistung in den eigenen politischen Prozessen bewerten, zeigt sich in den Länderfallstudien ein anderes Bild. Sie deuten darauf hin, dass Partner das Fachwissen, das von der deutschen staatlichen EZ vor Ort bereitgestellt wird, sehr schätzen und auf dieser Ebene somit nur wenig Verbesserungspotenzial besteht. Im Gegensatz dazu ist die Wahrnehmung der Partner im Hinblick auf die Flexibilität der Prozesse und die Reaktionsfähigkeit der deutschen staatlichen EZ weniger vorteilhaft. Für das BMZ sowie für die GIZ und die KfW könnte es daher nützlich sein, zu prüfen, ob in bestimmten Prozessen mehr Flexibilität möglich ist, ohne die Qualität und Integrität zu beeinträchtigen. Diese Empfehlung wurde im Jahr 2015 auch vom OECD-DAC-Peer-Review für Deutschland gegeben (OECD, 2015: 18).

### **Konkrete Empfehlung für die deutsche staatliche EZ**

**Das BMZ sollte seine Strategien, Konzepte und Instrumente im Politikbereich „Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft, öffentliche Verwaltung“ auf der Grundlage solider Evidenz zur Wirksamkeit der geleisteten Unterstützung überprüfen.**

In der Studie wird gezeigt, dass die GIZ im Politikbereich „Demokratie, Zivilgesellschaft, öffentliche Verwaltung“ in den Augen der Partner hinsichtlich des Einflusses auf das Agenda-Setting und der Nützlichkeit bei der Politikimplementierung unter dem Durchschnitt der Peergroup liegt. Dies steht im Einklang mit den Ergebnissen der Vorgängerstudie von AidData und DEval (Faust et al., 2016), wonach Deutschland in Bezug auf den Einfluss auf das Agenda-Setting im breiteren Politikbereich der Förderung von „guter Regierungsführung“ (Good Governance) unterdurchschnittlich abschnitt. Ebenfalls steht dieses Ergebnis im Einklang mit einer kürzlich von der GIZ durchgeführten Evaluierung ihres Engagements in diesem Sektor, bei der „bescheidene“ Ergebnisse erzielt (Gomez, 2020: 58) und insbesondere auf der Ebene der Strategien und Konzepte der GIZ zur Regierungsunterstützung Schwachstellen festgestellt wurden.

Auch wenn die Durchschnittswerte für die staatlichen EZ-Akteure Deutschlands im Listening to Leaders Survey in diesem Politikbereich noch in die Kategorien „ziemlich einflussreich“ und „ziemlich nützlich“ fallen, ist die gleichwohl noch unterdurchschnittliche Bewertung durch die Partner aus zwei Gründen von besonderer Bedeutung für die deutsche staatliche EZ. Erstens ist Good Governance der am zweithäufigsten geförderte Politikbereich in den bilateralen Portfolios Deutschlands (Stand 2017, Doc. 7). Zweitens – und noch wichtiger – betont Deutschland, ein wertebasiertes EZ-Konzept zu verfolgen. Dies zeigt sich insbesondere in der Verpflichtung des BMZ zu Good-Governance-Kriterien, die seit Mitte der 1990er einen Referenzrahmen für die gesamte deutsche staatliche EZ bilden. Das Bekenntnis zu einer wertebasierten EZ lässt sich auf die „Spranger-Kriterien“ von 1991 zurückführen. Verstanden als Bezugsrahmen für die deutsche staatliche EZ wurden diese Kriterien 1996 als konkrete Handlungsfelder des BMZ weiterentwickelt. Vor dem Hintergrund der Millennium-Entwicklungsziele hat das BMZ die Kriterien 2006 noch einmal überarbeitet (Wagner, 2017). Bis heute spiegeln sie sich in verschiedenen BMZ-Konzepten und -Strategien wider, zum Beispiel in der sektorübergreifenden BMZ-Strategie zur Menschenrechtspolitik (BMZ, 2011). Die hohe Relevanz von Good Governance für die staatliche EZ Deutschlands zeigt auch der BMZ-interne Prozess zur Bewertung der Governance-Situation in den Partnerländern (BMZ, 2009). Entsprechend spielt die Förderung von Good Governance ebenso eine wichtige Rolle in aktuellen Schlüsselstrategien des BMZ, wie der BMZ-2030-Strategie (Doc. 11) sowie dem „Marshallplan mit Afrika“ (BMZ, 2017), als zwei wichtigen Meilensteinen für die Zukunftsorientierung der deutschen staatlichen EZ.

Angesichts der hohen Relevanz dieses Politikbereichs in der deutschen staatlichen EZ sollten sich BMZ, GIZ und andere Akteure nicht mit einer durch die Partner als unterdurchschnittlich bewerteten Leistung in diesem Feld zufriedengeben. Es wäre daher wichtig, das deutsche Engagement in diesem Politikbereich auf der Grundlage solider Evidenz zu überprüfen und Strategien, Konzepte und Instrumente gegebenenfalls anzupassen und weiterzuentwickeln.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is about (1) how policymakers and practitioners in low- and middle-income countries assess the support for internal policy processes they receive from Germany and other donors<sup>4</sup> and (2) what these donors can do to improve their support in the eyes of their partners.

### Why partner perceptions matter

How partner-country policymakers and practitioners perceive donors' support for agenda setting and implementation of internal policies is relevant mainly for two reasons.

First, economic development in many low- and middle-income countries and the proliferation of donors continue to expand partner-countries' access to finance and policy ideas (Janus et al., 2015; Klingebiel et al., 2016; Parks et al., 2015). In an "age of choice" (Prizzon et al., 2016), partner countries can be increasingly selective about who they wish to cooperate with and who they invite to the table when national development priorities and policy agendas are negotiated. Over the coming years, this is likely to lead to increased competition among donors as providers of policy ideas and implementation support (Acharya et al., 2006; Frot and Santiso, 2010; Gonsior and Klingebiel, 2019; Mawdsley, 2015; Morris, 2018). As a consequence, for a donor to stay in the game and be able to contribute to the achievement of development outcomes in countries of the Global South, positive perceptions of the donor's performance among policymakers and practitioners in those countries will become increasingly important.

The second reason why donors in particular should take a keen interest in how policymakers and practitioners in their partner countries assess donor support for local policy processes is that these stakeholders can be expected to be among the best judges of the quality of this support. In view of an understanding of aid as a mere "catalyst" for internally induced development dynamics (Pronk, 2001), the approach of assessing the effectiveness of development cooperation only by directly measuring development outcomes such as economic growth poses considerable challenges. Instead, the link between donor support for local policy processes and development outcomes can also be recognised as an indirect one, and here the perceived influence and helpfulness of donors' support for partners' policies is measured to reflect donors' contributions.

Though a donor's image in the eyes of partners is important for donors to care about in and of itself, competition between donors to provide policy ideas and implementation makes perceptions even more important, as these distinguish one donor from another. However, the Listening to Leaders Survey measures more than just "perceptions": it reports experience-based assessments of donors' support by those who should know best and, as such, should be taken seriously. Accordingly, in this report we use both terms – perceptions and assessments – to describe the measured items throughout.

### Guiding questions and empirical approach

Given the importance of the partner perspective, the study identifies agenda setting and policy implementation as two important entry points and examines donors' support at these two stages in the eyes of policymakers and practitioners from 126 low- and middle-income countries. In addition, it identifies factors that explain partner assessments of donor support for internal processes at three levels: first, strategic decisions by donors about aid allocation and partner-country selection (macro level); second, donor adherence to principles of aid effectiveness (see Box 1; meso level); and third, donor-partner interactions on the ground (micro level).

<sup>4</sup> The term "donor" has been widely banished from international development cooperation vocabulary in favour of "development partner" to express a relationship at eye level and of mutual interest (Konijn, 2013). For the same reason, the term "recipient" has been widely replaced by "partner (country)". For the sake of clarity, this report uses the term "donor" to describe providers of development assistance and "partner" or "partner country" to describe recipients.

This joint report by the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) and AidData investigates partner assessments globally for all bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as for Germany's official development cooperation in particular. The questions that guide the report are:

#### Assessments of bilateral and multilateral donors

1. How do partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess donor support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?
2. What factors explain differences in partner-country policymakers' and practitioners' assessments of donor support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?

#### Assessments of Germany's official development cooperation

3. How do partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess Germany's support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?
4. What factors explain differences in partner-country policymakers' and practitioners' assessments of Germany's support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?

By means of AidData's 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey, we are able to analyse data on agenda setting and policy implementation, two crucial stages of a partner-country's policy cycle in which donors can act in order to contribute to the achievement of development outcomes. In the 2017 survey, nearly 2,400 policymakers and practitioners from "government" (62.6%), "civil society" (29.8%), and the "private sector" (7.6%) provided first-hand insights into their experiences working with a variety of bilateral and multilateral donors and shared feedback on two aspects of performance: influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in implementing policy initiatives. 375 partner-country policymakers and practitioners evaluated at least one of the three main actors of Germany's official development cooperation present in partner countries (German embassies, the GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), and the KfW Development Bank (KfW, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau)).

We complement the survey data with insights drawn from four country case studies (Albania, Cambodia, Colombia, and Malawi). In sum, interviews with 193 policymakers and practitioners were conducted, of which 101 were partner-country policymakers and practitioners (69.3% "government and public sector", 24.8% "civil society" and 5.9% "private sector"). These country case studies provide value in two ways. First, they explore how policymakers and practitioners understand the terms "influence" in agenda setting and "helpfulness" in policy implementation. Second, they build a richer narrative around the presumed explanatory factors through which donors can become more influential and more helpful, and unearth additional factors that were not identified ahead of the case studies.

### How do partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess donor support?

#### Key findings I: Bilateral and multilateral donors

- On average, bilateral and multilateral donors achieve scores between 2.5 and 3.5 on a scale from 1 (not at all influential/helpful) to 4 (very influential/helpful) on each item and, per our interpretation, are thus assessed as "quite influential" and "quite helpful". However, clear differences between individual donors are apparent. For instance, multilateral donors are assessed as more influential in agenda setting and more helpful in policy implementation than bilateral donors.
- The four country case studies indicate that, by and large, donors' influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation are perceived positively.
- Survey respondents assess donors who are influential in agenda setting as also being helpful in policy implementation. While higher perceived helpfulness of donors is associated with greater perceived progress on policy initiatives, the same is not true for influence on agenda setting.

**On average, bilateral and multilateral donors are assessed as "quite influential" in agenda setting and "quite helpful" in policy implementation in low- and middle-income countries. In relative terms, survey respondents assess multilateral organisations as more influential and more helpful than bilateral donors. Multilateral donors are assessed as more influential (average score: 3.00) and more helpful (average score:**

3.28) than bilateral donors (influence average score: 2.85; helpfulness average score: 3.15). In our sample of 43 bilateral and multilateral donors, the top ten donors in terms of perceived influence and helpfulness are a mix of large multilateral donors. Compared to the average across all donors, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the USA, the European Union (EU), and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are assessed as more influential and more helpful. Other donors typically have an edge on one of the two measures. The three bilateral donors ranked among the ten most influential donors are two large Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors – the USA and the UK – and Denmark, a rather small and specialised donor. Although Denmark ranks below the USA and the UK, this result indicates that a high total amount of provided Official Development Assistance (ODA) or a large project portfolio is not necessarily related to higher influence scores. The only bilateral donor in the top ten of the most helpful donors is a large bilateral donor: the USA.

**Country case studies indicate that partner-country policymakers and practitioners perceive donors' influence as an input that supports them in dealing with their development challenges. Accordingly, influence is perceived positively. Nevertheless, there are some instances when influence is perceived negatively, for example when donors disregard partners' policy preferences.** Partner-country policymakers and practitioners in the country case studies describe donors' influence in agenda setting as creating or contributing to new policy agendas, modifying existing ones, or retaining priorities when new governments come to power. In the country case studies, influence in agenda setting is generally assessed as positive, i.e., as a contribution of solutions to partner-countries' development challenges. However, in a few cases partner-country policymakers and practitioners also raise criticisms with respect to influence. On the one hand, a few government interviewees mention that “influence” is not the right word to describe the nature of their partnership with donors. In their view, cooperation implies mutual respect between donors and partner-country stakeholders, and is less about donors' influence and more about supporting partners' decisions. On the other hand, influence is assessed as a negative attribute in a few cases when donors push their own interests too much and do not take partners' preferences or arguments into account.

**The qualitative analysis suggests that partner-country policymakers and practitioners often associate helpfulness with donors adopting sector-wide approaches and supporting internal capacity.** In the four case studies, partner-country policymakers and practitioners interpret donors' helpfulness in policy implementation mainly as various forms of support in the areas of technical and financial assistance. As we only received information that rated helpfulness positively, we conclude that scoring high on this measure is a desirable outcome. Across the country case studies, two aspects stand out that are assessed as helpful in policy implementation: using sector-wide approaches and building internal capacity.

**Survey respondents assess donors who are influential in agenda setting as also being helpful in policy implementation.** Survey respondents across low- and middle-income countries reveal that donors who are assessed as influential tend to be assessed as helpful, and vice versa. However, donors should not expect this positive relationship to appear automatically, as country case studies indicate that there are factors that might counteract it. First, where a donor pushes its policy ideas strongly, partners may agree to include these ideas in their policy documents, but might not prioritise their implementation in the near future. Second, if a partner-country's government changes (e.g., following elections), the new government might not prioritise its predecessor's commitments. Thus, in both cases partners might assess a donor as influential because, for example, the donor successfully brought an issue onto the agenda, but not as helpful, because projects were not implemented.

**Perceived progress on policy initiatives is associated with greater donor helpfulness.** We hypothesise that more favourable assessments of donors in terms of influence and helpfulness are associated with perceptions of greater progress on a policy initiative. The survey analysis reveals a positive relationship between perceived progress and assessed donor helpfulness, but not between perceived progress and perceived donor influence. However, there is also no negative relationship between perceived donor influence and perceived progress of a policy initiative. These identified correlations among influence, helpfulness, and progress indicate that donors can successfully influence partner-countries' policy agendas and subsequently assist partners to implement those policies to achieve development goals.

## What explains how donors perform in the eyes of their partners?

### Key findings II: Bilateral and multilateral donors

- Actionable factors that are related to how influential and helpful a donor is perceived by partner-country policymakers and practitioners have been identified at three levels: (1) strategic decisions about aid allocation and country selection (macro level), (2) donors' adherence to aid effectiveness principles (meso level), and (3) donor–partner interactions on the ground (micro level).
  - Macro level: The importance of a donor's provided aid in relation to the total provided aid to a specific partner country is positively related to that donor's perceived influence in agenda setting and perceived helpfulness in policy implementation.
  - Meso level: Donors' adherence to specific aid effectiveness principles is positively related to how partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess donors' influence and/or helpfulness.
  - Micro level: Partner-country policymakers and practitioners emphasise aspects of the donor–partner interaction that make donors more helpful in their view, such as donors' expertise, flexibility in donors' processes, cooperative partnerships, and the quality of the relationship.

#### *Factors concerning strategic decisions about aid allocation and country selection (macro level)*

**Survey analysis reveals that the importance of a donor's provided aid in relation to the total provided aid to a partner country is positively related to that donor's perceived influence in agenda setting and perceived helpfulness in policy implementation.** This result complements Faust et al. (2016), who also find a positive effect – of a donor's *provided aid* (measured through the indicator “country programmable aid” (CPA)) in relation to the total provided aid in a partner country – on Germany's perceived influence, but no effect on its perceived helpfulness. The result confirms that aid can be used as leverage to achieve influence on policy initiatives, which is in line with other literature (Dietrich and Wright, 2012; Molenaers et al., 2015).

**Survey data show a negative relationship between aid fragmentation and donors' perceived helpfulness.** In countries where *aid fragmentation* is high, policymakers and practitioners assess donors as less helpful in policy implementation. Evidence for a relationship between fragmentation and perceived influence in agenda setting is less robust, but points in the same direction.

**A country's level of democracy and aid dependency were not found to be related to donors' perceived influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation.** The level of democracy or autocracy of a partner country (*regime type*) does not directly affect donors' perceived influence and helpfulness. Although for many donors the level of democracy is an important factor with regard to aid allocation, the first AidData-DEval report also did not find a direct relationship (Faust et al., 2016). Furthermore, according to the country case studies, we assumed that the greater a partner country's *aid dependency*, the more a donor would be perceived as influential and helpful. By contrast, our models show no robust relationship between aid dependency and partners' assessments of donors' support.

#### *Factors concerning donors' adherence to aid effectiveness principles (meso level)*

**Survey analysis indicates that providing a larger share of aid on budget or in the form of general budget support is positively related to partners' assessments of donors' influence in agenda setting; aid on budget is also positively related to perceived helpfulness in policy implementation. Donors' use of a country's systems to provide aid was not found to be related to how partners assessed donors.** In line with our initial expectation, providing *general budget support* is positively related to greater perceived influence of a donor in agenda setting. *Aid on budget* even leads donors to be assessed as more influential and more helpful in the eyes of their partners. As aid on budget facilitates budget processes and is expected to support greater accountability, it can be interpreted as a crucial step towards alignment (CABRI, 2014; OECD, 2012). The latter equally applies to general budget support, which is also seen to enhance partner-country accountability (Frantz, 2004), to improve public management systems (Lawson, 2015), and to increase budget transparency (Schmitt, 2017) as well as potentially serving to increase harmonisation among donors (Orth et al., 2017). By contrast, our analysis reveals that *use of country systems* – that is, the use of partner-country budget

execution, financial reporting, auditing, and procurement systems – is not positively related to donors' perceived performance in the internal policymaking process in the eyes of their partners. In the course of our qualitative analysis, policymakers and practitioners in the four country case studies also emphasise the general importance of donor alignment.

**Donor coordination through the use of pooled funding is associated with positive assessments of donor influence and helpfulness.** While there are many ways for *donors to coordinate* better, the study focuses on one approach: use of pooled funding. Our results show that, in countries where donors disburse a higher share of their aid by using pooled funding mechanisms, survey respondents assess donors as more influential and more helpful. Interestingly, whether an individual donor pools its funds with other donors in a given country does not seem to affect its own performance in the internal policymaking process, but pooling funds provides an enabling environment in which donors are perceived as more influential and more helpful. Partner-country policymakers and practitioners in three of the four country case studies (Albania, Cambodia, and Malawi) express the need for improved cooperation and communication among donors and view donor cooperation as helpful.

**Survey analysis reveals a positive relationship between in-year predictability and partner-country perceptions of donors' influence and helpfulness.** As one might expect, donors are assessed as more influential and more helpful when their aid is more predictable in the short term. In contrast to the survey analysis, which used in-year *predictability* as an indicator, the country case studies related predictability mostly to the sudden exit of donors from the partner country or changes in donors' commitments.

**Survey analysis shows that adherence to ownership is positively related to donors' perceived influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation.** Survey participants who report that the policy initiatives they worked on received broad-based partner-country support – that is, support from a larger group of actors (e.g., the head of state/government, the legislature, the judiciary, and civil-society groups), which is related to *adherence to ownership* – assess donors to be more influential and helpful. This relationship confirms findings from the first joint AidData-DEval report, which found partner-country support to be positively correlated with Germany's perceived influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in implementation (Faust et al., 2016). Furthermore, it is in line with findings from Keijzer and Black (2020), who show that local ownership is important for effective use of development funding (pp. 1–2). While we cannot be certain about the causal relationship, partner-country support is a relevant factor to be explored in more detail in future studies, especially against the background of inclusive partnerships being a specific aspect of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17.

### ***Factors concerning donor–partner interactions on the ground (micro level)***

**Country case studies suggest that policymakers and practitioners find helpful those donors that bring expertise and are flexible in their processes.** Partner-country policymakers and practitioners across the board assess donors' *expertise* as helpful, especially expertise in the area of bringing in scientific evidence and analysis, providing technological know-how, and possessing country-specific experience. Partner-country policymakers and practitioners in all four case study countries also value *flexible processes*. They regard rigid processes with respect to project planning schemes (e.g., long conception phases, cumbersome procedures, and deadlines) as rather unsupportive, because these can be out of sync with changing policy dynamics and actor constellations in specific reform processes.

**Country case studies indicate that cooperative partnerships – characterised by an openness towards ideas, trust, and cultural sensitivity – make donors more helpful in policy implementation in the eyes of their partners.** These *cooperative partnerships* comprise different aspects, all of them based on a partnership where both partners and donors are valued equally: working together (e.g., joint involvement in design, implementation, roll-out, and problem-solving); trust; respectful and honest communication; long-standing relationships; cultural sensitivity; proximity; and listening to and valuing partners' ideas.

**Qualitative analysis indicates that personal relationships matter for donors to be perceived by partner-country actors as more influential in agenda setting and more helpful in policy implementation.** Partner-country and external stakeholders (donor staff based in-country and experts) in the case studies highlight

that a donor's influence and helpfulness can be related to individual staff members (e.g., their technical and soft skills). Other aspects that appear to be relevant with respect to individual staff members include being knowledgeable in the field, responsible, and straightforward, demonstrating leadership and commitment, and maintaining good *interpersonal relations*.

### How do partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess Germany's support in the BMZ's partner countries?

The study places a particular focus on analysing how the three German actors (German embassies and the implementing organisations the GIZ and the KfW) and Germany's overall official development cooperation – measured as the aggregate of the three – perform in comparison to a relevant peer group of donors in terms of influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation across the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ's) 85 partner countries. The peer group consists of four large multilateral donors (the EU, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, and the World Bank), the four largest DAC bilateral donors aside from Germany (the UK, France, Japan, and the USA), China as an important non-DAC donor, and, lastly, relatively small and specialised donors (Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden). The latter were included as they ranked high on influence and helpfulness in the first AidData-DEval report (Faust et al., 2016). The study also shows how influential and helpful Germany's overall official development cooperation and the three German development actors are perceived across stakeholder groups ("government", "non-governmental organisations/civil society organisations" ("NGOs/CSOs"), and "private sector"), regions, and policy areas. Due to the low number of responses for German development actors, not all individual stakeholder groups, regions, and policy areas could be analysed.

#### Key findings I: Germany's official development cooperation

##### Germany's aggregate score

- Germany's aggregate score is 2.93 for influence and 3.18 for helpfulness, placing Germany's official development cooperation in the range of "quite influential" and "quite helpful", comparable to what we see for donors in the peer group of 13 bilateral and multilateral donors. Compared to the average scores of this peer group, however, Germany's aggregate score is on par for helpfulness but below par for influence.
- Across policy areas, regions, and stakeholder groups, the aggregate scores for Germany's helpfulness and influence range between 2.68 and 3.37 and are by and large on par with the peer group average. Germany's aggregate scores for influence and helpfulness are below the peer group average only for the policy area "democracy, civil society and public administration".

##### Individual performance of German development actors

- The three German development actors are perceived differently. More positive assessments of the German embassies in terms of their perceived influence and of the implementing organisations (the GIZ and the KfW) in terms of their perceived helpfulness might be due to the division of labour among the three development actors.
- The disaggregated analyses show that all three actors are, on average, perceived as on par with the peer group among single stakeholder groups as well as across different policy areas and regions. Only in a few areas do they perform above or below the peer group average.

#### Germany's aggregate score

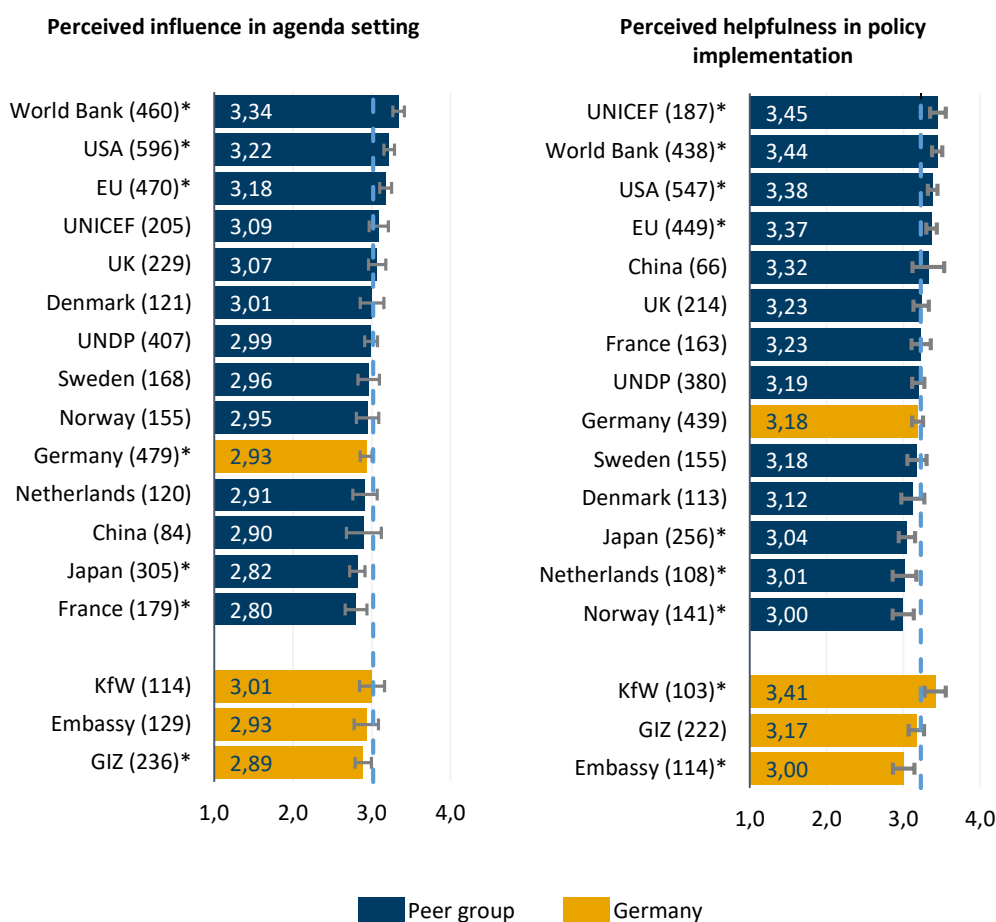
**Germany's official development cooperation is "quite influential" in agenda setting and "quite helpful" in policy implementation. In relative terms, Germany performs on par with the average of the peer group (13 bi- and multilateral donors) for helpfulness and below par for influence.** The individual scores of the three German actors range between 2.89 and 3.41 for perceived influence and perceived helpfulness on a scale of 1 to 4, which translates to an aggregate score for Germany's overall official development cooperation of 2.93 for influence in agenda setting and 3.18 for helpfulness in policy implementation. Concerning influence,



Germany's aggregate score ranks 10th, with all four multilateral donors and some large (the USA and the UK) and small (Denmark, Sweden, and Norway) bilateral DAC donors ranking higher (see Figure below). China is ranked lower than Germany for influence in agenda setting. Regarding helpfulness, Germany's aggregate score ranks 9th, again with all the multilateral and most large bilateral DAC donors (the USA, the UK, and France) ranking higher. China performs higher than Germany's aggregate score in terms of helpfulness, while all small DAC donors perform lower (see Figure below).

**The analyses across stakeholder groups, regions, and policy areas demonstrate that Germany's aggregate score is by and large on par with the peer group average in terms of influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation.** Given the low number of assessments of Germany's official development actors, not all disaggregated categories (stakeholder groups, regions, and policy areas) could be analysed. Across the conducted analyses, Germany's aggregate scores are between 2.68 and 3.37 for perceived influence and perceived helpfulness; Germany's official development cooperation can thus be regarded as "quite influential" and "quite helpful" in absolute terms. Only the aggregate score for Germany in the policy area "democracy, civil society and public administration" is 2.91 for influence and 3.04 for helpfulness, both lower than the peer group average (3.15 and 3.26 for respectively).

### Partner assessments of donor influence and helpfulness in BMZ's partner countries



Note: Scale: 1 = not at all influential/helpful, 2 = only slightly influential/helpful, 3 = quite influential/helpful, 4 = very influential/helpful. Blue dotted line = average (adding all donors' average scores with  $N \geq 30$  and dividing the result by the total number of donors). Average influence/helpfulness = 3.02/3.23. Numbers in brackets refer to responses. Grey lines = 95% confidence intervals. An \* indicates a significantly different donor score from the peer group average ( $p < .05$ ).

Source: 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey.

## Individual performance of the German development actors

**German embassies perform on par with the peer group average in terms of perceived influence in agenda setting and below par in terms of perceived helpfulness in policy implementation.** On the 1 to 4 scale, German embassies score 2.93 for perceived influence and 3.00 for perceived helpfulness and thus can be described as “quite influential” and “quite helpful”. Compared to the peer group average score for helpfulness in policy implementation (3.23), as well as in comparison to the GIZ (3.17) and the KfW (3.41), the embassies are assessed less favourably by partner-country policymakers and practitioners. The latter finding can be explained by the division of labour among the three German development actors. In contrast to the GIZ and the KfW, which are mandated to implement the largest part of Germany’s technical and financial assistance, the embassies (more specifically BMZ staff seconded to embassies and formally part of the foreign service) work on the policy sphere of development cooperation (see section 5.1) and are not directly involved in the implementation of policy initiatives.

**The disaggregated analyses across stakeholder groups, regions, and policy areas show that the embassies, by and large, perform on par with the peer group average. In some areas, they receive lower assessments in terms of helpfulness in policy implementation, which – as in the aggregated analysis – might be traced back to their mandate.** On a disaggregated level, the embassies receive lower assessments in terms of helpfulness in policy implementation from the stakeholder group “government officials”, in the region “Sub-Saharan Africa”, and in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration”. In “Europe and Central Asia”, and with respect to assessments by the stakeholder group “NGOs/CSOs”, German embassies perform on par with the peer group average for perceived influence and perceived helpfulness. In the policy area “sustainable economic development”, the embassies perform on a par with the peer group in terms of their perceived influence.

**The GIZ performs on par with the peer group average in terms of perceived helpfulness in policy implementation and below par in terms of perceived influence in agenda setting.** The GIZ scores 2.89 and 3.17 on the 1-to-4 scale for perceived influence and perceived helpfulness respectively, and thus is perceived as “quite influential” and “quite helpful”. In relative terms, the GIZ performs on par with the peer group average on perceived helpfulness (score: 3.02) but below par on perceived influence (score: 3.23). Corresponding to the division of labour between the German actors, the GIZ also reap a dividend in their perceived helpfulness in comparison to the embassies. The lower performance of the GIZ in terms of perceived influence can be traced back to its mandate (see section 5.1).

**The disaggregated analyses demonstrate that the GIZ performs on par with the peer group average in almost all stakeholder groups, policy areas, and regions. It only performs below par in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration”.** The disaggregated analyses show that the GIZ performs on par with the peer group average in terms of perceived influence and perceived helpfulness from the stakeholder groups “government officials” and “NGOs/CSOs”, in the regions “Europe and Central Asia” and “Sub-Saharan Africa”, and in the policy area “sustainable economic development”. By contrast, it scores below the peer group average in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration” across both measures.

**The KfW outperforms the peer group average in terms of perceived helpfulness in policy implementation and performs on par in terms of perceived influence in agenda setting.**

The KfW scores 3.01 and 3.41 on the 1-to-4 scale for perceived influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation respectively, outperforming the peer group average of 3.23 for perceived helpfulness. Overall, the KfW ranks 6th for influence and 3rd for helpfulness, with only UNICEF and the World Bank scoring higher in helpfulness. Since the KfW operates mainly at the implementation level, its high score for perceived helpfulness in policy implementation reflects its mandate (see section 5.1; BMZ, 2008).

**The disaggregated analyses reveal that the KfW is perceived as more helpful than the average of the peer group among the stakeholder group “government officials” and in the region “sub-Saharan Africa”.** The KfW’s performance is particularly strong for perceived helpfulness by the stakeholder group “government officials” and in the region “Sub-Saharan Africa”, scoring 3.45 with government officials (peer group average:

3.24). Only UNICEF, the World Bank, and the USA are perceived as more helpful. In “Sub-Saharan Africa” the KfW scores 3.63 for perceived helpfulness (peer group average: 3.39), with only UNICEF ranking higher.

### What explains how Germany performs in the eyes of its partners?

#### Key findings II: Germany’s official development cooperation

- In general, the actionable factors we identified as being relevant to the perceived helpfulness and influence of all donors are equally relevant for the case of Germany. In particular, “adherence to ownership” is found to be positively related to perceived influence in agenda setting.
- The survey analysis does not show positive or negative effects for most of the examined Germany-specific factors (e.g., duration of Germany’s official bilateral development assistance and number of staff abroad) on perceived influence in agenda setting and perceived helpfulness in policy implementation.
- As of 2011, Germany introduced comprehensive reforms of its official development cooperation. However, the study did not find any effects of this reflected in Germany’s score for influence and helpfulness in the eyes of partner-country policymakers and practitioners.

#### *Relevance of factors identified in the cross-donor analysis for assessments of Germany’s official development cooperation*

**Consistent with findings presented earlier on all donors, the regime type and the aid dependency of a partner country are not found to be related to Germany’s influence and helpfulness scores. The same is true for countries where Germany coordinates with other donors. Suggestive evidence points to a negative relationship between aid fragmentation and Germany’s score for helpfulness.** Consistent with the all-donor analysis and the first joint AidData-DEval report (Faust et al., 2016), the study does not indicate that the *regime type* (level of democracy or autocracy) of a partner country is related to Germany’s scores for perceived influence in agenda setting and perceived helpfulness in policy implementation. Also consistent with the all-donor analysis, the *aid dependency* of a partner country is not found to be related to Germany’s influence and helpfulness scores. The same is true for countries in which Germany *coordinates with other donors*, measured by Germany’s participation in EU joint programming initiatives. The latter finding confirms the all-donor analysis, showing that donor coordination does not seem to affect single-donor performance. Finally, suggestive evidence points to a negative relationship between *aid fragmentation* and Germany’s scores for helpfulness. This finding also points in the same direction as the first AidData-DEval report (Faust et al., 2016).

**Consistent with the analysis for all donors, the internal support for policy initiatives and the relevance of projects from the GIZ and KfW in a partner country are related to Germany’s score for influence.** Our results on the effects of both partner-country support and the relevance of projects indicate that donors’ *adherence to ownership* is positively related to partner assessments of donors’ influence.

**Unlike the findings shown for all donors, no evidence was found with regard to the relationship between the share of Germany’s provided aid in a partner country and Germany’s scores for influence and helpfulness.** There is no evidence in the data of a statistically significant positive correlation between Germany’s relative *share of provided aid* (measured through the indicator CPA) in a partner country and Germany’s scores for perceived influence and helpfulness. Although the relationship was not found for Germany’s official development cooperation (which could be related to the small number of cases in the Germany-specific analysis), there is no reason to believe that the findings from the analysis of all donors do not apply to Germany. Moreover, the results of the all-donor analysis (a greater share of provided aid is associated with greater perceived influence and helpfulness) are in line with results found in the first AidData-DEval report, which identified positive relationships between the share of Germany’s provided aid in a partner-country’s total received aid and Germany’s perceived influence score (Faust et al., 2016).

### ***Relationship between Germany-specific factors and assessments of Germany's official development cooperation***

The survey analysis shows neither positive nor negative effects for most of the examined Germany-specific factors (e.g., duration of Germany's official bilateral development assistance and number of staff abroad) on perceived influence in agenda setting and perceived helpfulness in policy implementation. Neither a positive nor a negative relationship is found between *state fragility* and partner assessments. Thus, this study indicates the performance of Germany's official bilateral development cooperation is no worse in fragile states. Moreover, no conclusive evidence is found that the *intensity of development cooperation* between Germany and its partners is positively related to Germany's performance on influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation in the eyes of its partners. Furthermore, we find no positive relationship between the *duration of Germany's bilateral official development assistance* to BMZ partner countries and Germany's performance in terms of perceived influence and helpfulness in the survey analysis. However, the qualitative data indicate that duration is a relevant factor for partners. Thus, even though the duration of cooperation holds true only for Germany within specific contexts, it is not related to partner assessments of Germany's performance on influence and helpfulness across all BMZ partner countries.

In addition, survey data reveal no evidence that the *number of staff* from the BMZ seconded to German embassies (and formally part of the foreign service), the KfW, or the GIZ in a partner country is related to Germany's performance in influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation. Interestingly, this holds true for all three German development actors, regardless of the notable differences in the number of their staff abroad.

**There is no evidence to suggest that Germany's official development cooperation reforms of 2011 have resulted in improved scores for influence in agenda setting or helpfulness in policy implementation for Germany.** We address the question of whether the reforms entail a higher score for Germany for either influence or helpfulness using four approaches (see sub-section 5.3.3). Across all four, the study does not provide evidence that Germany's official development cooperation reforms resulted in an improved score for Germany's influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation.

### **Main conclusions for bilateral and multilateral donors**

- The common approach of bilateral and multilateral donors – to (1) contribute policy ideas to a partner's agenda-setting process and (2) provide support for the implementation of partner policies – can foster progress on policy initiatives and is, by and large, valued as positive by partner-country policymakers and practitioners.
- Although most donors are assessed as “quite influential” in agenda setting and “quite helpful” in policy implementation, partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess some donors as significantly more (or less) influential and helpful than the donor average. For instance, a number of multilateral donors are assessed as significantly more influential and helpful than the average of all donors.
- Besides the marked differences between bilateral and (a number of) multilateral donors, variations in how policymakers and practitioners assess donor support in partner-country policy processes are related to factors at three levels: (i) strategic decisions about aid allocation and country selection (macro level); (ii) adherence to aid effectiveness principles (meso level), and (iii) donor–partner interactions in the partner country (micro level). Thus, both multilateral and bilateral donors can take action at any of these levels to improve their support in the eyes of their partners. Given the diversity of donors, they might consider different actions as appropriate depending on their resources, mandates, organisational structure, or degree of decentralisation in decision-making, as well as the specific donor–partner interaction in each country.

## Main conclusions for Germany's official development cooperation

- In absolute terms, the support of the three German development actors included in the survey (German embassies, the GIZ, and the KfW) is assessed as “quite influential” in agenda setting and “quite helpful” in policy implementation.
- When aggregated into an overall score for Germany's official development cooperation, in relative terms, Germany's score is on par with the average of the peer group of bilateral and multilateral donors for helpfulness and below par for influence. These results confirm the findings of the previous AidData-DEval study on the topic (Faust et al., 2016). In the current study, Germany's performance on influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation is found to be predominantly average when disaggregated by stakeholder group, region, and policy area.
- Germany is the second-largest bilateral donor in the world (BMZ, 2019a) – with an institutionally and instrumentally highly differentiated development cooperation system. As such, Germany's official development cooperation actors should reflect on this rather middling performance on influence and helpfulness and consider the options for action identified in this study in order to improve their perception in the eyes of their partners. In particular since the analysis does not find evidence that specific characteristics of Germany's official development cooperation, such as its high number of staff abroad, necessarily represent a unique selling point in terms of partner assessments of agenda-setting influence and helpfulness in policy implementation. It would therefore seem safe to assume that the findings and options for action identified generally for all donors should be equally relevant for Germany and that Germany's official development actors can improve their performance in the eyes of their partners by following the recommendations formulated for all donors below. In this respect, the ongoing efforts to further optimise Germany's official development cooperation system (most recently in the context of the BMZ's 2030 strategy) appear to be strongly supported by the results of this study.

## Recommendations

Every donor–partner interaction is different, as both donor systems and country contexts vary widely. Accordingly, the findings and conclusions of this study cannot be applied homogeneously to each of these individual settings. There can be no one-size-fits-all blueprint as to how donors can improve their agenda-setting influence and helpfulness in policy implementation in the eyes of their partners.

We therefore formulate only one overarching recommendation that in principle applies to all donors. We then identify options for action, which each donor can carefully assess to see if they represent a viable way to improve how they are perceived by their partners. As this study has a specific focus on Germany, each option for action is reflected in light of Germany's particularities as a bilateral donor and its current strategic framework “BMZ 2030”. This study also formulates one specific recommendation for Germany's official development cooperation to review its engagement in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration”.

### *Recommendation for all donors*

**Donors should examine whether they can identify appropriate strategies or measures to improve how their support for domestic policy processes is assessed by their partners, taking into account options for action at the macro, meso, and micro levels.**

Almost all donors in the survey sample are assessed as “quite influential” and “quite helpful” (on a scale from “not at all influential/helpful” to “very influential/helpful”). Yet variations between donors suggests that donors can improve on their performance in the eyes of their partners, and this study identifies actionable factors to do so.

However, given donors' limited resources, the diversity in individual development actors' mandates, their organisational structure, the degree of decentralisation in decision-making, and diverse partner-country contexts as well as specific donor–partner interactions, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all strategy or

measures to recommend across all donors. Instead, donors need to choose carefully among a range of options for action identified at three levels that best fit them: macro level, meso level and micro level.

**Specification for Germany:** When compared to the peer group of donors, Germany (the second-largest bilateral donor in the world; BMZ, 2019a) shows an overall rather middling performance in terms of influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation in the eyes of its partners. In order to improve how they are assessed by their partners, Germany's development actors, above all the BMZ, should therefore consider the options for action identified below with a view to whether they can provide avenues in line with the BMZ's 2030 strategy to further improve how Germany's support for partners' policy processes is assessed by those very partners.

*Options for action at the macro level: Strategic decisions on aid allocation and partner-country selection*

Donors should gauge whether it would be possible to increase their allocations or – if they have an (over-)diversified portfolio of partner countries – concentrate their resources on a smaller number of countries. This would increase a donor's individual share in its partner-countries' aid budgets, which is associated with increased influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation as assessed by partners.

A donor's relative share in a partner-country's total aid budget (CPA) is associated with the donor being assessed as more influential in agenda setting and more helpful in policy implementation. Given limited resources, in most cases increasing a donor's relative share of total aid in a partner country is only possible through a concentration of its aid. To avoid this recommendation becoming self-defeating, however, and to avoid the concentration of aid resources on a handful of donor-darlings and the emergence of aid orphans, any such concentration processes should be carefully coordinated among donors (see also the options for action on donor coordination at the meso level).

**Specification for Germany:** While the BMZ's budget has increased substantially over the past few years (BMZ, 2019a), the (over-)diversification and fragmentation of Germany's bilateral cooperation have continued to be a topic of discussion (OECD, 2010, 2015). Within the framework of the BMZ's 2030 strategy, the ministry is now in the process of further focusing its bilateral ODA (both thematically as well as geographically), by reducing the number of topics and partner countries for its bilateral cooperation (BMZ, 2020a: 25). This strategy is supported by the findings of this study. Experience also suggests, however, that such processes should be carefully coordinated with other donors and that exit processes need to be carefully managed to avoid undermining past achievements or damaging bilateral relations.<sup>5</sup>

Bilateral donors should assess whether they can make more effective use of multilateral channels in supporting partner-countries' policies.

As in the first joint study by AidData and DEval (Faust et al., 2016), we find that, on average, multilateral donors are assessed more favourably than bilateral donors by partner-country policymakers and practitioners with regard to their influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation. This may be linked to the advantages of multilateral donors commonly discussed in the literature, such as being less politicised, more selective in terms of poverty criteria, more demand-driven (Gulrajani, 2016: 15), and less fragmented than bilateral cooperation.

Bilateral donors should therefore assess whether they can make more strategic use of individual multilateral donors' influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation – for example, by increasing contributions, seeking to gain more influence on the multilaterals' policies, and improving coordination with multilateral actors. Whether these are viable options for any particular bilateral donor, however, needs to

<sup>5</sup> DEval is currently undertaking a synthesis study on the lessons learned from donors' concentration and exit processes in the past.

be considered in light of realities such as the alignment of objectives and policies between the respective multilateral and bilateral donor or the possibility for a bilateral donor to have a say within a multilateral organisation and thus to be able to influence decision-making processes within that organisation. Moreover, it is important to note that the superior performance of multilateral donors does not apply to all multilaterals to the same extent (or even at all). Further, shifting allocations to multilateral channels comes at the potential cost of limited visibility of bilateral donors (Michaelowa et al., 2018) and reduced resources for bilateral cooperation.

**Specification for Germany:** The findings of this study – as well as the precursor study by Faust et al. (2016) – support the BMZ’s current efforts within the framework of the “BMZ 2030” strategy to strengthen and make more effective use of the multilateral system to tackle global challenges in close coordination with bilateral efforts (BMZ, 2018: 6). The “BMZ 2030” strategy envisages working more closely with the EU and other multilateral organisations, such as UNICEF and UNDP. The strategy calls for engaging more effectively within these institutions and in their strategic agenda setting (e.g., through more active engagement of seconded staff). In addition, the strategy sets out to improve coordination with these actors, e.g., through a division of labour in certain sectors (Doc. 11).<sup>6</sup> In doing so, the BMZ plans to focus on those multilateral institutions that show the political will to push international reform and development agendas and in places where Germany can exercise its influence (e.g., because of substantial financial contributions or high-ranking seconded staff) (Doc. 11). This strategy would seem in line with the recommendation formulated above. Whether it would be a viable option for the BMZ to choose to channel more of its ODA resources through the multilateral system than in the past, however, needs to be weighed in terms of congruence of policy objectives, Germany’s influence in a particular multilateral organisation, the need for bilateral visibility, and so on. In the years 2015–2017, the multilateral share of Germany’s ODA stood at 21%; for the BMZ’s budget, the figure is about 30% (BMZ, 2019b; Doc. 12).

#### *Options for action at the meso level: Adherence to aid effectiveness principles*

To improve partner assessments regarding influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation, donors should consider whether they can improve on their adherence to aid effectiveness commitments, in particular with regard to coordination, alignment, and predictability of their support.

*Coordination of donor contributions:* Our study shows that close coordination of financial contributions matters for partners’ assessments of donors’ support for their policy process. In general, policymakers and practitioners in low- and middle-income countries where donors coordinate their activities better (e.g., by pooling funds) are more likely to assess these donors as influential and helpful. This benefit does not accrue to donors individually, but appears to apply collectively to all donors in countries where such coordination takes place. These findings are in line with literature that emphasises efficiency gains and reduced transaction costs as positive aspects of donor coordination (Anderson, 2011; Bourguignon and Platteau, 2015; Bigsten and Tengstam, 2015; Klingebiel et al., 2017). They are also in line with literature that underlines the importance of donor coordination despite existing downsides, such as potential political costs and reduced visibility as a bilateral donor, that might come along with donor coordination (Bourguignon and Platteau, 2015; Carbone, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> To preserve the confidentiality of unpublished documents provided to DEval, these are cited within the text in the form “Doc.” plus a sequential number and do not appear in the references.

**Specification for Germany:** Although there is no direct link between an individual donor's efforts to coordinate with other development partners and how that donor's influence and helpfulness is assessed by policymakers and practitioners in partner countries, collectively donors are assessed as more influential and more helpful in countries where they coordinate their activities well (e.g., in the form of pooled funding arrangements). Germany's current ambition to foster coordination with other development partners through co-financing and pooling mechanisms and to promote not only joint programming but also joint implementation among EU donors (Doc. 11) is thus supported by the findings of this study, and it should therefore be examined whether it could be strengthened across Germany's bilateral portfolios.

*Use of country systems and alignment with partners' priorities:* The study finds evidence that a greater share of aid on budget is positively associated with partner perceptions of donor influence and helpfulness and the provision of general budget support is associated with higher levels of donor influence. The study findings also suggest that donor support for policies that enjoy broad domestic ownership is associated with favourable assessments by partner-country policymakers and practitioners. Providing assistance through partner-countries' own budgetary systems (or at least reporting on budget) and thus aligning support with partner-countries' priorities (Birdsall and Kharas, 2010; OECD, 2008a: 9; OECD and UNDP, 2016: 38; Prizzon, 2016) can help donors to be assessed as more influential in agenda setting and more helpful in policy implementation. Providing support in this way has to be weighed against other relevant aspects for donors' strategic decision-making, such as donors' own priorities and strategic objectives and their confidence in partner governments and fiduciary systems.

**Specification for Germany:** Our results for all donors suggest that providing aid through (or at least on) budget – and thus aligning with partner-countries' systems and priorities – makes a difference to how influential and helpful this donor support is assessed by policymakers and practitioners in partner countries. The proportion of Germany's development cooperation funding that is reported in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) 2019 progress report as provided on budget, however, is a mere 52.7% (2016: 48.0%; GPEDC, 2020), a far call from the target of 85% formulated for 2015 by the GPEDC (OECD and UNDP, 2016: 38).

The positive relationship between use of countries' own budgetary systems and assessment by partners of donors' influence in agenda setting is particularly pronounced for the instrument of budgetary aid. The results for Germany confirm the finding that the provision of general budget support is related to a more positive assessment by partners of Germany's influence in agenda setting. While Germany has incrementally stopped its use of budget support as an aid modality during the last decade, it has recently begun offering incentive-based policy reform credits to a handful of selected countries within the framework of its "reform partnerships". These results are thus in line with the BMZ's current strategy to give more weight to the strategic use of modalities such as (policy) reform credits where conditions allow (Doc. 11). This strategy would appear to be supported by this study with regard to improving partner perceptions of Germany's official development cooperation's influence and helpfulness.

*Provision of predictable development cooperation:* The study shows that predictability of policy support (measured as the share of development cooperation funding to a government policy area that is disbursed in the year for which it was scheduled; GPEDC, 2020) is linked to donors being perceived as more influential and more helpful by policymakers and practitioners in partner countries. Thus, in order to improve how they perform in terms of influence and helpfulness in the eyes of their partners (among other good reasons), donors should assess whether they can increase their efforts to provide predictable support.



**Specification for Germany:** In the 2018 GPEDC monitoring round, annual predictability of resources provided by Germany’s development cooperation is reported at a strong 91.1%. While there is some room for improvement, Germany’s official development cooperation will probably not be able to greatly increase its influence and helpfulness as perceived by partners by further improving the predictability of its disbursements. The picture is somewhat different at the level of transparent and forward planning, for which Germany scores only 75.1% in the 2018 GPEDC monitoring round. Although this indicator of predictability was not used in the analysis of this study, it would seem that Germany’s official development cooperation could do better in this regard, potentially improving partner perceptions of its influence and helpfulness. This echoes the recommendations of the latest Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) DAC Peer Review, which recommends that Germany strengthen the predictability of its programmes and strategic planning (OECD, 2015: 19).

#### *Options for action at the micro level: Donor–partner interactions on the ground*

Donors should scrutinise to what extent they can build on staff competencies and responsive processes at the micro level of donor–partner interactions to improve their helpfulness in the eyes of their partners.

While most aspects of direct donor–partner interactions at the micro level of development cooperation are intangible and thus do not lend themselves readily to quantitative analysis, the qualitative case studies conducted for this study provided strong indications of the importance of day-to-day development cooperation activities for how partners assess donor helpfulness. At the personal level, factors that impact how partners perceive individual donors include the specific expertise and soft skills of staff and a truly cooperative partnership characterised by trust, respect, and honest communication. At the agency level, factors such as flexibility and the ability to respond quickly to partner needs particularly affect how partners perceive donors.

**Specification for Germany:** Germany’s official development cooperation is characterised by a comparatively large number of staff present at the country level (see Chapter 5). While the quantitative analyses conducted for this study do not provide any evidence that the number of staff in a country impacts how helpful partners assess Germany’s support to domestic policy processes, case study evidence suggests that the expertise provided by Germany’s official development cooperation on the ground is highly appreciated by partners, suggesting little potential to improve at this level. By contrast, partner perceptions are less favourable with regard to the flexibility of processes and responsiveness of Germany’s official development cooperation. It could therefore be useful for the BMZ, the GIZ and KfW, to scrutinise whether there is room to introduce more flexibility in certain processes without compromising quality and integrity. This recommendation was also made by the OECD DAC Peer Review for Germany in 2015 (OECD, 2015: 18).

#### *Specific recommendation for Germany’s official development cooperation*

**The BMZ should review its strategies, concepts, and instruments in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration” based on solid evidence on the effectiveness of the support it provides in this area.**

This study finds that, in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration”, the GIZ performs below the peer group average in the eyes of partners in terms of agenda-setting influence and helpfulness in policy implementation. This is supported by findings of the precursor study by AidData and DEval (Faust et al., 2016), which found a below-par performance of Germany’s agenda-setting influence in the wider policy field of good governance support. Furthermore, it is in line with the results of a recent GIZ evaluation, which assigns to the GIZ’s engagement in this sector rather “modest” results (Gomez, 2020: 58) and identifies weaknesses in particular at the level of its strategies and concepts for governance support.

Even though the average scores for Germany’s official development actors in the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey in this policy field still fall in the categories “quite influential” and “quite helpful”, this remaining

below-average assessment by partners is of particular concern for Germany's development cooperation for two reasons. First, the promotion of good governance constitutes the second-most frequently funded policy area in Germany's bilateral portfolios (as of 2017, Doc. 7). Second, and more importantly, Germany prides itself on pursuing a "values-based" concept of development cooperation. This is particularly reflected in the BMZ's commitment to good governance criteria that have provided a reference framework for all of Germany's official development cooperation since the mid-1990s. Germany's clear commitment can be traced back to the so-called "Spranger criteria" of 1991. Understood as a reference framework for Germany's official development cooperation, these were further developed as concrete action fields for the BMZ in 1996. Against the background of the Millennium Development Goals, the BMZ revised the criteria once more in 2006 (Wagner, 2017). They are still reflected in various BMZ concepts and strategies, for instance the cross-sectoral strategy concerning human rights in development policy (BMZ, 2011). The high relevance of good governance for Germany's official development cooperation is also demonstrated by the internal BMZ process for assessing the governance situation in the partner countries (BMZ, 2009). Similarly, the promotion of good governance also plays an essential role in current key BMZ strategies, such as "BMZ 2030" (Doc. 11) and its Marshall Plan With Africa (BMZ, 2017), both important landmarks for the future orientation of Germany's official development cooperation.

Given the high relevance of this policy area within Germany's official development cooperation, the below-par performance in the eyes of its partners makes it important to review Germany's engagement in the policy field and consider revising and improving strategies, concepts, and instruments based on solid evidence on what works and what does not in this area.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
BGR	Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources)
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
CPA	Country programmable aid
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
CSO	Civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEG	Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft
DEval	Deutsches Evaluierungsinstitut der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (German Institute for Development Evaluation)
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	European Union
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GNI	Gross National Income
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW Development Bank)
LDC	Least developed country
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBA	Result-based approaches
RES	Reform Efforts Survey
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America



# 1. INTRODUCTION



## 1.1 Why partner perceptions matter

---

This report is about (1) how policymakers and practitioners in low- and middle-income countries<sup>7</sup> assess the support for internal policy processes they receive from Germany and other donors<sup>8</sup> and (2) what these donors can do to improve their support in the eyes of their partners. How partner-country policymakers and practitioners perceive donors' support for agenda setting and implementation of internal policies is relevant mainly for two reasons.

First, economic development in many low- and middle-income countries and the proliferation of donors continue to expand partner-countries' access to finance and policy ideas (Janus et al., 2015; Klingebiel et al., 2016; Parks et al., 2015). In an "age of choice" (Prizzon et al., 2016), partner countries can be increasingly selective about who they wish to cooperate with and who they invite to the table when national development priorities and policy agendas are negotiated. Over the coming years, this is likely to lead to increased competition among donors as providers of policy ideas and implementation support (Acharya et al., 2006; Frot and Santiso, 2010; Gonsior and Klingebiel, 2019; Mawdsley, 2015; Morris, 2018).<sup>9</sup> As a consequence, for a donor to stay in the game and be able to contribute to the achievement of development outcomes in countries of the Global South, positive perceptions of the donor's support among policymakers and practitioners in those countries will become increasingly important.

The second reason why donors in particular should take a keen interest in how policymakers and practitioners in their partner countries assess donor support for local policy processes is that these stakeholders can be expected to be among the best judges of the quality of this support. This is especially relevant against the background of the long-running debate on the effectiveness of aid. For a long time, this debate suffered not only from poor data availability and methodological challenges to assessing the effectiveness of aid (Mekasha and Tarp, 2019), but also from the lack of a universal measure of development outcomes as a dependent variable (Faust and Leiderer, 2008). As a proxy, the academic debate on aid effectiveness has long been almost exclusively focused on the nexus between aid and economic growth. This would have appeared appropriate in the early decades of development cooperation, when underdevelopment was understood mainly as the result of a lack of resources, or – at a later stage – inadequate macroeconomic framework conditions. However, over the past two decades, development cooperation has undergone a fundamental paradigm shift in two important aspects. The debate on the (in-)effectiveness of aid has led to a wide consensus that aid cannot "buy" development and that development cooperation can only be effective by means of supporting internal reforms and policy processes for which there is broad ownership in the developing country itself (World Bank, 1998). In addition, major bilateral and multilateral donors have come to the conclusion that, in order to overcome the most important obstacles to development, development cooperation must become more political and engage more explicitly in the political processes of developing countries (see Carothers and de Gramont, 2013; Dasandi et al., 2019).

In view of an understanding of aid as a mere "catalyst" for internally induced development dynamics (Pronk, 2001), the approach to assess the effectiveness of development cooperation only by directly measuring development outcomes such as economic growth poses considerable challenges. Instead, the link between donor support for local policy processes and development outcomes has to be recognised as an indirect one, and here the perceived influence and helpfulness of donors' support to partners' own policies is measured

<sup>7</sup> We apply the country classification of the World Bank (World Bank, 2019a).

<sup>8</sup> The term "donor" has been widely banished from international development cooperation vocabulary in favour of "development partner" to express a relationship at eye level and of mutual interest (Konijn, 2013). For the same reason, the term "recipient" has been widely replaced by "partner (country)". For the sake of clarity, this report uses the term "donor" to describe providers of development assistance and "partner" or "partner country" to describe recipients.

<sup>9</sup> The degree of competition varies by the type of partner country and policy sectors. In the social sector, for instance, there is still a financing gap (Manuel et al., 2018). Thus, even though there is an increasing number of donors in the social sector (Addison et al., 2015), competition among donors might be lower. Also, competition is expected to be lower in least developed countries (LDCs), because ODA remains especially important for them (Klingebiel, 2015). Nevertheless, the trend towards increased competition might be reinforced because partner-country governments do not yet have full access to new financing sources, but might have in the future (e.g. sources of philanthropic assistance; Prizzon et al., 2016).

to reflect donors' contributions. Thus, we posit that experience-based assessments of those who receive and use donors' support are a meaningful measure for evaluating the quality of donors' support.

Though it is important for donors to care about their image in the eyes of partners in and of itself, competition between donors to provide policy ideas and implementation makes perceptions even more important, as they distinguish one donor from another. However, the Listening to Leaders Survey measures more than just "perceptions": it reports experience-based assessments of donors' support by those who should know best and, as such, should be taken seriously. Accordingly, in this report we use both terms – perceptions and assessments – to describe the measured items throughout.

Given the importance of the partner perspective, the study identifies agenda setting and policy implementation as two important entry points and examines donors' support at these two stages in the eyes of policymakers and practitioners from 126 low- and middle-income countries. In addition, it identifies factors that explain partner assessments of donor support for internal processes at three levels: first, strategic decisions by donors about aid allocation and partner-country selection (macro level); second, donor adherence to principles of aid effectiveness (see Box 1; meso level);<sup>10</sup> and third, donor–partner interactions on the ground (micro level). The study thereby places a strong emphasis on factors that donors can act upon to contribute to partner-country policymaking and implementation, which are relevant for the achievement of development outcomes in partner countries.

The aim of this report is threefold. First, it provides evidence on how partners assess donors' support in the internal policymaking process (more precisely, donors' influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation). Second, it identifies factors that explain differences in donors' performance at these two stages in the eyes of their partners. Third, the report derives recommendations for key actors in Germany's official development cooperation and bilateral and multilateral donors on how to improve their support in the eyes of partners in the future.

## 1.2 Guiding questions and empirical approach

This joint German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval)-AidData report investigates partner assessments globally for all bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as for Germany's official development cooperation in particular. The questions that guide this report are:

### Box 1 Assessments of bilateral and multilateral donors

1. How do partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess donor support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?
  - a. Which donors do partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess as influential in agenda setting and helpful in the implementation of policy initiatives?
  - b. To what extent are assessments of donor support in the policy process associated with perceived progress on policy initiatives in partner countries?
2. What factors explain differences in partner-country policymakers' and practitioners' assessments of donor support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?

The study covers key actors in Germany's official development cooperation, namely the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and its main implementing agencies (see section 5.1): the KfW Development Bank (KfW, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau) and the GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft

<sup>10</sup> We refer to the term "aid effectiveness" instead of "effective development cooperation", since we use data from the 2010 progress monitoring round for our analysis, which relates to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, 2008a). While we acknowledge the role that partner-country governments need to play, the focus of this study is largely on donor practices, because our primary interest lies in how donors can act differently in the future.

für Internationale Zusammenarbeit). The following questions therefore address assessments related to Germany's official development cooperation in particular, in order to formulate targeted recommendations for German policymakers and practitioners.

### Box 2 Assessments of Germany's official development cooperation

3. How do partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess Germany's support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?
  - a. What are the comparative strengths and weaknesses of Germany's official development cooperation?
  - b. What are the comparative strengths and weaknesses of Germany's main development actors, namely the German embassies, the GIZ, and the KfW?
4. What factors explain differences in partner-country policymakers' and practitioners' assessments of Germany's support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?

By means of AidData's 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey, we are able to analyse data on agenda setting and policy implementation, two crucial stages of a partner-country's policy cycle in which donors can act in order to contribute to the achievement of development outcomes. In the 2017 survey, nearly 2,400 policymakers and practitioners from "government" (62.6%), "civil society" (29.8%), and the "private sector" (7.6%) provided first-hand insights into their experiences working with a variety of bilateral and multilateral donors<sup>11</sup> and shared feedback on two aspects of performance: influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in implementing policy initiatives. 375 partner-country policymakers and practitioners evaluated at least one of the three main actors of Germany's official development cooperation present in partner countries (German embassies, the GIZ, and the KfW).

We complement the survey data with insights drawn from four country case studies (Albania, Cambodia, Colombia, and Malawi). In sum, interviews with 193 policymakers and practitioners were conducted (of which 101 were partner-country policymakers and practitioners: 69.3% "government and public sector", 24.8% "civil society" and 5.9% "private sector"). These country case studies provide value in two ways. First, they explore how policymakers and practitioners understand the terms "influence" in agenda setting and "helpfulness" in policy implementation. Second, they build a richer narrative around the presumed explanatory factors through which donors can become more influential and more helpful, and unearth additional factors that were not identified ahead of the case studies.

## 1.3 Structure of the report

The report is organised as follows. Chapter 2 develops our conceptual framework to describe the entry points of development cooperation in partner-countries' policy cycles and identifies explanatory factors for partner assessments of donors' influence and helpfulness. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used to answer our guiding questions, including details of the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey and the four country case studies. Chapter 4 provides the main results of the analysis for all donors (guiding questions 1 and 2), while Chapter 5 presents findings for Germany (guiding questions 3 and 4). Chapter 6 gives our conclusions and recommendations on how bilateral and multilateral donors as well as Germany in particular can improve their support in the eyes of partners.

<sup>11</sup> For more comprehensive information on the survey, see Custer et al. (2018). For the full list of donors that were examined, see the online Appendix.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the conceptual framework on which this study is built. First, we illustrate entry points at which donors support partner countries' policy processes. The focus is on two key stages of the policy process: agenda setting and policy implementation (section 2.1). Second, the chapter presents factors that potentially affect assessments of donors' support by partner-country policymakers and practitioners (section 2.2).

## 2.1 Entry points for donors to support partner countries' policy process

---

According to the current understanding of development cooperation, policymakers and practitioners in low- and middle-income countries themselves take action to achieve development outcomes, and donors support these efforts (OECD, 2008a). Correspondingly, this study centres on entry points to internal policymaking at which donors support their partners. In order to illustrate these entry points, we use a basic policy cycle model, which considers the policy process as a sequence of five stages (see Figure 1): agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation, policy evaluation, and problem (re)definition (Jann and Wegrich, 2014: 106).<sup>12</sup>

Among these entry points, agenda setting and policy implementation are especially important stages. Since policy priorities set at the outset of the policy process determine development efforts down the line, we concentrate on the initial agenda setting stage. Only if relevant and appropriate policy ideas and priorities are set early on will respective projects and programmes be implemented. In addition, the implementation stage is the bottleneck of the policy process towards achieving development outcomes. Only if policy ideas are implemented adequately will development outcomes be achieved. Therefore, we also set the focus on the policy implementation stage.<sup>13</sup>

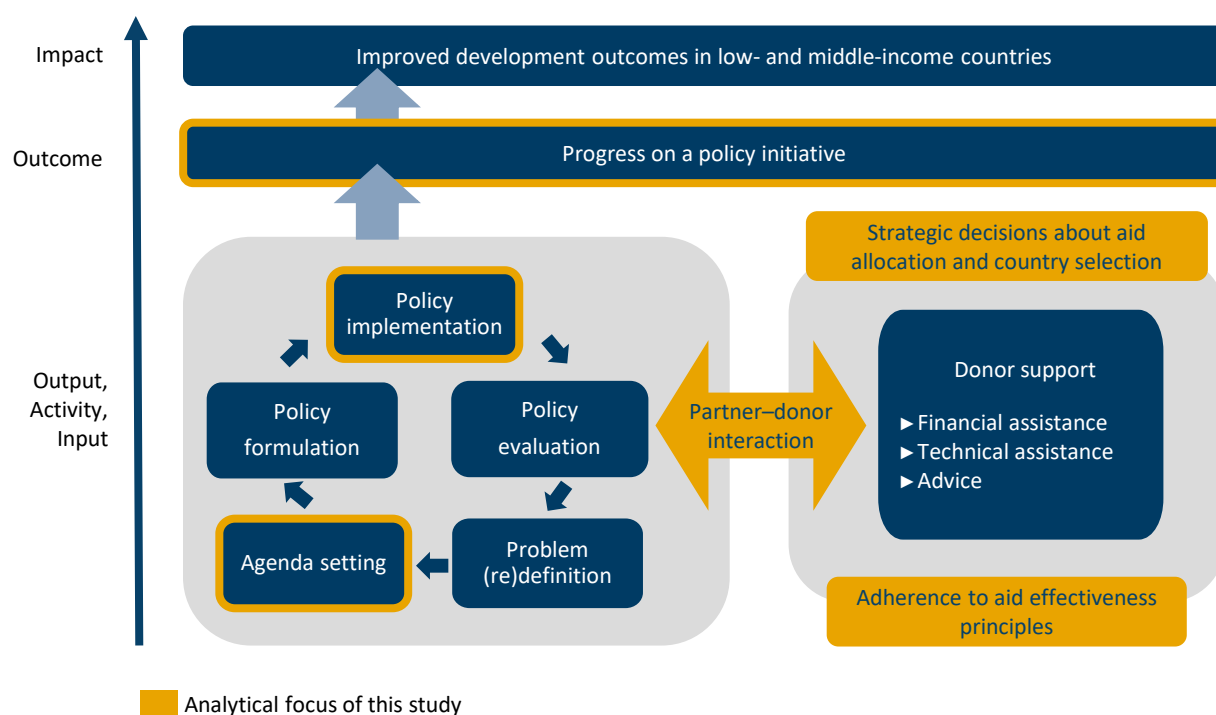
In order to analyse how donors support partners at these two stages, the study focuses on donors' *influence in agenda setting* and *helpfulness in policy implementation*. The focus on influence enables us to examine to what extent donors channel their views of development priorities into partners' agenda-setting processes. However, partner countries themselves often lack implementation capacities, so that policy ideas may not always result in tangible effects. Therefore, we also analyse how helpful donors are in supporting partners' policy implementation.

As this study's focus is on the partners' perspective, we investigate donor influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation in the eyes of partner-country policymakers and practitioners. AidData's 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey provides data on experience-based assessments by partner-country policymakers and practitioners concerning the influence and helpfulness of donors with which they have worked.

<sup>12</sup> This simplified model has been met with criticism. The analytical differentiation of the policy process itself into discrete stages and sequences has been criticised (Sabatier, 2007: 7). Alternative models of the policy cycle have been put forward. For example, Lauth and Thiery (2019: 279ff.) differentiate eight stages: problem perception, problem definition and agenda setting, search and valuation of alternative solutions, policy formulation, implementation, outcomes and impacts, evaluation and control, and policy learning. This study rests on Jann and Wegrich's (2014) model, as it offers an overview with reduced complexity.

<sup>13</sup> Based on Whitfield and Fraser (2009: 38), we liken this model to a results chain. Accordingly, the input, activity, and output dimensions are located at the level of the policy cycle, whereas outcome and impact are situated at a subsequent level where the achievements of the implemented policies are assessed.

**Figure 1** Conceptual framework: Partner-countries' policy cycle, donor support, and explanatory factors



Source: DEval/AidData, informed by Whitfield and Fraser (2009) and Jann and Wegrich (2014: 106).

## 2.2 Factors explaining donor influence and helpfulness as assessed by partners

It is plausible that a range of factors drive donor performance in terms of influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation. Accordingly, these drivers will also affect partner assessments concerning donor influence and helpfulness. As illustrated through the orange boxes in Figure 1, respective drivers can be located at three levels:

- factors about strategic decisions about aid allocation and country selection (macro level)
- factors that reflect a donor's adherence to aid effectiveness principles (meso level)
- relational and other more intangible factors of donor-partner interactions on the ground (micro level).

The study focuses on factors that enable donors to take action to improve their influence and helpfulness in the eyes of partners. To identify "actionable" factors at the three levels, we apply four criteria.

1. Given the scarce literature on partner perceptions, we replicate the analysis of factors that were related to partner assessments according to the first AidData-DEval study, in order to check whether these factors remain significant with a more comprehensive donor sample.
2. For the analysis of factors that indicate how donors adhere to the Aid Effectiveness Agenda, we focus on those indicators, which were used in the three progress monitoring rounds in 2011, 2014 and 2016.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The rounds correspond to the period covered in the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey, 2010 to 2015. Since the Aid Effectiveness Agenda itself has undergone changes with respect to the indicators on which donors and partner countries report progress, the fact that these indicators – aid is predictable, aid is on budget, aid is untied, and use of country systems – have stayed the course reflects their importance in the discourse on effective development cooperation. In addition, we include the share of ODA in general budget support, which is closely linked to alignment, one of the five key principles of the Paris Declaration (OECD, 2008a).

3. We take characteristics of Germany's official development cooperation into account in order to explain its assessment by partners in particular.<sup>15</sup>
4. After the country case studies, we incorporate factors into the quantitative analysis, which partner-country policymakers and practitioners cited as important.<sup>16</sup>

In the following sub-section, we assign each factor to the three identified levels, discuss them briefly, and hypothesise their effects on how partners assess donor support. As there is a research gap concerning factors that have an effect specifically on the assessments of policymakers and practitioners in partner countries, we refer to a broader body of literature in order to formulate our hypotheses. At this point, we do not list those factors that were identified in the course of the country case studies (criterion 4), as we did not formulate hypotheses prior to collecting this data (for more information on all factors included in our empirical models, see the online Appendix).

### 2.2.1 Strategic decisions about aid allocation and partner-country selection

The macro-level factors address actionability, as they provide information that can be used by donors for strategic decisions to perform better in terms of influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation in the eyes of their partners. These include two types of high-level decision: (1) decisions that donors need to make with respect to the volume and channels of aid disbursement; and (2) decisions about which countries to work in, which depends on the partner-country environment.

While the first AidData-DEval study focused on Germany only, the present study tests these macro-level factors with a more comprehensive donor sample. Factors drawn from the first study are: donor type, share of provided aid, regime type, aid fragmentation, intensity of the BMZ's official development cooperation, and state fragility (Faust et al., 2016). We add the share of Official Development Assistance (ODA) from non-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors in order to take into account the increasing importance of non-traditional ODA support.

*Donor type* (bilateral versus multilateral donors): In a review of empirical evidence on whether disbursing funds via bilateral or multilateral channels was more effective for achieving development outcomes, no consistent evidence was found across 45 studies (Biscaye et al., 2017: 1426).<sup>17</sup> However, partner countries seem to prefer multilateral over bilateral donors (Gulrajani, 2016: 12), possibly because multilateral donors are assumed to be less politicised and less interest-driven (Klingebiel, 2014: 39) as well as appreciated for their ability to support rather complex (large-scale and long-term) projects and programmes (Davies and Pickering, 2015). In fact, previous research on perceptions, including Faust et al.'s study (2016), reveals that multilateral institutions were assessed as more influential and more helpful than bilateral donors (Custer et al., 2015, 2018).<sup>18</sup> We built on this previous research and expect that multilateral donors are again assessed as more influential in agenda setting and more helpful in policy implementation than bilateral donors.

*Share of provided aid* (country programmable aid, CPA)<sup>19</sup>: The call for more financial support was expressed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, 2008a) and is seen as an essential step towards achieving

<sup>15</sup> These factors are: number of German development staff and offices abroad, intensity of cooperation (also included in Faust et al., 2016), relevance of German development projects, state fragility, and Germany's official development cooperation reforms in 2011.

<sup>16</sup> These factors are: aid dependency, donor coordination, expertise, flexibility, personal relationships, cooperative partnerships, and duration of cooperation. From this set of factors, we could only include in our empirical models those factors for which quantified measures were available (aid dependency, donor coordination, and duration of cooperation).

<sup>17</sup> Biscaye et al. (2017) define aid effectiveness based on GDP growth, measures of human development, and private investment flows (p. 1426). In their literature review, they counted nine studies that found bilateral donors more effective, 13 that found multilateral donors more effective, and 13 that found neither more effective (p. 1436).

<sup>18</sup> Custer et al. (2018), to whom we repeatedly refer in the following section, analysed the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey with a broader sample that included responses from partner-country stakeholders as well as donor staff based in these countries.

<sup>19</sup> In this study, aid is measured through the indicator "country programmable aid" (CPA). CPA is the portion of aid that donors can programme for individual countries or regions and over which partner countries can have a significant say.

development outcomes (Menocal and Rogerson, 2006; OECD, 2008a, 2017). However, evidence on the effects of aid on economic growth is mixed. Some authors detect no link at all (Easterly, 2003; Rajan and Subramanian, 2008) while others find a relationship only over the long term (Arndt et al., 2010) or under certain conditions (Bearce and Tirone, 2010; Burnside and Dollar, 2004). Prizzon et al. (2016) show that partner-country governments consider the volume of ODA important and, according to a survey by Davies and Pickering (2015), the demand by governments in low- and middle-income countries for ongoing financial support from DAC providers will remain strong. The share of a donor's provided aid in relation to the total aid a partner country receives was also related to partner perceptions of that donor, according to the previous AidData-DEval study by Faust et al. (2016) and Custer et al. (2018).<sup>20</sup> In light of these findings, we expect donors with a greater share of provided aid out of a partner country's total amount of aid to be assessed as more influential and more helpful.

*Regime type:* If donors are viewed as more influential or helpful in certain regime types, this might inform their decisions on selecting partner countries and allocating aid. Faust et al. (2016) find that the regime type is not related to partner assessments of Germany's influence or helpfulness. In this study, we once again test the effect of regime type on partner assessments of donors' influence and helpfulness.

*Aid fragmentation:* Aid fragmentation is described as aid flowing from many donors in several small slices (OECD, 2009a: 80). It is the result of a sharp increase in the number of (emerging) donors and aid projects. Fragmentation makes aid coordination more difficult, resulting in high overhead costs for donors as well as recipients (Easterly and Pfitze, 2008). However, the negative effect of fragmentation is less robust than commonly assumed (Gehring et al., 2017). Nevertheless, concerning perceptions, Faust et al. (2016) show that Germany's official development cooperation is assessed as less influential in countries characterised by fragmented aid. The present study seeks to corroborate whether donors are still assessed as less influential and less helpful in these partner countries.

*Intensity of the BMZ's official development cooperation:* The BMZ classifies its partner countries according to different intensities of development cooperation relations – for instance, in terms of the number of priority policy areas it addresses in a partner country (see section 5.1). Accordingly, Germany is more engaged in partner countries with a greater intensity of cooperation. Surprisingly, Faust et al. (2016) found that Germany was assessed as less helpful in countries where it had a greater cooperation intensity than in others. Given this counterintuitive result, the present study examines again whether Germany is perceived as more influential and helpful in partner countries with more intensive cooperation with Germany.

*State fragility:* Development cooperation in fragile countries may become more important because extreme poverty will agglomerate in such settings (Hart et al., 2015: iv). At the same time, donor performance on aid effectiveness indicators is poorer in fragile and conflict-affected states than in others, as a World Bank working paper shows (Ishihara, 2012). Given that more than 50% of Germany's partner countries are affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (BMZ, 2013: 3), we seek to assess whether fragility affects partner assessments of Germany's influence and helpfulness. We hypothesise that the more fragile a country, the lower Germany's perceived influence and helpfulness.

*ODA from non-DAC donors:* Due to poor reporting, precise data regarding the volume of development finance provided by non-DAC donors are not easily available (Gulrajani and Swiss, 2019). However, it is evident that donors like China, India, and Brazil have become increasingly important players in development cooperation since the 2000s (Dreher et al., 2013; Klingebiel et al., 2016; Manning, 2006). There is initial evidence that non-DAC donors tend to be assessed as less helpful than DAC donors (Custer et al., 2018: 39), but we cannot draw on prior studies to hypothesise whether a higher share of ODA from non-DAC donors has a positive or negative effect on how partner-country policymakers and practitioners perceive donor influence and

<sup>20</sup> Both studies found that CPA was related to more favourable partner assessments; Faust et al. (2016) demonstrate this for the perceived influence of Germany's official development cooperation, whereas Custer et al.'s (2018) results concern various bilateral and multilateral donors.



helpfulness. We therefore test the effect of this factor without assuming a priori whether this relationship is positive or negative.

### 2.2.2 Adherence to aid effectiveness principles

The aid effectiveness agenda rests on the understanding of a joint responsibility of partner countries and donors to make development cooperation more effective (meso level). While aid effectiveness principles and their indicators have undergone some changes, the substance of these principles has remained intact over the last 15 years. We expect that donors can actively improve their performance at the agenda setting and implementation stages in the eyes of partners when their support is consistent with the Aid Effectiveness Agenda and particularly with those principles that have stayed the course during the last three progress monitoring rounds (in 2011, 2014 and 2016) (see footnote 14).

*Aid on budget:* Putting ODA on budget (i.e., recording donors' planned funding in the parliament-approved budget)<sup>21</sup> can be interpreted as a way for donors to align with (the budget of) a partner country (CABRI, 2014). This interpretation is shared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2012), which states that reporting ODA in partner-countries' budgets creates "incentives for stronger budget processes, better alignment to country priorities, and greater accountability to legislatures and citizens" (p. 48).<sup>22</sup> Against this background, we expect donors providing a higher share of their ODA on budget to be assessed as more influential and more helpful.

*Budget support:* As budget support implies the use of partner-country systems as well as the allocation of ODA to partners' priority policy areas, it promotes alignment and ownership, both key principles of the Aid Effectiveness Agenda. Moreover, budget support serves to increase harmonisation among donors (Orth et al., 2017), helps to improve public management systems (Lawson, 2015), and enhances budget transparency (Schmitt, 2017). In fact, budget support is also used as a tool with which donors attempt to leverage technocratic and democratic governance policies, and thus increase their influence on internal policy processes (Molenaers, 2012; Swedlund, 2013). In the light of these arguments, we hypothesise that donors providing a greater share of their ODA as budget support are assessed as both more influential and more helpful.<sup>23</sup>

*Use of country systems:* As defined by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, country systems and procedures are used when donors work with partner-countries' national arrangements and procedures for auditing, procurement, accounting, public financial management, and monitoring (OECD, 2008a: 4). In the longer term, using a country's own public financial management system strengthens these systems and enhances ownership. In addition, through the use of country systems, donors can also better align their programmes with the strategies and priorities of partners (OECD, 2009b). We therefore assume that donors who channel a greater share of their aid through partner-country systems are assessed as more influential and more helpful.

*Adherence to ownership:* In light of the importance assigned by the Aid Effectiveness Agenda to the principle of ownership (OECD, 2008a), the study analyses whether ownership is related to donor performance at the two stages of the policy cycle as assessed by partner-country policymakers and practitioners. We use two indicators to examine this effect of ownership: the breadth of partner-country support and the relevance of

<sup>21</sup> The indicator "does not indicate whether or not the development partner used the government budget process to disburse the funds" (OECD and UNDP, 2019a: 125).

<sup>22</sup> Aid on budget is not explicitly listed as an indicator of the alignment principle throughout all OECD/UNDP progress monitoring reports. Rather, it is treated as an "inter-related" aspect of several principles (OECD, 2008b: 57).

<sup>23</sup> We acknowledge the critical debate on budget support, for instance concerning the political risks of providing funds to corrupt partner governments (Schmitt, 2017; Swedlund and Lierl, 2019), as well as the call for an integrated policy-based approach to development cooperation with an emphasis on political conditionality, good governance, and guarantees of mutual accountability of donors and partner governments. However, viewed solely from the perspective of perceptions, we expect a positive effect of general budget support on partner assessments of donor influence and helpfulness.

development projects.<sup>24</sup> The former is measured by the number of partner-country stakeholder groups that support a particular policy initiative. Although, at first glance, this indicator may not be straightforwardly linked to the Aid Effectiveness Agenda, Keijzer et al. (2018) emphasise the intrinsic and instrumental importance of partner-country support in terms of multi-stakeholder ownership. While broad-based inclusion of partner-country stakeholders increases the social accountability of results (Fox, 2016), Keijzer et al. (2018) also show that from a more instrumental perspective it “broadens the basis for and enhances the acceptance, effectiveness and sustainability of development” (p. 74). In fact, the first AidData-DEval report demonstrates that Germany tended to be assessed as more influential when policy priorities were supported by partner-country actors (Faust et al., 2016). The second indicator is the relevance of development projects (only examined in the Germany-specific analysis). The GIZ and the KfW evaluate their projects based on the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, defined as “the extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries’ requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners’ and donors’ policies” (BMZ, 2006: 3). Thus, this evaluation criterion also relates to ownership. In sum, we expect that donors’ adherence to ownership is positively related to their assessed influence and helpfulness.

*Untied aid:* Tied aid is the practice by which a donor requires the recipients of its aid to use the provided ODA to procure goods or services from this same donor. In such a setting, one of the biggest disadvantages of the limited choices available to partner countries in procuring goods and services is reduced cost effectiveness (Clay et al., 2009; Jepma, 1991) – for instance, because the provided services may not be the most appropriate for a country, and services purchased from a donor country are often more expensive than equivalent services offered in partner countries (Ellmers, 2011). For these reasons, the importance of untying aid is stressed in the Paris Declaration (OECD, 2008a). Nevertheless, Prizzon (2016) finds that tied aid is not a major concern for partners. In a related finding, Custer et al. (2018) show that untied aid is related to lower assessments of donors’ influence and helpfulness.<sup>25</sup> We hypothesise that untied aid is relevant, but do not assume a direction of its effect on donors’ assessed influence and helpfulness.

*Predictability:* Aid predictability enables partners to be certain about the amount and timing of donors’ aid disbursements (OECD, 2012: 73). Conversely, unpredictability of ODA flows may erode the effectiveness of development cooperation (Canavire-Bacarreza et al., 2015) and in-year variations in ODA flows can be disruptive for a government’s ability to implement development strategies, particularly in aid-dependent countries (OECD, 2012). A lack of predictability also makes fiscal planning and implementation for a partner country difficult (Osakwe, 2008: 2) and is related to fiscal as well as monetary instability (Osakwe, 2008; Vargas Hill, 2005). In fact, government officials consider unpredictability a risk for the quality of development cooperation (Davies and Pickering, 2015: 35). In view of the negative consequences of unpredictable aid, we hypothesise that the more predictable development cooperation with a donor is, the more influential and helpful this donor is assessed.

<sup>24</sup> Both indicators themselves are not actionable in the same manner as the other aid effectiveness factors (e.g., providing aid on budget). However, conceptually, the results of our analyses of the effects of both partner-country support and relevance of projects can be interpreted in an actionable way as a donor’s adherence to ownership. Beyond this, partner-country support could be considered a macro-level factor if the analysis is aggregated to the country level. The actionability – the adherence to ownership – would then relate to identifying partner countries where donors can support initiatives that receive broad-based partner-country support.

<sup>25</sup> In the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey, Custer et al. (2018) rest their findings on a broader sample that included responses from partner-country stakeholders as well as donor staff based in these countries.

### Box 3 Aid Effectiveness Agenda

The Aid Effectiveness Agenda grew from an increased effort on the part of the donor community to coordinate their actions (OECD, 2003: 10). Multiple high-level fora took place to discuss aid effectiveness. After the first forum in Rome 2003, when principles of aid effectiveness were outlined, partners and donors declared their commitment to enhance aid effectiveness at the Second High Level Meeting in Paris in 2005 and specified the following five principles with the Paris Declaration (OECD, 2008a: 3–8).

- Ownership: “Partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies and co-ordinate development actions.”
- Alignment: “Donors base their overall support on partner countries’ national development strategies, institutions and procedures.”
- Harmonisation: “Donors’ actions are more harmonised, transparent and collectively effective.”
- Managing for Results: “Managing resources and improving decision-making for results.”
- Mutual Accountability: “Donors and partners are accountable for development results.”

In 2008, a wider set of stakeholders agreed on the Accra Action Agenda to strengthen and deepen the implementation of the Paris goals. Next, the high-level forum in Busan (2011) broadened the agenda from aid effectiveness as pertaining principally to OECD donors to development cooperation effectiveness as also encompassing multiple actors and partnerships involving South-South, triangular, philanthropic, civil-society, and private-sector cooperation. In Busan, the principles were restructured and limited to four: country ownership, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and mutual accountability (OECD, 2011a). In addition, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) was established as a multi-stakeholder platform that focuses on the achievement of these four principles. Since Busan, high-level meetings of the GPEDC have been held in Mexico (2014) and Nairobi (2016), followed by a senior-level meeting in New York (2019; see also the online Appendix).

To track progress, monitoring rounds are conducted. Under the aegis of the OECD’s Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, monitoring surveys of the implementation and achievement of the Paris Declaration goals were carried out in 2006, 2008, and 2011. The GPEDC reported progress in areas related to the effective development cooperation principles in 2014, 2016, and 2019.

#### 2.2.3 Donor–partner interactions on the ground

It is plausible that a donor’s performance, in terms of influence and helpfulness as assessed by its partners, is also driven by relational and other more intangible aspects of donor–partner interactions (micro level). Besides those factors identified in the course of qualitative data gathering, we expect the two following factors to have an effect on a donor’s assessed influence and helpfulness.

*Number of German development staff abroad:* The key actors in Germany’s official development cooperation employ a considerable number of staff in partner countries (see section 5.1). The GIZ employs approximately 20,700 staff abroad, with about 14,200 of them (about 70%) local personnel (GIZ, 2019a). The BMZ and the KfW employ fewer staff abroad – between 100 and 400 (Doc. 1; Doc. 2)<sup>26</sup> – but have increased their personnel in partner countries in recent years (OECD, 2015). Since staff size is a relevant topic for Germany’s official development cooperation, we are interested in whether the number of staff abroad from the BMZ seconded to German embassies (and formally part of the foreign service), the GIZ, and the KfW respectively has an effect on partner assessments of Germany’s influence and helpfulness. However, due to a lack of concrete scientific evidence, we do not hypothesise about the direction of the effect of staff size on assessed influence and helpfulness.

<sup>26</sup> To preserve the confidentiality of unpublished documents provided to DEval, these are cited within the text in the form “Doc.” plus a sequential number and do not appear in the references.

*Number of German offices abroad:* Another particular feature of Germany's development cooperation is the GIZ's presence with project offices outside capital cities in provinces and regions of Germany's partners. The number of project offices of the BMZ's implementing organisation could have an impact on perceived influence and helpfulness. On the one hand, with more project offices at subnational levels one may expect enhanced perceived influence and helpfulness, as this may provide Germany's development cooperation with more information on the specific challenges in a sector or region and allow for context-adapted solutions. On the other hand, more offices might also imply difficulties for partners in identifying the right contact person, which could lead to less favourable partner assessments. As the number of offices in partner countries varies most for the GIZ, we investigate whether this variation is related to partner assessments without a predefined hypothesis.

#### **2.2.4 Germany's 2011 development cooperation reforms**

In 2011, Germany introduced comprehensive reforms of its official development cooperation, including the reduction of partner countries and priority areas, in order to operate more efficiently and effectively (OECD, 2010: 63). In the course of the reforms, Germany also reorganised the institutional structure of its official development cooperation (see section 5.1). As the impact of Germany's official development cooperation reforms on partner assessments is particularly interesting (because it constitutes a significant change in the organisational and strategic setup of Germany's official development cooperation), we analyse the reforms as a potential factor driving partner assessments. Thus, we examine whether Germany is assessed as more influential and more helpful since the reforms than before.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

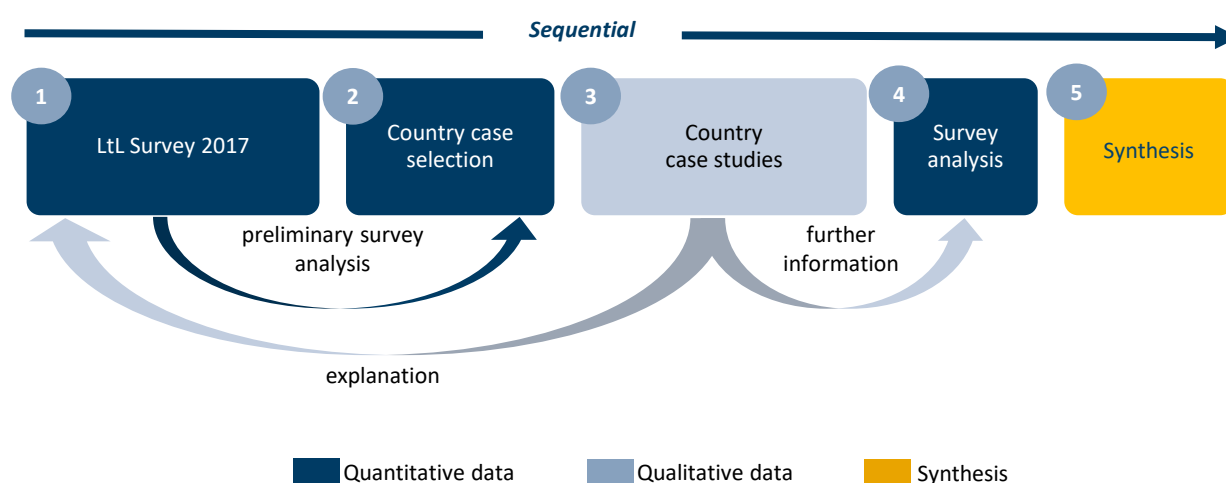
This chapter provides an overview of our methodological approach. The following sections present the research design (section 3.1) and provide information about the online survey as well as the country case studies (section 3.2). Lastly, the chapter discusses the strengths and limitations of this study (section 3.3).

### 3.1 Study design

The study integrates data from an online survey and country case studies. More precisely, AidData implemented the Listening to Leaders Survey in 126 low- and middle-income countries in 2017 and DEval conducted four country case studies in Albania, Cambodia, Colombia, and Malawi in 2018 and 2019.<sup>27</sup>

After data collection for the 2017 survey, we selected four country case studies based on a preliminary analysis of the survey data (see sub-section 3.2.2). The country case studies probe deeper into specific aspects of the survey data – for instance, what respondents understand donor influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation to mean, and which of the preselected explanatory factors they regard as important, and why.<sup>28</sup> In addition, we used the country case studies to identify additional explanatory factors, which are related to partners’ assessments of influence and helpfulness. Where possible, we incorporated these factors in our empirical models, which examine the relationship between various donor- and partner-country factors on the one hand and perceptions of donor influence and helpfulness on the other.<sup>29</sup> Finally, we synthesised the survey and country case study information (see Figure 2). This sequenced mixed methods design mitigates the limitations of each stand-alone method and enables us to generate a more comprehensive understanding of partner assessments (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017).

**Figure 2** Modified explanatory sequential design



*Note: The arrows between the stages indicate connections between them. For instance, we selected the countries for the case studies based on a preliminary analysis of the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey. Similarly, we used the country case studies to probe deeper into aspects, such as donor influence and helpfulness, that are captured in the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey. Insights gathered during the case studies were used to inform and expand on our survey analysis. Source. DEval/AidData, adjusted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2017).*

<sup>27</sup> Fieldwork took place in Malawi from 28 June to 7 July 2018, in Albania from 17 to 21 September 2018, in Cambodia from 22 to 26 October 2018, and in Colombia from 1 to 8 February 2019. Since we assume policymakers’ and practitioners’ understanding of our perception-based measures does not vary across the different time frames of data gathering for the survey and case studies, the qualitative data provide additional contextual information complementing the insights from the survey.

<sup>28</sup> Following Creswell and Plano Clark (2017), this research design corresponds to an explanatory sequential design, with “explanatory” highlighting the contribution of the country case studies in explaining the survey findings.

<sup>29</sup> In addition to the factors listed and described in Chapter 2, we added three factors to our empirical models based on the case studies: “aid dependency” and “donor coordination” (for all donor models) as well as “duration of cooperation with Germany in a country” (for Germany-specific models). Other factors could not be added due to the lack of publicly available data.

## 3.2 Data source and data analysis

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### 3.2.1 Online survey

This study focuses on the assessments by policymakers and practitioners in low- and middle-income countries regarding bilateral and multilateral donors they worked with. For this purpose, the study uses responses to AidData's 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey from three stakeholder groups: (1) government officials, (2) leaders in non-governmental organisations/civil society organisations (NGOs/CSOs), and (3) private-sector representatives.<sup>30</sup>

Prior to rolling out the 2017 survey, AidData carefully elaborated the sampling frame (i.e., the population of interest) of some 37,000 partner-country policymakers and practitioners in 126 low- and middle-income countries (see the online Appendix for the inclusion criteria). Of those sampling frame members, the email invitation was successfully delivered to the inboxes of roughly 29,000 individuals, of whom 2,353 participated, i.e., they answered the first survey question (a response rate of 8.1%<sup>31</sup>). Of these individuals, 62.6% were "government officials", 29.8% "civil society", and 7.6% "private sector" representatives.

Among those who responded to the survey, 375 reported working with at least one of the three actors in Germany's official development cooperation, which were included in the survey (German embassies, the GIZ, and the KfW).<sup>32</sup> The total number of 539 responses for German actors exceeds the number of individual respondents, because many partner-country policymakers and practitioners worked with more than one donor (see Table 1).

<sup>30</sup> Two other stakeholder groups – in-country staff of donor organisations and independent experts – were also covered by the 2017 survey. We do not consider these in our analyses, as they do not represent pure partner assessments. The 126 low- and middle-income countries include countries and autonomous regions (examples of the latter are Puntland, Somaliland, and Kurdistan). Respondents identified international donors from which they had received advice or assistance from a list of 43 (inter-)governmental organisations, multilateral development banks, foreign embassies, and bilateral aid agencies. For the list of all donors, see the online Appendix.

<sup>31</sup> Meta-analyses show that response rates from representatives and executives of organisations tend to be lower than from other respondents (Anseel et al., 2010; Baruch and Holtom, 2008; Cycyota and Harrison, 2006). Web-based surveys also yield lower responses than other modes (Daikeler et al., 2019; Shih and Fan, 2008). In addition, individual-level participation rates in email surveys (Shih and Fan, 2008) and elite surveys (Avey and Desch, 2014; Ellinias and Suleiman, 2012) tend to be lower than that of household surveys.

<sup>32</sup> See section 5.1 for more details on the role of German embassies in Germany's official development cooperation in partner countries. The GIZ was formed out of three smaller organisations – Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED), and Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung GmbH (InWEnt) – in the course of the 2011 reforms. Thus, strictly speaking, assessments from 2010 of the GIZ may also refer to one of these former actors. For the KfW's international business that concerns development assistance, two members of the KfW group, namely the KfW Development Bank and the German investment and development company (Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft, DEG), are engaged in partner countries (KfW, 2019a). While most respondents to the Listening to Leaders Survey collaborated with the KfW Development Bank, which is mandated to implement Germany's financial assistance, some survey participants might also relate their responses to the DEG, which focuses mainly on financing private-sector development engagement.

**Table 1** Distribution of survey respondents by stakeholder group

Stakeholder group	Government	NGOs/CSOs	Private sector	TOTAL
Members in the sampling frame	27,990	7,063	1,949	<b>37,002</b>
Survey recipients	21,615	5,915	1,666	<b>29,196</b>
Sample of respondents	1,473	701	179	<b>2,353</b>
Sample of respondents that worked with German development actors	255	98	22	<b>375</b>
Total number of responses for actors of Germany's official development cooperation	392	115	32	<b>539</b>
<i>Number of responses for German embassies</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>6</i>	<b><i>139</i></b>
<i>Number of responses for GIZ</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>14</i>	<b><i>271</i></b>
<i>Number of responses for KfW</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>12</i>	<b><i>129</i></b>

AidData mitigates potential bias of the actual respondent sample vis-à-vis the sampling frame by first creating a robust sampling frame, thereby ensuring a large enough number of respondents, and then by using non-response weights for the aggregated statistical analysis. The latter was done to account for unit non-response in particular (i.e., systematic differences in perceptions between individuals who answered the survey and those who did not).<sup>33</sup>

Survey respondents were asked about their experience working within a single policy initiative between 2010 and 2015.<sup>34</sup> In the questionnaire, a policy initiative was defined as an “organizational action designed to solve a particular problem”, such as revising teacher salaries or introducing a cash transfer scheme for farmers. Subsequently, respondents assessed how much progress the initiative made (“progress of the policy initiative”).<sup>35</sup> Respondents then answered a suite of questions, beginning by listing all donors that provided their government or their team with advice or assistance related to the initiative (see the online Appendix for the full list of donors). Thus, only partner-country policymakers and practitioners with working experience with a donor assessed that donor’s performance in agenda setting and/or policy implementation. Respondents subsequently indicated whether these donors were influential in the government’s or their

<sup>33</sup> The non-response weights were generated as follows. First, the probability of a survey response was estimated using a logistic regression (including information about respondents’ gender, country, institution type, and stakeholder group). These predictors were used to estimate the probability of a survey response for every member of the sampling frame. Second, the inverse of the estimated probability was calculated to identify the final non-response weights, which were used for the analysis (Custer et al., 2018: 82). For a comprehensive discussion of the problem of unit non-response, see Seaman and White (2013), Härkänen et al. (2014), or Tourangeau et al. (2013).

<sup>34</sup> We do not find a significant correlation between the number of donors a respondent worked with and the average scores for perceived influence and helpfulness.

<sup>35</sup> The question in the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey was: “On the whole, how much progress did this initiative make towards solving the most important problem you identified?” Respondents selected from 1 = no progress at all, 2 = very little progress, 3 = a fair amount of progress, 4 = a great deal of progress, 5 = don’t know/not sure, and 6 = prefer not to say. In the analysis, we omitted all responses that selected 5 or 6.



team's decision to pursue the initiative ("influence in agenda setting")<sup>36</sup> and helpful in its implementation ("helpful in policy implementation").<sup>37</sup>

We use descriptive statistics to show how each donor is assessed in comparison to other donors regarding influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation (guiding questions 1 and 3; see Chapter 1). In addition, we apply correlation analysis to explore the relationship between these measures of donor influence and helpfulness and assessed progress on policy initiatives. In order to identify factors that explain donors' perceived influence and helpfulness (guiding questions 2 and 4), we use ordered logit models with an increasingly demanding set of fixed effects.<sup>38</sup> In line with our conceptual framework, we included factors in our empirical models that may affect partners' assessments: (1) factors that exhibited a relationship to perceptions in previous publications, in particular the first joint AidData-DEval study; (2) factors that cover donors' adherence to selected aid effectiveness commitments; (3) factors that are particularly relevant to Germany's official development cooperation system; and (4) factors that were identified as important in the country case studies. (For more information on the factors included in our empirical models, see section 2.2 and the online Appendix.) To interpret the findings of our empirical analyses, we focus on results that are consistent across two sets of models: first, reduced form regressions with an increasingly demanding set of fixed effects, and second, reduced form regressions with a set of controls and an increasingly demanding set of fixed effects.

### 3.2.2 Country case studies

From 2018 to 2019, DEval conducted country case studies in Albania, Cambodia, Colombia, and Malawi. Malawi was the first case study in chronological terms and can be regarded as a pilot. The purposes of conducting these country case studies were: (1) to gain a better understanding of how survey respondents assess donors' influence in agenda setting, donors' helpfulness in policy implementation, and progress of policy initiatives; and (2) to identify additional factors that explain what makes donors, and Germany's official development actors in particular, influential and helpful in the eyes of their partners.

Country case studies were selected based on five criteria. (1) We identified non-exceptional country cases (i.e., countries in which donor influence and helpfulness were predicted accurately in our preliminary survey analysis). In addition, we ensured that survey data for these countries provided ample information on Germany by selecting (2) countries with a large number of respondents who assessed the three German official development actors (German embassies, the KfW, and the GIZ), (3) countries in which all three German actors were assessed at least once, and (4) countries with whom Germany has intense development cooperation (so-called "A" countries; see section 5.1). Finally, we included (5) countries from different contexts by choosing countries across various regions. For more details on the country case selection, see the online Appendix.

Within the country case studies, 136 interviews were conducted with 193 interviewees (see Table 2). Interviewees were selected using the following criteria: (1) 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey respondents

<sup>36</sup> The question in the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey was: "You indicated that the foreign and international organizations below provided [the government/your team] with advice or assistance. How influential were they on the [government/your team]'s decision to pursue this initiative? For the purposes of the survey, we define influential as the power to change or affect the policy agenda." Respondents selected from 1 = not at all influential, 2 = only slightly influential, 3 = quite influential, 4 = very influential, 5 = don't know/not sure, and 6 = prefer not to say. In the analysis, we omitted all responses that selected 5 or 6.

<sup>37</sup> The question in the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey was: "In your opinion, how helpful were each of the following organizations to the implementation of this initiative? For the purposes of the survey, we define helpful as being of assistance in implementing policy changes." Respondents selected from 1 = not at all helpful, 2 = only slightly helpful, 3 = quite helpful, 4 = very helpful, 5 = don't know/not sure, and 6 = prefer not to say. In the analysis, we omitted all responses that selected 5 or 6.

<sup>38</sup> Where possible, we included the following fixed effects: country-level, stakeholder-level, policy cluster-level, policy cluster-stakeholder-country level, and respondent-level. (See the online Appendix for the categorisation of policy areas.)

who agreed to be contacted for a future interview<sup>39</sup>; (2) partner-country counterparts of the German development actors from the three stakeholder groups (“government and public sector”, “NGOs/CSOs”, and “private sector”); (3) non-German donor staff; (4) independent experts; and (5) individuals working for the three assessed German development actors.<sup>40</sup> About half of the interviewees worked for a country’s government, NGOs/CSOs, or the private sector at the time of the interviews. Partner-country interviewees were mainly government office-holders and interviewees from the public sector (approximately 69%). We interviewed government officials from the ministry of finance and planning, as well as from various line ministries, most of them representing the national level. Within the ministries, we interviewed the minister or deputy minister and/or the person most familiar with the three actors in Germany’s official development cooperation who was available at the time. In the categories “NGOs/CSOs” and “private sector”, we conducted interviews mainly with the director or deputy director and/or the person most familiar with the work of Germany’s official development cooperation actors.

In the course of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted and recorded. Subsequently, data were coded and analysed by means of qualitative content analysis. In our analysis, we focus on assessments by partner-country stakeholders.<sup>41</sup> Overall, the study weights the results from the survey analysis more than the country case study results, as the former are not case-specific.

**Table 2** Distribution of case study interviewees by stakeholder group

Perspective	Stakeholder group	Malawi	Albania	Cambodia	Colombia
Partner-country	Government office-holders/public sector	16 (12)	18 (12)	19 (9)	17 (10)
	NGOs/CSOs	6 (4)	4 (3)	6 (6)	9 (1 <sup>c</sup> )
	Private sector	0 (0)	2 (2)	4 (2)	0 (0)
External	Donors (incl. German actors)	19 (16)	16 (12)	21 (19 <sup>b</sup> )	21 (15)
	Independent experts <sup>a</sup>	1 (1)	6 (5)	4 (3)	4 (4)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>42 (33)</b>	<b>46 (34)</b>	<b>54 (39)</b>	<b>51 (30)</b>

Notes: N = 136 interviews, 193 interviewees. The number of interviews is in brackets. The number of individuals interviewed that had responded to AidData’s 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey is as follows: Albania 1, Cambodia 2, Colombia 1, and Malawi 5.

<sup>a</sup> Some independent experts are locals; however, we classify them as external because they were not selected based on the defined partner-country stakeholder groups.

<sup>b</sup> One expert was involved in two donor interviews.

<sup>c</sup> Two individuals who can be classified as donor representatives were involved in one NGO/CSO interview.

<sup>39</sup> Due to the time interval between the implementation of the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey and the case study interviews, interviewees were not able to recall their previous thoughts and perceptions. We therefore reduced the number of partner-country policymakers and practitioners who were selected based on this criterion after our first case study.

<sup>40</sup> The procedure of selecting partner-country policymakers and practitioners based on criteria 2 to 5 was as follows. German embassies, the GIZ and the KfW provided the interview team with a list of approximately 50 people with whom they work. The team then prioritised some of these actors (e.g. people who work in BMZ focus policy areas). Responses might differ among respondents who answered the survey (criterion 1) and those who did not, but this is not a concern given that our main interest for the country case studies is to offer contextual insights complementing our quantitative analysis.

<sup>41</sup> Interviewees who were selected based on criteria 3 to 5 were chosen in order to triangulate the information from partner-country policymakers and practitioners (criteria 1 and 2); interviewees selected based on criterion 5 also provided context-specific information about Germany’s support in the four country cases.

### 3.3 Strengths and limitations

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In this study, we use a mixed methods approach combining large-n survey data and small-n country case information. This approach enables us to reduce the limitations of each stand-alone method and supports a more comprehensive understanding of partner assessments (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). Based on the comprehensive identification of the population and the elaborate weighting procedure of the survey data, these experience-based partner assessments are proper measures of the partner perspective on the support of bilateral and multilateral donors for partners' policy processes, which we argue can serve to evaluate donor support in partner-countries' policy processes. There are nevertheless some limitations that we wish to discuss.

First, the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey encompasses a smaller sample than AidData's previous 2014 Reform Efforts Survey (RES). This limits the extent to which we can conduct analyses on a disaggregated level, such as policy area-specific analyses (see section 5.2). Nevertheless, the sample size is sufficient to obtain statistically significant results, and thus, to formulate recommendations.

Second, as with all surveys, the analysis of the Listening to Leaders Survey rests on the assumption that all respondents share a similar understanding of the questions and response options. However, since the respondents are from different cultural and educational backgrounds, it is possible that there were differences in interpretation, especially due to the translation of the questionnaire into different languages.<sup>42</sup> We control for these possible differences by incorporating various fixed effects into our empirical models (e.g., respondent-level, country-level, policy area-level, and a combination of these).

Third, although the survey covers a large number of development actors, this list is not exhaustive. In the case of Germany, for instance, "[t]he full range of German organisations that rely on ODA funding is more diverse than this organisational core and includes more than 30 institutions, including other federal ministries, official agencies and organisations outside government (political foundations, church-based organisations and non-governmental organisations) as well as federal states and municipalities" (OECD, 2006: 12).

Finally, we use country case studies to provide additional contextual insights and to identify factors that might explain partners' assessments of donors' performance at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation beyond the preselected factors of the quantitative analysis. We report country case findings if we consider them to be not strictly case-specific but potentially generalisable. This is particularly the case when findings from all four case studies point in the same direction, despite large differences in the countries' contexts.

<sup>42</sup> The questionnaire was translated from English into French, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese, and Russian.

**Box 4 Addressing potential social desirability bias in online survey and case studies**

**Online Survey:** AidData – a research lab at the College of William & Mary in Virginia, USA – fielded the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey online. To reinforce to respondents that the survey was purely for research purposes, the invitation specified that the findings would be analysed by AidData’s research team to better understand how national and international organisations can more effectively support the development priorities of policymakers and practitioners in low- and middle-income countries. The survey covered a range of topics such as top development challenges, perceptions of progress on policy initiatives, experience working with international organisations, and the use of data and evidence produced by national and international organisations. The evaluation of donor-organisations’ performance on influence and helpfulness (the focus of this report) was only a very small part of the whole survey, and consequently we do not expect there to be any bias in responses to these questions.

**Country case studies:** DEval conducted the country case studies. Consequently, there may be a concern regarding bias for social desirability, e.g., if interviewees hesitated to share negative aspects of Germany’s official development cooperation. To mitigate this as much as possible, the interviewers made a point of stressing DEval’s institutional independence and mandate at the beginning of or during each interview. Any remaining bias in this respect should extend only to the assessment of Germany’s performance. It should not affect the respondents’ interpretation of concepts or their views about which explanatory factors they would identify as important for donor influence and helpfulness.

## 4. DONOR PERFORMANCE AS ASSESSED BY PARTNERS

In this chapter, we use responses to the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey and insights from the interviews of our four country case studies to understand which donors are assessed as influential in agenda setting and helpful in implementing policy changes (section 4.1), and why (section 4.2). Finally, we discuss partner assessments of donor performance against the DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance (section 4.3).<sup>43</sup>

#### 4.1 How do partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess donor support?

In the first sub-section, we present our findings on partner-country policymakers' and practitioners' assessments of donors' influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation (sub-section 0). We then draw upon the case studies in Albania, Cambodia, Colombia, and Malawi to explain and concretise these two perception-based measures (sub-section 4.1.2). Finally, we explore the relationship between perceptions of influence/helpfulness and perceived progress on policy initiatives in partner countries (sub-section 4.1.3). For an overview of the key findings in this section, see Box 3.

##### Box 5 Key findings I: Bilateral and multilateral donors

- On average, bilateral and multilateral donors achieve scores between 2.5 and 3.5 on a scale from 1 (not at all influential/helpful) to 4 (very influential/helpful) on each item and, per our interpretation, are thus assessed as “quite influential” and “quite helpful”. However, clear differences between individual donors are apparent. For instance, multilateral donors are assessed as more influential in agenda setting and more helpful in policy implementation than bilateral donors.
- The four country case studies indicate that, by and large, donors' influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation are perceived positively.
- Survey respondents assess donors who are influential in agenda setting as also being helpful in policy implementation. While higher perceived helpfulness of donors is associated with greater perceived progress on policy initiatives, the same is not true for influence on agenda setting.

##### 4.1.1 Assessments of donors' influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation

**On average, bilateral and multilateral donors are assessed as “quite influential” in agenda setting and “quite helpful” in policy implementation in low- and middle-income countries. In relative terms, survey respondents assess multilateral organisations as more influential and more helpful than bilateral donors.**

Bilateral and multilateral donors are rated on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = not at all influential/helpful, 2 = only slightly influential/helpful, 3 = quite influential/helpful, 4 = very influential/helpful).<sup>44</sup> On average, they scored 2.92 for influence in agenda setting and 3.21 for helpfulness in policy implementation. However, when comparing donor assessments, substantial differences among donors are noticeable, with some assessed below or above the overall donor average.

Survey analysis shows that multilateral donors are assessed as more influential (with an average score of 3.00) and more helpful (average score 3.28) than bilateral donors (average score of 2.85 for influence and 3.15 concerning helpfulness).<sup>45</sup> In our sample of 43 bilateral and multilateral donors, the top ten donors in terms of perceived influence and perceived helpfulness are a mix of large multilateral donors, which either

<sup>43</sup> The passages in bold are intended as a reading aid and very briefly summarise our main findings for each factor, which are then discussed in more detail in subsequent paragraphs.

<sup>44</sup> We round off scores to allow for easy interpretation. For example, a score of 2.5 and above gets rounded up to 3. As such, all donors that receive a score of between 2.50 and 3.49 are viewed as “quite influential” or “quite helpful” (i.e., 1–1.49: not at all influential/helpful; 1.50–2.49: only slightly influential/helpful; 2.50–3.49: quite influential/helpful; 3.50–4: very influential/helpful).

<sup>45</sup> For details of the analysis, see the online Appendix. In the empirical analysis of the determinants of donor performance in agenda setting and policy implementation, the coefficient of donor type is positive and significant for both perceived influence and helpfulness in the partial effects regressions. Additional analysis shows that the loss of significance of the coefficients after including other variables is due to sample size.

operate in a wide range of policy areas (such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)) or constitute highly specialised multilaterals (such as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) or the Global Fund to Fight Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which primarily focus on a single policy area) (see Figure 3).

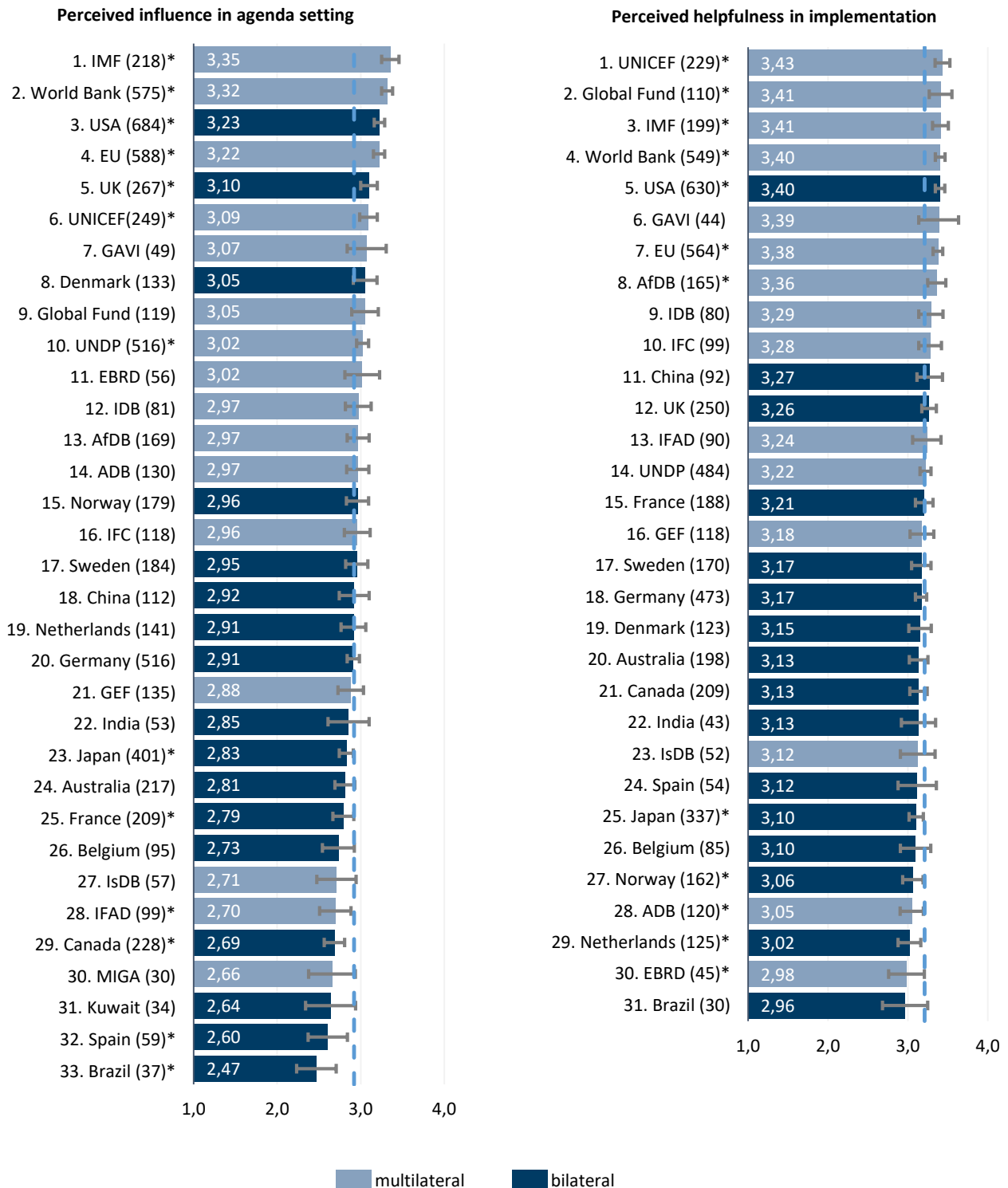
Compared to the average across all donors, the IMF, the World Bank, the USA, the European Union (EU), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are assessed as more influential and more helpful. Other donors typically have an edge in one of the two measures. For instance, the UK and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) receive above-average influence scores, while the Global Fund and the African Development Bank (AfDB) receive helpfulness scores that are higher than the donor average. The three bilateral donors ranked among the ten most influential donors are the USA, the UK, and Denmark. This is particularly interesting, because the USA and the UK are large DAC donors, while Denmark is a rather small and specialised donor. Although Denmark ranks below the USA and the UK, this result indicates that a high total amount of provided ODA or a large project portfolio is not necessarily related to higher influence scores. The only bilateral donor in the top ten most helpful donors is the USA.<sup>46</sup>

This finding is in line with Faust et al. (2016), who also find that multilateral donors (e.g., the World Bank and the EU) are on average assessed as more influential and more helpful than bilateral donors.<sup>47</sup> Given that multilaterals do not systematically support different thematic or geographical areas or apply different instruments of development cooperation compared to bilateral donors, this raises the question of what leads multilaterals to be assessed more favourably by partners than their bilateral counterparts. One argument is that multilateral aid is seen as more politically neutral than bilateral development cooperation (Biscaye et al., 2017; Gulrajani, 2016). Some studies found that multilateral donors communicate more frequently and more closely with key stakeholders, which also yields an influence dividend and can be conducive to bringing about policy change in partner countries (Custer et al., 2015; Parks et al., 2016).<sup>48</sup> Moreover, studies suggest that – in comparison to bilateral aid – multilateral aid is characterised by lower aid fragmentation (Gulrajani, 2016; Klingebiel, 2014). However, Biscaye et al. (2017) argue that the literature demonstrates only mixed evidence concerning the question of whether multilateral donors are more effective than bilateral ones (see also Findley et al., 2017).

<sup>46</sup> Japan, France, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Canada, Spain, and Brazil receive statistically significant influence scores that are lower than the average, and Japan, Norway, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Netherlands, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) have helpfulness scores that are lower than the average.

<sup>47</sup> Custer et al. (2018) found a similar result with regard to donor rankings for influence and helpfulness when analysing the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey for four stakeholder groups (host government officials, development partner staff based in the country, civil society leaders, and private-sector representatives). Therefore, the overall finding seems to be the same whether we include or exclude donor staff, which made up 25% of the survey respondents.

<sup>48</sup> Despite being a relatively small donor, Denmark's high performance has been attributed to its frequent communication with government counterparts and its strategy of building long-term partnerships (Parks et al., 2016). Denmark's relatively high frequency of communication is more akin to the reported communication practices of large multilateral donors such as the UNDP and the World Bank than to some other major DAC bilateral donors like Germany, France, and Japan (Parks et al., 2016).

**Figure 3** Partner assessments of donor influence and helpfulness

Note: Scale: 1 = not at all influential/helpful, 2 = only slightly influential/helpful, 3 = quite influential/helpful, 4 = very influential/helpful. Blue dotted line = average (adding all donors' average scores with  $N \geq 30$  and dividing the result by the total number of donors). Average influence/helpfulness = 2.92/3.21. Numbers in brackets refer to responses. Grey lines = 95% confidence intervals, \* =  $p < .05$ . For all donor rankings, see the online Appendix.

Source: 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey.



#### 4.1.2 Case study-based interpretation of influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation

While the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey shows that policymakers and practitioners in low- and middle-income countries assess donors as both influential and helpful, the survey data do not provide any information on whether the influence exercised by donors on countries' policy agendas is assessed positively or negatively.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, survey data do not provide detailed information on how policy influence is exercised or what it specifically means for a donor to be helpful in policy implementation. In order to obtain a more thorough understanding of stakeholders' interpretation of the two measures of influence and helpfulness, we utilise information from the four country case studies.

**Country case studies indicate that partner-country policymakers and practitioners perceive donors' influence as an input that supports them in dealing with their development challenges. Accordingly, influence is perceived positively. Nevertheless, there are some instances when influence is perceived negatively, for example when donors disregard partners' policy preferences.**

Partner-country policymakers and practitioners in the country case studies describe donors' influence in agenda setting as creating or contributing to new policy agendas, modifying existing ones, or retaining priorities when new governments come to power. In the country case studies, influence in agenda setting is generally assessed as positive – for example, as a contribution of solutions to partner-countries' development challenges. As influence is assessed similarly across the four cases despite large differences in country contexts, we regard this overall positive assessment to be generalisable to other contexts.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that a few partner-country policymakers and practitioners also raise criticism with respect to influence. On the one hand, few government interviewees mention that "influence" is not the right word to describe the nature of their partnership with donors. In their view, cooperation implies mutual respect between donors and partner-country stakeholders, and is less about donors' influence and more about supporting partners' decisions. This indicates that some stakeholders may at least have reservations about the term. On the other hand, influence is assessed as a negative attribute in a few cases when donors push their own interests too much and do not take partners' preferences or arguments into account.

The case studies also indicate why differences in the scope of a donor's influence in agenda setting might exist. For instance, interviewees in Colombia – which became an OECD member in 2018 and relies the least on ODA among the four countries – highlight that donors support the government in generating ideas for policies only. By contrast, in Malawi – which is highly aid-dependent – donors are assessed as influential to the extent that they determine entire policies. These two country case studies show that the influence measure might mirror a different scope of influence: what donors can influence in a partner country.<sup>50</sup>

**The qualitative analysis suggests that partner-country policymakers and practitioners often associate helpfulness with donors adopting sector-wide approaches and supporting internal capacity.**

In the four case studies, partner-country policymakers and practitioners interpret donors' helpfulness in implementation in relation to various forms of support in the areas of technical and financial assistance. As we only received information that rated helpfulness positively, we conclude that scoring high on this measure is a desirable outcome. Across our country case studies, two aspects stand out that are assessed as helpful in implementation: using sector-wide approaches and building internal capacity.

<sup>49</sup> Arguably, this is less of an issue for helpfulness, which can be presumed to be positively connoted.

<sup>50</sup> As opposed to the other case studies, in Albania, agendas are less negotiated between the government and donors, because development cooperation is closely tied to Albania's process of EU accession and there is already an agreed roadmap for the country, precluding the need for expanding debates about the direction the country takes. The case study shows that influence in agenda setting is less necessary in Albania, as the main agenda is already set in other political areas.

Sector-wide approaches are assessed as particularly helpful by partner-country policymakers and practitioners. This finding indicates that donors' support might be assessed as more helpful when the support takes into account – and is comprehensively embedded in – partners' sectoral activities (for instance, when donors coordinate arrangements between them and coherently link their support to several topics in the sector). The finding does not imply that donors do not already link their support to partners' activities, but when partners perceive that this is the intention of donors' efforts, they assess them as helpful.<sup>51</sup> Our finding is in line with the literature, which explains that sector-wide approaches have “increased recipient control and improvements in allocative efficiency” (Sweeney and Mortimer, 2016: 559) and that not using them distorts a partner-country's planning (Riddell and Niño-Zarazúa, 2016).

Donor contributions are assessed as more helpful in the eyes of partner-country policymakers and practitioners when they include capacity-building of partner-country actors (e.g., local authorities, local experts, and technical staff). The desire for more capacity development is not a unique finding of this study. A survey of senior officials, mainly in ministries of finance and planning, in 40 developing countries shows that, when asked about future development cooperation trends and needs, government officials expect donors – especially multilateral donors – to encourage more local capacity-building (Davies and Pickering, 2015). Moreover, Schmaljohann and Prizzon (2014), who analysed the management of traditional and non-traditional development assistance flows using two country case studies, have shown that capacity-building was considered a priority for government officials in Fiji and Vanuatu.

In addition, findings indicate that government officials in partner countries regard donors as helpful when the latter are transparent about their engagement with non-state actors (e.g., sharing the names of non-state partners, information on the volume of engagement, and other data). However, full disclosure may not always be in the interest of donors. From a donor perspective, the decision to by-pass a government and interact directly with non-state actors can be a strategic choice to improve the prospects of success for their aid (e.g., in cases of high levels of corruption or weak government institutions and low implementing capacities of the partner; see Chasukwa and Banik, 2019). This assumption is supported by Dietrich (2013), who shows that donors use by-pass tactics to increase the prospects of success for their aid. However, Dietrich (2013) adds that “from a policy perspective, bypassing state structures may offer immediate relief for the poor but by-pass is also a double-edged sword. It might hamper or even undermine long-term efforts to build up a state capable of managing its own development” (p. 708). This is supported by our results, which show that when donors decide to by-pass partner governments, they may be assessed as less helpful and, hence, are less likely to strengthen the managing capability of the state in question.

#### 4.1.3 Relationship between perceptions of donor influence, helpfulness, and progress on policy initiatives

In order to investigate whether donors who are assessed as influential are also assessed as helpful and whether or not the two indicators are linked to partners' perceived progress on a policy initiative, we test the statistical correlations among them.

##### **Survey respondents assess donors who are influential in agenda setting as also being helpful in policy implementation.**

Survey respondents across low- and middle-income countries reveal that donors who are assessed as influential tend to be assessed as helpful, and vice versa (see Table 3). However, donors should not expect this positive relationship to appear automatically, as country case studies indicate that there are factors that might counteract it. First, where a donor pushes its policy ideas too strongly, partners may agree to include

<sup>51</sup> In Albania, for example, donors in one sector had implemented successful projects in selected geographical areas but, because these were poorly coordinated among them and with the Albanian government, the government describes finding it difficult to identify a model for scaling-up to the country level. This example illustrates that, if donors do not consider a sector-wide approach beforehand, they are seen as less helpful in the eyes of partners, leaving the partner with individual solutions that are less easy to scale up afterwards.

these ideas in their policy documents, but might not prioritise the implementation in the near future.<sup>52</sup> Second, if a partner-country's government changes (e.g., following elections), the new government might not prioritise its predecessor's commitments. Thus, in both cases, partners might assess a donor as influential because, for example, the donor successfully brought an issue onto the agenda, but not as helpful, because projects were not implemented.

**Table 3 Correlation between assessments of progress on policy initiatives, donors' influence in agenda setting, and donors' helpfulness in policy implementation**

	Influence – Helpfulness	Influence – Progress	Helpfulness – Progress
<b>Respondent level<sup>53</sup></b>	0.47*** (1,091)	0.04 (1,122)	0.17*** (1,085)

Note. Numbers in parentheses refer to the number of respondents. \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

### Perceived progress on policy initiatives is associated with greater donor helpfulness.

We hypothesise that donor support should be associated with greater progress on policy initiatives in partner countries. If this hypothesis is correct, it should be reflected in more favourable assessments of donors in terms of influence and helpfulness being associated with more positive assessments of progress on policy initiatives. Survey responses show that this relation holds true for assessments of donor helpfulness<sup>54</sup>, but not for perceived donor influence<sup>55</sup> (see Table 3).

Country case studies underline that the positive relationship between perceived progress on a policy initiative and assessed donor helpfulness in policy implementation is not always straightforward, mainly due to the difficulty of attributing progress on a policy initiative to a single donor's contribution (e.g., due to a high number of donors involved in implementation).<sup>56</sup> This aspect is also discussed in the literature, which shows that progress on a policy initiative is a result of many factors that are not always linked to a donor and its support (Bourguignon and Sundberg, 2007).<sup>57</sup> However, officials in partner-country governments and in donor organisations did mention that results-based approaches (RBA) enable a clearer link between progress

<sup>52</sup> Partner-country policymakers and practitioners and donors agree that it is challenging to identify the point at which a donor pushes its policy ideas too much to ensure their implementation. This aspect is not mentioned in Albania, perhaps because a clear plan for EU accession exists and thus partners are not pushed to implement policies that they do not prioritise themselves.

<sup>53</sup> Country-level correlations (obtained by aggregating responses within each country) indicate a relationship between perceived influence and assessed helpfulness (correlation = .47\*\*\*,  $n = 108$ ,  $p < .01$ ), no relationship between perceived influence and assessed progress on a policy initiative (correlation = .01,  $n = 107$ ,  $p > .10$ ), and a relationship between assessed helpfulness and assessed progress on a policy initiative (correlation = .23\*\*,  $n = 107$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In order to avoid the inclusion of outliers, country-level correlations incorporate countries where at least ten respondents answered the questions on assessed progress, influence and helpfulness.

<sup>54</sup> In testing this hypothesis, we are examining the link between inputs, activities and outputs on the one hand, and outcomes on the other (see the conceptual framework in Figure 1). The study reports correlations and does not test the causality of this relationship. In principle, it cannot entirely be precluded that individual characteristics of respondents may have an effect on both the assessment of donor support and perceptions of progress on policy initiatives, which could also explain the observed positive correlation between the two. However, both things are recorded independently from each other in different sections of the survey and there is no evidence of such a systematic positive or negative bias in survey answers.

<sup>55</sup> The relationship between donor influence and progress on policy initiatives is positive, but is not statistically significant. There is therefore also no evidence of a negative relationship between donor influence and (perceived) progress on policy initiatives, as could be expected if donors push for policies of which domestic decision-makers have little ownership. This supports the finding of the qualitative country case studies, which suggest that donor influence on partners' policy agenda is mostly perceived as something positive.

<sup>56</sup> Interviewees in Malawi found it difficult to comment on the relationship between progress on a policy initiative and influence. In subsequent case studies we therefore modified the interview guide to ask mainly about assessed progress on a policy initiative and its relationship to donors' helpfulness in policy implementation.

<sup>57</sup> According to Biscaye et al. (2017), factors such as country context, length and objective of aid, and the donor organisation determine development outcomes.

on a policy initiative and a single donor's contribution. This also corresponds to the literature on RBA, which underlines that RBA enable a better verification of the effects of aid (Klingebiel, 2012: 15).

The identified correlations among perceived influence, helpfulness, and progress indicate that donors can successfully influence partner-countries' policy agendas and subsequently assist partners to implement those policies to achieve development goals. The relationship between perceptions of helpfulness and progress also suggests that donors perceived to be helpful may be well positioned to foster greater progress on a policy initiative in partner countries.

## 4.2 What explains how donors perform in the eyes of their partners?

In this section, we investigate which actionable factors explain why partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess donors as more or less influential in agenda setting and helpful in policy implementation. (For an overview of key findings, see Box 4.) The study discusses and interprets findings in order to provide information about what donors can do to perform better in internal policymaking processes in the eyes of their partners. Actionable factors are presented at three levels, as shown in our conceptual framework (see Chapter 2): first, strategic decisions about aid allocation and country selection (macro level, sub-section 4.2.1); second, donors' adherence to the aid effectiveness principles (meso level, sub-section 4.2.2); and third, donor-partner interactions in the partner country (micro level, sub-section 4.2.3).

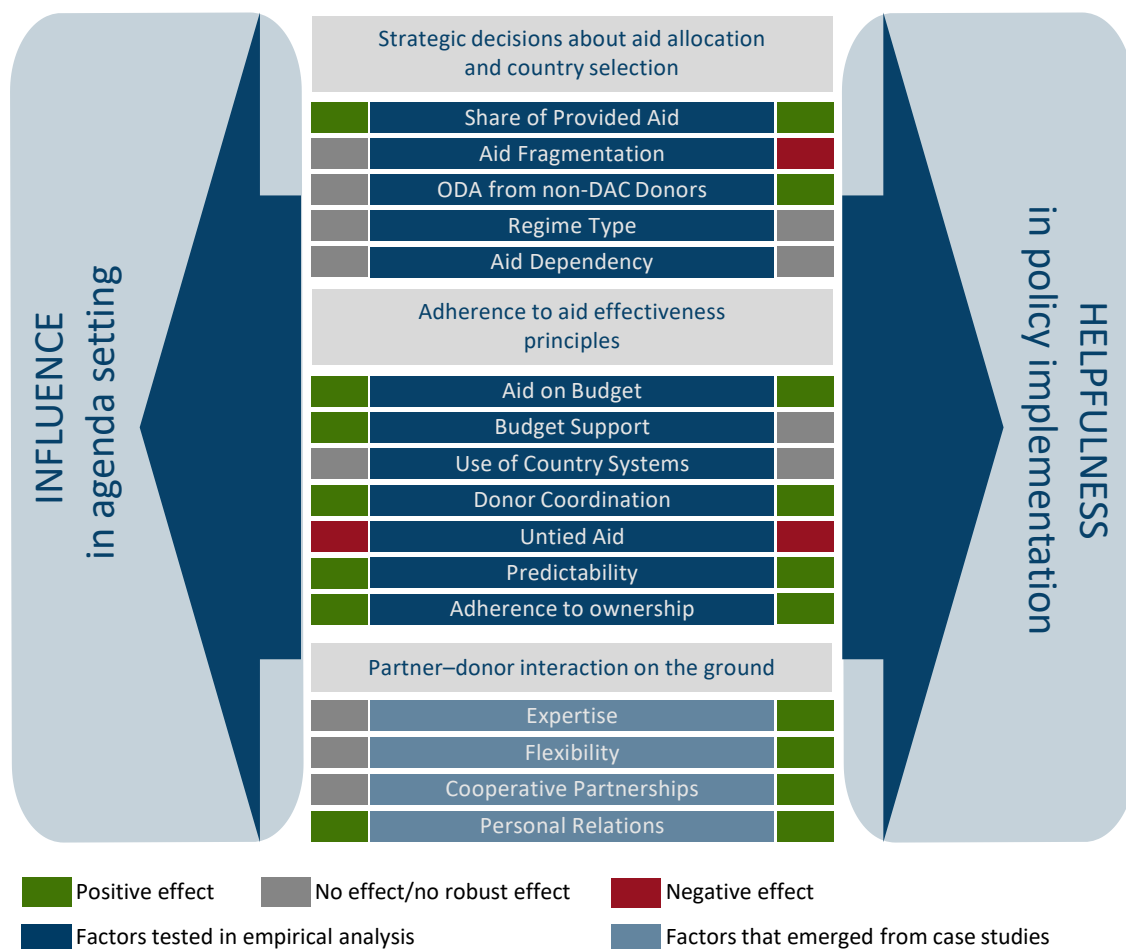
### Box 6 Key findings II: Bilateral and multilateral donors

- Actionable factors that are related to how influential and helpful a donor is perceived by partner-country policymakers and practitioners have been identified at three levels: (1) strategic decisions about aid allocation and country selection (macro level), (2) donors' adherence to aid effectiveness principles (meso level), and (3) donor-partner interactions on the ground (micro level).
  - Macro level: The importance of a donor's provided aid in relation to the total provided aid to a specific partner country is positively related to that donor's perceived influence in agenda setting and perceived helpfulness in policy implementation.
  - Meso level: Donors' adherence to specific aid effectiveness principles is positively related to how partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess donors' influence and/or helpfulness.
  - Micro level: Partner-country policymakers and practitioners emphasise aspects of the donor-partner interaction that make donors more helpful in their view, such as donors' expertise, flexibility in donors' processes, cooperative partnerships, and the quality of the relationship.

Before we discuss the findings in more detail, Figure 4 illustrates the relationship of each actionable factor to partners' assessments of donors' influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Some factors, namely "share of provided aid", "aid on budget", "budget support", "donor coordination", and "predictability", are measured by using a donor's share of each indicator in a partner country. Where we identified that a higher share is related to more perceived influence and/or helpfulness (predictability being the only exception, in which we rely on an average of a donor's share across all partner countries), we conclude that an increase in a donor's share is related to an increase in that donor's perceived influence and/or helpfulness. This conclusion is based on the assumption that an increase has the same effect as a higher share.

**Figure 4 Relationship between actionable factors and donors’ perceived influence and helpfulness**



Note. Factors for which findings are not robust are aid dependency (positive for influence and helpfulness) and aid fragmentation (negative for influence). As described in Chapter 3, we analysed the survey data using ordered logit regression models. For details about our empirical analysis and measurement of independent variables, see the online Appendix. Source: DEval/AidData.

#### 4.2.1 Strategic decisions about aid allocation and country selection

Survey analysis reveals that the importance of a donor’s provided aid in relation to the total provided aid to a partner country is positively related to that donor’s perceived influence in agenda setting and perceived helpfulness in policy implementation.

Our findings demonstrate that the greater the relative financial importance of a donor to a partner country in comparison to other donors, the more influential in agenda setting and more helpful in policy implementation that donor is assessed to be. More specifically, our survey analysis finds strong evidence that the higher the *share of CPA* from a donor in a country’s total CPA, the greater the perceived influence and helpfulness of that donor.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> CPA is the portion of aid that donors can programme for individual countries or regions and over which partner countries can have a significant say. In 2015, about half of bilateral ODA was in the form of CPA (OECD, 2017). Thus, a large proportion of aid may not actually go to partner countries. As CPA is operationalised by using a donor’s share in a partner country, no results about absolute figures can be drawn. Because we identified that a higher share is related to greater perceived influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation, we conclude that an increase in a donor’s share is related to an increase in that donor’s perceived influence and helpfulness. This conclusion is based on the assumption that an increase has the same effect as a higher share.

This result complements Faust et al. (2016), who also find an effect of CPA on Germany’s perceived influence, but do not find an effect on its perceived helpfulness. The result confirms that aid can be used as leverage to achieve influence on policy initiatives, which is in line with other literature (Dietrich and Wright, 2012; Molenaers et al., 2015).<sup>60</sup> Partner-country and external stakeholders (donor staff based in-country and experts) in all country case studies support the survey results and – except for Colombia – echo the sentiment that donors who provide a higher share of aid are more influential and more helpful.<sup>61</sup> The absence of support for this relationship in the case of Colombia might be explained by several aspects that could level the effect of a higher share of aid – for instance, its higher economic status, low aid dependency (net ODA was 0.3% of its gross national income (GNI) in 2017; see World Bank, 2017), or the relatively high level of qualification of policymakers and practitioners.

**On the one hand, survey data show a negative relationship between aid fragmentation and donors’ perceived helpfulness. On the other hand, the study reveals a positive relationship between the share of ODA from non-DAC donors and donors’ perceived helpfulness.**

Survey analysis indicates that, in countries where *aid fragmentation* is high, policymakers and practitioners assess donors as less helpful in policy implementation. Evidence for a relationship between fragmentation and perceived influence in agenda setting is less robust, but points in the same direction.<sup>62</sup> Our findings corroborate the literature that stresses the general negative effects of fragmentation, such as a degradation of bureaucratic quality (Easterly and Pfutze, 2008; Knack and Rahman, 2007).

The study also tests the effect of a higher share of aid from non-DAC donors, such as China, India, and Brazil, which have become increasingly important players in development cooperation (Dreher et al., 2010). The study finds that partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess the average helpfulness in policy implementation of all donors more favourably in countries where the share of *ODA from non-DAC donors* is higher. Since our survey result relates to an increase in the average helpfulness of all donors in a country and not of a special donor group, the support of non-DAC donors may not necessarily be assessed as more helpful. The positive relationship with perceived helpfulness could also be driven by other factors.<sup>63</sup>

**A country’s level of democracy and aid dependency were not found to be related to donors’ perceived influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation.**

The level of democracy or autocracy of a partner country (*regime type*) does not directly affect donors’ perceived influence and helpfulness. Although for many donors the level of democracy is an important factor with regard to aid allocation, the first AidData-DEval report also did not find a direct relationship (Faust et al., 2016).

In the study, *aid dependency* was included in our econometric models, because partner-country and external interviewees in the country case studies indicated that a country’s aid dependency is related to partners’ assessments of donors’ performance in the internal policymaking process. According to the country case studies, we assumed that the greater a partner country’s aid dependency, the more a donor would be perceived as influential and helpful. By contrast, our models show no robust relationship of aid dependency

<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Custer et al. (2018: 36) identify positive correlations between influence and helpfulness and a donor’s ODA spending. They find that a few donors punch above their financial weight (e.g., GAVI, the Global Fund, the IADB, the IMF, UNICEF, and UNDP), while others punch below (e.g., France, Germany, and Japan). Custer et al. (2018) also analyse the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey, but using a sample different from ours, i.e., they include responses from in-country donor staff in their calculations.

<sup>61</sup> Partner-country policymakers and practitioners across the four case study countries mention the World Bank as a financially strong donor and those in Cambodia characterise China as a “game-changer” because it constitutes a large source of development finance. Similarly, donor respondents also regard the EU and other multilateral donors as donors with strong financial contributions.

<sup>62</sup> We find suggestive evidence in our partial models for the negative relationship between aid fragmentation and perceived influence (which would speak to the findings in Faust et al., 2016). However, this relationship does not show up in our full models (see the online Appendix).

<sup>63</sup> For instance, it is possible that non-DAC donors invest more in countries in which development cooperation was already assessed as more helpful before non-DAC donors increased their share of ODA. However, more research is needed to explain this finding accurately.

and partners' assessments of donors' support.<sup>64</sup> This is surprising in the light of our case study finding, yet it is in line with Whitfield and Fraser (2010), who examine aid negotiations between donors and partner countries and understand these as a state of permanent negotiation. Based on eight country case studies, they reveal that the level of aid dependency does not determine the degree of control in negotiating aid. Instead, other structural conditions – such as debt crises or the partners' self-confidence in their ability to translate country conditions into bargaining capital – are decisive factors in achieving positive outcomes as a result of negotiations (Whitfield and Fraser, 2010).

#### 4.2.2 Adherence to aid effectiveness principles

**Survey analysis indicates that providing a larger share of aid on budget or in the form of general budget support is positively related to partners' assessments of donors' influence in agenda setting; aid on budget is also positively related to perceived helpfulness in policy implementation. Donors' use of a country's systems to provide aid was not found to be related to how partners assessed donors.**

In line with our initial expectation, providing *general budget support* is positively related to greater perceived influence of a donor in agenda setting. *Aid on budget* even leads donors to be assessed as more influential and more helpful in the eyes of their partners.<sup>65</sup> As aid on budget facilitates budget processes and is expected to support greater accountability, it can be interpreted as a crucial step towards alignment (CABRI, 2014; OECD, 2012). The latter equally applies to budget support, which is also seen to enhance partner-country accountability (Frantz, 2004), to improve public management systems (Lawson, 2015), and to increase budget transparency (Schmitt, 2017), as well as to potentially serve to increase harmonisation among donors (Orth et al., 2017). Partner-country policymakers and practitioners only rarely refer to aid on budget and budget support in our case study interviews.<sup>66</sup> However, according to one interviewee, providing aid on budget was not crucial, as long as partners received information about aid before the government considered its budgets. This indicates that the relevance of providing aid on budget might be related to transparency of donor financing ahead of budget preparation rather than its potential to strengthen budgeting systems.

However, in contrast to our hypothesis and also to expectations from the literature (e.g., Booth, 2012; CABRI, 2014; OECD, 2009b), our econometric analysis reveals that the *use of country systems* – that is, the use of partner-country budget execution, financial reporting, auditing, and procurement systems – is not positively related to donors' perceived performance in the internal policymaking process in the eyes of their partners. Policymakers and practitioners in the case studies also only rarely mention the use of country systems. By contrast, in their answers they focus on the importance of donor alignment with partner-country interests rather than partner-country systems.

The differentiation made by Prizzon et al. (2016) between “systems alignment” (for instance, the use of budget support) and “policy alignment” – for example, providing development finance to sectors and priorities articulated in the national strategy – is particularly instructive in this regard. Thus, these findings – combining aid on budget<sup>67</sup>, budget support, and alignment with partner-countries' interests – indicate that donor alignment to specific country systems and partners' priorities are associated with more favourable

<sup>64</sup> We find suggestive evidence in our partial models of a positive relationship between aid dependency and perceived influence and helpfulness. However, this relationship is not significant in our full models (see the online Appendix).

<sup>65</sup> Looking at data from the current monitoring progress report, in which the GPEDC targets a value of 85% of aid being provided on budget, data present a declining trend for most countries since 2015. According to the 2018 Monitoring Round, an average of “61% of development co-operation was recorded on national budgets subject to parliamentary oversight” (OECD and UNDP, 2019b: 32).

<sup>66</sup> As we did not explicitly ask partner-country policymakers and practitioners about the preselected actionable factors, the feedback from interview partners does not support the conclusion that these factors are not related to perceived influence and helpfulness; it only allows us to conclude that other factors came into their minds more prominently.

<sup>67</sup> Aid on budget was listed in the alignment principle in the OECD progress report (2011), the ownership and results of development cooperation principles in the GPEDC progress report (2014), and the transparency and accountability principle in the GPEDC progress report (2016). In their indicator “share of aid to recipients' top development priorities”, Birdsall and Kharas (2010) also include general budget support on the grounds that recipient countries can use that support for their own priorities as expressed through their budgets.

perceptions of donor support for internal policy processes. This finding is in line with other studies. For example, Custer et al. (2018) found that, after the provision of financial assistance, alignment of advice and assistance with the government’s national development strategy was the second-most important reason for survey respondents perceiving certain donors as more influential.<sup>68</sup> Finally, in a survey conducted in 40 developing countries, 83% of respondents expected policy alignment to be one of the three most important qualities of donors in five to ten years – with 58% even ranking it in first place (Davies and Pickering, 2015: 27).

**Donor coordination through the use of pooled funding is associated with positive assessments of donor influence and helpfulness.**

We included *donor coordination* as an actionable factor in our econometric model based on feedback from partner-country policymakers and practitioners in the country case studies. While there are many ways for donors to coordinate better, the econometric analysis focuses on one strategy: use of pooled funding.<sup>69</sup> Our results show that, in countries where donors disburse a higher share of their aid by using pooled funding mechanisms, survey respondents assess donors as more influential and more helpful. Interestingly, whether an individual donor pools its funds with other donors in a given country does not seem to affect its own performance in the internal policymaking process, but pooling funds provides an enabling environment in which donors are perceived as more influential and helpful.<sup>70</sup>

Partner-country policymakers and practitioners in three of the four country case studies (Albania, Cambodia, and Malawi) expressed the need for improved cooperation and communication among donors and view donor cooperation as helpful.<sup>71</sup> Both partner-country and external stakeholders (donor staff based in-country and experts) consider pooled funding that brings together a small group of donors to be among the most effective cooperation strategies. This is in line with a statement in the OECD progress report that pooled funding “can bring efficiency gains and reduce transaction costs” (OECD, 2011a: 65).<sup>72</sup> However, coordination efforts also entail political costs and absorb time resources (Bourguignon and Platteau, 2015; Carbone, 2017), which – together with the issue of less visibility of an individual donor’s contribution (Michaelowa et al., 2018) – may de-incentivise such efforts on the part of donors.

Overall, with the exception of certain contexts (as seen in Colombia) and although donor coordination is no longer an explicit aid effectiveness commitment, the results suggest that donor coordination is positively related to donors’ influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation in the eyes of their partners.

<sup>68</sup> This finding is based on an analysis of the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey, which includes both partner-country stakeholders and donors in its sample.

<sup>69</sup> Besides pooled funding that we use for the all-donor analysis, there are other possible proxies for donor coordination, such as joint training, planning, assessment, and joint information management systems, as well as joint donor offices and coordination bodies (OECD, 2008a: 6, 10; OECD and UNDP, 2014: 102, 2016) and the EU joint programming (as used for our Germany-specific analysis; see section 5.3). However, given the lack of publicly available data quantifying these indicators for all donors, we refer to pooled funding and EU joint programming.

<sup>70</sup> The study looks at one specific strategy of donor coordination: the use of pooled funding mechanisms. We use this variable in two ways: as a donor factor (share of ODA disbursed in a partner country through pooled/basket funds) and as a partner-country factor (share of total ODA that a country receives in the form of pooled funds).

<sup>71</sup> Interestingly, none of the partner-country policymakers and practitioners interviewed in Colombia expect donors to harmonise. In fact, several non-partner-country interviewees mention that it seems that donors are not supposed to coordinate their work. Two explanations for this seem plausible. First, partner-country policymakers and practitioners in Colombia do not regard donor coordination as necessary for their work. Second, in the eyes of partners there, donors already harmonise to such a satisfactory extent that the issue is less pressing.

<sup>72</sup> On reduced transaction costs as an effect of donor coordination, see Bigsten and Tengstam (2015) and Klingebiel et al. (2017).



### Box 7 An example of positively-assessed donor coordination: The Health Equity and Quality Improvement Project in Cambodia

Cambodia is among the few countries to achieve maternal and child mortality targets under the Millennium Development Goals. Partner-country policymakers and practitioners attribute this achievement to a unique collaborative and cooperative framework of donors working together in a pooled fund on behalf of multiple partners. This multi-donor trust fund grant directly contributed to the government health system strategy through a series of projects called the Health Sector Support Project, the second Health Sector Support Project, and, most recently, the Health Equity and Quality Improvement Project. There has been a history of multiple partners coming together, pooling funds, and jointly holding support for the government on identifying, scaling up, and then consolidating its investments in several initiatives. The system in Cambodia evolved very well and has now been almost completely taken over by the government for its implementation.

Source: *Case studies and World Bank (2019b)*.

#### **Providing a higher share of aid as untied aid was found to be associated with a donor being perceived as less influential in agenda setting and less helpful in policy implementation.**

Due to mixed evidence in the literature, we did not hypothesise about the direction of the effect of *untied aid* on partner assessments of donor support in the policymaking process and implementation, but considered it important to analyse a possible relationship between the two. Our survey analysis reveals that donors that provide a greater share of their ODA in the form of untied aid are assessed as less influential and less helpful in low- and middle-income countries.

How might tying aid make a donor be assessed as more helpful? In general, technical development cooperation is more tied than development cooperation support in general (OECD, 2012). As we discuss in sub-section 4.2.3, many partner-country policymakers and practitioners value the expertise and advice of international consultants and technological know-how – typical components of technical cooperation grants. We presume that survey respondents might relate tying aid to also receiving technical assistance from partners, which, in turn, is appreciated in partner countries. This could explain why stakeholders may not view tied aid as negatively as some of the literature suggests. This finding is also in line with studies showing that untied aid has become less important over the years (Prizzon, 2016) and will become even less so in the future (Davies and Pickering, 2015).<sup>73</sup>

Overall, the analysis indicates that tying aid is assessed less negatively than we might expect. Moreover, untying aid may even harm partner assessments of donors' influence and helpfulness. While this finding should not serve as a justification for providing more tied aid, it does suggest that the importance of untied aid may not be as strong as previously assumed.

#### **Survey analysis reveals a positive relationship between in-year predictability and partner-country perceptions of donors' influence and helpfulness.**

As one might expect, donors are assessed as more influential and more helpful when their aid is more predictable in the short-term – which means it has in-year *predictability*.<sup>74</sup>

Partner-country policymakers and practitioners in all four country case studies reinforce the importance of predictability for donors' helpfulness, albeit in a slightly different way. In contrast to the survey analysis, which used in-year predictability as an indicator, the country case studies related predictability mostly to the sudden exit of donors from the partner country or changes in donors' commitments (e.g., donors reducing

<sup>73</sup> McKee, Blampied, Mitchell, and Rogerson (2020) also point out that the indicator used for tied aid may confer indirect home-country advantages adding up to de facto tying (p. 4) and suggest implementing a modified measure.

<sup>74</sup> The coefficient is positive and significant for both perceived influence and helpfulness in the partial effects regressions. Additional analyses show that the loss of significance of the coefficients after including other variables is due to sample size (see the online Appendix).

their commitments in a policy area, project, or financial instrument). Thus, when a donor did not provide reliable information about the timing of aid disbursement and future funding, this was considered less helpful. Exits or major changes in donors' commitments can be caused by various factors, for example, country-context factors (such as a reduced commitment to human rights by the government or improved economic or political status of the partner country) or donor-context factors (such as strategic decisions). The finding concerning a donor's exit is in line with other studies. For example, Davies and Pickering (2015) show that government officials in partner countries are concerned about abrupt or poorly managed exits, while other authors also find that, when partner countries are more confident about the amount and timing of aid disbursement, they can better plan resource allocation and the implementation of their national policies (Osakwe, 2008; Vargas Hill, 2005).<sup>75</sup>

Overall, our survey result stresses the relevance of in-year predictability. This is complemented by country case study interviews that further emphasise other aspects of predictability, namely the importance for partners of receiving information on a planned "donor exit" or on other significant changes donors plan to undertake with respect to their cooperation.

**Survey analysis shows that adherence to ownership is positively related to donors' perceived influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation.**

Survey participants who report that the policy initiatives they worked in received broad-based partner-country support – that is, support from a larger group of actors (e.g., the head of state/government, the legislature, the judiciary, and civil-society groups), which is related to *adherence to ownership* – assess donors to be more influential and helpful. This finding confirms the results from the first joint AidData-DEval report, which found partner-country support to be positively correlated with Germany's perceived influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in implementation (Faust et al., 2016), and is in line with findings from Keijzer and Black (2020), who show that local ownership is important for an effective use of public funding (pp. 1–2). A few caveats on this indicator are in order. Both the partner-country support indicator and the perception measures were gathered in the course of the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey. Since it is not possible to include respondent-level fixed effects in the model that looks at the effect of partner-country support on perceived performance on influence and helpfulness, it is difficult to know if a significant result captures various forms of respondent bias, the actual effect of partner-country support for reform, or both. While we are aware of these challenges, we consider this finding to be relevant because of the general importance of inclusive partnerships with partner-country stakeholder groups for development assistance. While we cannot be certain about the causal relationship,<sup>76</sup> partner-country support is a relevant factor to be explored in more detail in future studies, especially against the background of inclusive partnerships being a specific aspect of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17. This SDG, for instance, calls on donors and partners to involve relevant stakeholders from civil society or the private sector in their planned development projects, if these stakeholders are affected by the projects.

#### 4.2.3 Donor–partner interactions on the ground

In contrast to the factors at the macro and meso level, which were mentioned by relatively few partner-country policymakers and practitioners, many partner-country actors in our case studies referred to micro-level factors and their positive relationship to donors' helpfulness in policy implementation. This indicates that, from a partner perspective, factors shaping the day-to-day business between partners and donors seem

<sup>75</sup> The international average of predictability has improved only slightly in recent years – from 85% in 2011 to 87% in 2018 – with high variations between donors (OECD and UNDP, 2019b: 36).

<sup>76</sup> Partner-country support is constructed based on responses to the question "Overall, how much support did this initiative receive from each of the following domestic groups?" in the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey. The way survey participants responded to this question might depend on their individual characteristics, both observable and unobservable. Since we cannot add respondent fixed effects in a model that assesses the relationship between partner-country support and perceived donor performance in agenda setting and policy implementation, it is difficult to know if a statistically significant coefficient captures various forms of respondent bias (for example, whether the respondents themselves have a pro-initiative or anti-initiative orientation), the actual effect of partner-country support for the initiative, or both.

particularly important, especially with regard to the perceived helpfulness of a donor. Given the lack of publicly available data quantifying the micro-level factors, we could not examine their relationship with partner assessments of donor support in our survey analysis. However, we discuss the respective findings briefly as they were prominently reported in the country case studies.

**Country case studies suggest that policymakers and practitioners find helpful those donors that bring expertise and are flexible in their processes.**

In the country case studies, donor *expertise* and *flexibility* emerge as particularly relevant for perceived donor helpfulness.

Generally speaking, partner-country policymakers and practitioners across the board assess donors' expertise as helpful, especially expertise in the area of bringing in scientific evidence and analysis, providing technological know-how, and possessing country-specific experience. More specifically, development actors that provide scientific evidence in the form of policy and project analyses (i.e., evaluations and reviews) that previously has not been accessible to partner governments are considered particularly helpful. This specific finding is in line with a report on partner-country leaders' use of data showing that programme and project evaluation data are the most helpful type of information sourced internationally, as reported by respondents to the Listening to Leaders Survey (Masaki et al., 2017).

In addition, expertise can be regarded as technological know-how about infrastructure and other innovations, which include the provision of certain types of software, databases, and applications not yet available to partner countries.

Finally, experience in a particular partner-country context also contributes to donors being assessed as helpful. Government officials in Albania, Cambodia, and Colombia mention that donors who familiarise themselves with the culture and have extensive field experience in a partner country are considered more helpful than others. In general, consultants and experts are viewed as one of the conduits for these forms of expertise. In accordance with this aspect, several partner-country policymakers and practitioners perceive donors that employ mostly international experts and few or no local experts rather negatively. In their view, employing more local experts would guarantee contextual knowledge and the continuity of expertise in the country. Thus, partner-country actors call for a balanced combination of international and local experts. Fengler and Kharas (2010) support this argument by stating that finding the right balance of national and international providers – which is always dependent on the country context and characteristics of individual projects – is conducive to successful project implementation.<sup>77</sup>

Partner-country policymakers and practitioners in all four case study countries also value flexible processes. They regard rigid processes with respect to project planning schemes (e.g., long conception phases, cumbersome procedures, and deadlines) as rather unsupportive, because these can be out of sync with changing policy dynamics and actor constellations in specific reform processes. Moreover, they view time-consuming and difficult-to-understand processes that may result in a loss of partner ownership as less helpful. Instead, donors that have flexible processes are perceived as more helpful in policy implementation, because they allow donors to adapt to partner-country needs more rapidly. This finding is confirmed by other literature. For instance, Davies and Pickering (2015) show that government officials in 40 low- and middle-income countries ranked flexibility among the most important qualities of future development assistance. Prizzon et al. (2016) find speed and diversification of funding sources to be priorities for partner countries.

The following arguments also support the importance of flexibility in funding. First, flexibility can facilitate the transition between emergency responses, reconstruction, and development (Oxfam, 2013; Oxfam International and Save the Children, 2012) and – as a feature of countercyclical programmes – address potential crises and shocks (Alderman, 2010; Rohwerder, 2017). Second, flexibility in funding also stimulates

<sup>77</sup> Interestingly, Colombia is the only country where donors were not perceived as employing too few local experts. However, we assume Colombia to be a special case due to, for instance, its low aid dependency and high local expertise. Thus, local capacity development may be less necessary in Colombia.

a timely response resulting in cost savings (Cabot Venton, 2016). Furthermore, it encourages implementing organisations to be more innovative and to base modifications on implementation results and real-time challenges (Savedoff et al., 2015). Nevertheless, some rigidity, such as strict standards of transparency and process reliability, might actually be needed to safeguard the donor’s interests in the country. We acknowledge that it may be challenging for a donor to determine the optimal amount of rigidity in processes.

**Country case studies indicate that cooperative partnerships – characterised by an openness towards ideas, trust, and cultural sensitivity – make donors more helpful in policy implementation in the eyes of their partners.**

Information from the four country case studies also suggests that having a *cooperative partnership* is related to greater assessed donor helpfulness. Cooperative partnerships comprise different aspects, all of them based on a partnership in which both partners and donors are valued equally: working together (e.g., joint involvement in design, implementation, roll-out, and problem-solving); trust; respectful and honest communication; long-standing relationships; cultural sensitivity; proximity; and listening to and valuing partners’ ideas. This finding is also in line with other literature. For instance, Brehm (2004) found that partners define “effective partnership” differently from donors: while donors emphasise the results-orientation of a collaboration, partners appreciate the quality of the donor-partner interaction itself, especially with regard to good personal contact.

**Qualitative analysis indicates that personal relationships matter for donors to be perceived by partner-country actors as more influential in agenda setting and more helpful in policy implementation.**

Partner-country and external stakeholders (donor staff based in-country and experts) in the case studies highlight that a donor’s influence and helpfulness can be related to individual staff members (e.g., their technical and soft skills). Other aspects that appear to be relevant with respect to individual staff members include being knowledgeable in the field, responsible, and straightforward; demonstrating leadership and commitment; and maintaining good *interpersonal relations*. This micro-level finding is the only one also related to a donor’s perceived influence in agenda setting.<sup>78</sup> The finding supports the prevalent consensus that personal relations matter – in particular from a partner perspective (Brehm, 2004) – and that intercultural communication is a fundamental skill of staff members that enables them to understand the background of other country contexts (Thomas et al., 2010).

### 4.3 Partner perceptions of donor performance and the DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development

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In this section, we explain how our findings on partner perceptions of donor performance in the internal policymaking process relate to the recently revised OECD DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development.

The study examines how partners assess donors’ support for internal policy processes (more precisely, in agenda setting and implementation) and focuses on what donors can do to improve their performance in this respect. Thus, the study is related to a broader evaluation subject, namely development cooperation support in general, and not of a specific outcome of a particular intervention, programme, or instrument.

The objective of donor support in partner countries is to facilitate the achievement of selected development outcomes through assisting partners within their policy process. This study reveals that donor support for agenda setting and policy implementation is, by and large, assessed as positive by partner-country policymakers and practitioners (“government officials”, representatives from “NGOs/CSOs”, and the “private sector”) and thus seems to be positively related to partner-countries’ needs in the policymaking process. In addition, the helpfulness of donors’ support at the policy implementation stage is positively related to

<sup>78</sup> Similarly, donors also mention that development cooperation depends on individuals on the partner side. In this respect, government officials’ characteristics such as assertiveness and charisma are reported to drive processes and move projects forward.

progress on a policy initiative in the eyes of partner countries. Both findings – the mainly positive partner assessments of donor support for internal policy processes (concerning influence and helpfulness) and the positive correlation of donor helpfulness with assessed progress – underline the relevance of these donor contributions in the eyes of partner-country policymakers and practitioners (OECD DAC criterion: relevance).<sup>79</sup>

The fact that being perceived as a helpful donor is positively associated with perceived progress on policy initiatives also points to the effectiveness of donor support for policy implementation, assuming that partner-country policymakers' and practitioners' assessments of progress on a policy initiative reflect actual progress. As progress on policy initiatives can be considered a first step to achieving development outcomes, the study demonstrates that donors' support can be positively associated with development outcomes (OECD DAC criterion: effectiveness).<sup>80</sup> Whether the achievement of development outcomes is related to either the intended impact or sustained effects is part of the conceptual framework of this study, but was not empirically tested (OECD DAC criterion: impact and sustainability).

The actionable factor *share of provided aid* (operationalised as CPA) reveals that the greater the relative financial importance of a donor to a partner country in comparison to other donors, the more influential in agenda setting and more helpful in policy implementation that donor is assessed (see section 4.2). This finding indicates that a high share of ODA relative to the total amount of ODA in that country is important for a donor to achieve positive assessments by partners. This implies the possibility of efficiency gains through concentration and coordination of country allocations among donors (OECD DAC criterion: efficiency).<sup>81</sup>

In light of the new coherence criteria,<sup>82</sup> we highlight two findings. First, partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess the support of multilateral donors in comparison to bilateral donors as more influential and more helpful for their internal policy processes. Second, if bilateral donors make greater use of pooled funding (see section 4.2), donors in general are also assessed as more influential and more helpful. Since both actionable factors, namely donor type and donor coordination, are linked to a more coherent and coordinated approach of development cooperation, they can be related to the coherence criteria. Thus, with regard to this criterion, we find evidence that donors who place a strong emphasis on measures that facilitate donor coordination and a more coherent development cooperation system are valued from a partner perspective and that coordination is positively associated with a donor's performance in supporting internal policy processes (OECD DAC criterion: coherence).

<sup>79</sup> The OECD DAC defines relevance as “the extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change” (OECD, 2019: 7).

<sup>80</sup> The OECD DAC defines effectiveness as “the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups” (OECD, 2019: 9).

<sup>81</sup> The OECD DAC defines efficiency as “the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way” (OECD, 2019: 10).

<sup>82</sup> The OECD DAC defines coherence as “the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution” (OECD, 2019: 8).

## 5. GERMANY'S PERFORMANCE AS ASSESSED BY PARTNERS

This chapter presents findings for Germany in particular and provides the basis for the Germany-specific conclusions and recommendations of this study. The first section offers background information on Germany's official development cooperation system (section 5.1). The subsequent sections present how influential in agenda setting and helpful in policy implementation Germany's three official development actors – German embassies, the GIZ, and the KfW – are perceived to be compared to a selected donor peer group (section 5.2), and why (section 5.3). In these last two sections, we also present results for Germany's aggregate score, which is a weighted score of the three German actor-specific assessments.<sup>83</sup>

## 5.1 Germany's official development cooperation system

To contextualise the Germany-specific findings, we provide a brief overview of the main actors and characteristics of Germany's official development cooperation system.

### Governance of Germany's official development cooperation system

Germany is a bilateral donor with a dedicated ministry for development assistance. The *BMZ* sets policies and leads and oversees Germany's official development cooperation system (OECD, 2015: 54). The BMZ provides bilateral development assistance in 85 partner countries and regions. These cooperation relationships vary in intensity. In 50 "A" countries, bilateral country programmes cover up to three policy areas. In the remaining 35 "B" countries, programmes cover one policy area with either a regional or thematic focus (Doc. 3).<sup>84</sup> The BMZ does not have its own country offices and staff overseas and is represented through Germany's network of embassies, where staff seconded from the BMZ assume development cooperation-related responsibilities (Faust et al., 2016: 4). The BMZ supports international organisations including the EU and the UN, as well as civil-society actors, the private sector, political institutions, and church organisations. Beyond that, the BMZ "delegates implementation of its aid budget (financial and technical cooperation have separate budgets) predominantly to two powerful, government-owned – yet institutionally independent – agencies: GIZ (for technical cooperation) and KfW Entwicklungsbank (for financial cooperation)" (Faust et al., 2016: 4).

### Division of labour in Germany's official development cooperation in partner countries

*German embassies* represent Germany overseas, defend its interests (Auswärtiges Amt, 2019), and are mainly responsible for Germany's support for partner-countries' agenda setting. Beside these key tasks, the embassies play an important role in Germany's official development cooperation in the BMZ's partner countries. Since the BMZ is formally not represented abroad, the embassies coordinate all development cooperation-related projects of the BMZ and other federal ministries in Germany's partner countries. Although seconded BMZ staff in the embassies work on issues that are in line with the BMZ's mandate, these personnel formally "become part of the foreign service, and report officially to the Federal Foreign Office" (OECD, 2015: 56). By coordinating development cooperation-related projects of different ministries and preparing government negotiations (Doc. 4; OECD, 2015: 56), these staff take an active part in steering the overall strategic orientation of Germany's official development cooperation in partner countries. However, the divergent responsibilities between the BMZ and the German embassies in-country lead to a challenging

<sup>83</sup> In Chapter 5, the term "Germany's official development cooperation" refers to the aggregate of three German development actors in partner countries: German embassies, the GIZ, and the KfW. The BMZ itself is not part of the aggregate, as it operates from Germany and was not assessed by partner-country policymakers and practitioners. The two official implementing agencies in addition to the GIZ and the KfW – the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) and the National Metrology Institute of Germany (PTB) – are not part of the aggregate either, as they are smaller in terms of personnel, budget, and portfolio size than the GIZ and the KfW.

<sup>84</sup> Hereafter, we refer to "A" and "B" countries as BMZ partner countries (see the online Appendix for a list of these countries and regions). In "C" countries no official development cooperation takes place, but types of non-governmental development cooperation may be deployed and funds for BMZ special initiatives or transitional aid can be invested. As part of the current BMZ 2030 strategy, the ministry is planning to reduce the number of partner countries with regard to its bilateral cooperation in the near future (BMZ, 2020b).

situation: the effects of the embassies' support for development cooperation cannot be traced back conclusively to either the BMZ or the embassies.

The *GIZ* is mandated to implement the largest part of Germany's official technical cooperation. Its experts advise and assist governments, civil-society organisations, and private-sector actors in 120 countries (not only the BMZ's partner countries). The *GIZ* works on a wide array of development-related areas, such as sustainable economic development, migration, governance, agriculture, water, environment, energy, and climate change. In doing so, capacity building is at the core of its mandate (Doc. 5). Although the *GIZ* receives the largest part of its budget from the BMZ, it also implements projects for other ministries and donors, such as the EU (*GIZ*, 2019a). With approximately 20,700 people employed as of December 2018 (*GIZ*, 2019a), of whom about 70% are partner-country nationals (staff working on local contracts in *GIZ* country offices), the *GIZ* is not only the largest German official implementing organisation for technical assistance by far, but also one of the largest in the world (Meyer et al., 2016).

The *KfW Development Bank* – a member of the *KfW* Group – is mandated to implement Germany's official financial cooperation. It is engaged in BMZ partner countries, for instance, through providing grants, concessional and non-concessional loans, and accompanying activities (Doc. 5). In terms of volume, the *KfW* Group is one of the largest development banks in the world (Griffith-Jones, 2016: 2) and one of the most important micro-financiers. The *KfW Development Bank* receives a large portion of its budget from the same contracting authorities as the *GIZ* (mainly from the BMZ, but also from other ministries and donors) and invests funds that the *KfW* itself raises on the capital market (*KfW*, 2019b).

### **Reform endeavours to foster collaboration between the key actors in Germany's official development cooperation**

Following the 2005 OECD DAC Peer Review, Germany launched a reform process and concentrated its development cooperation on a reduced number of countries and fewer priority areas in order to make its development policy more efficient and effective. Accordingly, Germany concentrated its bilateral aid on 85 partner countries (OECD, 2015: 46) and its sectoral focus on 11 priority sectors (OECD, 2010: 13).<sup>85</sup> In addition, Germany restructured its institutional structure in terms of its technical assistance. In 2011, three major German technical cooperation agencies – *Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (*GTZ*), *Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst* (*DED*), and *Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung GmbH* (*InWEnt*) – were merged to create the *GIZ* (Faust et al., 2016: 4). In line with the recommendation of the 2010 peer review, Germany also strengthened the BMZ (with a clear mandate and enhanced capacities) and consolidated humanitarian assistance within the Federal Foreign Office (OECD, 2015: 54). Moreover, the BMZ particularly strengthened its policy capacity abroad. Between 2009 and 2014, 46 additional BMZ staff were seconded to embassies (formally becoming part of the foreign service) – representing a 78% increase (OECD, 2015: 54). By February 2018, about 100 BMZ staff were seconded to embassies and international organisations (Doc. 2).

In addition to this reform, the BMZ launched the *Gemeinsame Verfahrensreform* (Joint Procedural Reform) in 2016. This aims to enhance the working structure of Germany's official development cooperation system and to improve effective collaboration between its main actors. Thus, the BMZ strives to strengthen its process reliability, to improve the quality of its interaction with implementing organisations, and to augment strategic control and planning of its bilateral development cooperation, amongst other goals (Doc. 6; Doc. 7).

<sup>85</sup> According to the BMZ 2030 strategy, the ministry is planning to reduce the number of partner countries with regard to its bilateral cooperation (BMZ, 2020b).



## 5.2 How do partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess Germany's support in BMZ's partner countries?

The study places a particular focus on analysing how the three German development actors (German embassies, and the implementing organisations the GIZ and the KfW), and Germany's overall official development cooperation – measured as the aggregate of the three – perform in comparison to a relevant peer group<sup>86</sup> in terms of influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation across the BMZ's 85 partner countries.<sup>87</sup> It also shows how influential and helpful Germany's overall official development cooperation and the three German development actors are perceived across stakeholder groups ("government", "NGOs/CSOs", and "private sector"), regions, and policy areas.<sup>88</sup> Findings are illustrated and discussed in the report if any of the analyses were conducted based on a large enough sample size and Germany's aggregate score or the scores for one of the three development actors are significantly above or below the peer group average.<sup>89</sup> Where applicable, information from the country case studies is integrated.

### Box 8 Key findings I: Germany's official development cooperation

- Germany's aggregate score is 2.93 for influence and 3.18 for helpfulness, placing Germany's official development cooperation in the range of "quite influential" and "quite helpful", comparable to what we see for donors in the peer group of 13 bilateral and multilateral donors. Compared to the average scores of this peer group, however, Germany's aggregate score is on par for helpfulness but below par for influence.
- Across policy areas, regions, and stakeholder groups, the aggregate scores for Germany's influence and helpfulness range between 2.68 and 3.37 and are by and large on par with the peer group average. Germany's aggregate scores for influence and helpfulness are below the peer group average only for the policy area "democracy, civil society and public administration".

<sup>86</sup> Since Germany is the second-largest bilateral donor in the world, the peer group consists of four large multilateral donors and the four largest DAC bilateral donors (aside from Germany) in terms of provided net ODA in 2018 (BMZ, 2019c). China is part of the peer group due to its increasing importance as a donor in many low- and middle-income countries. Lastly, as the first AidData-DEval report reveals that rather small and specialised donors ranked high on influence and helpfulness (Faust et al., 2016), such donors are also included. In total, the peer group comprises 13 bilateral and multilateral donors: China, Denmark, the EU, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UNDP, UNICEF, the UK, the USA, and the World Bank.

<sup>87</sup> See the online Appendix for a list of these countries. We acknowledge that other donors have different partner countries, which may affect how they are assessed in the BMZ's partner countries. However, as the focus of this chapter is on Germany's official development cooperation, we do not consider other donors' partner countries in our analysis.

<sup>88</sup> Stakeholder group: We analyse stakeholder groups based on their classification in the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey. Due to the low number of responses, we do not present scores on helpfulness in policy implementation as rated by the "private sector". Region: The survey respondents' countries are grouped into six regions, as classified by the World Bank (2018). Due to the low number of responses, we do not show scores for the "Middle East and North Africa" (scores are provided for "East Asia and Pacific"; "South Asia"; "Europe and Central Asia"; "Sub-Saharan Africa"; and "Latin America and the Caribbean"). Policy area: We mapped the 22 policy domains addressed in the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey to the BMZ's 11 focus sectors. What we could not map was included in the "other" category, which is not reported in this study. (See the online Appendix for the categorisation of policy areas.) Given the limited number of responses, we do not give scores for seven policy areas: "peacebuilding and conflict prevention"; "education"; "water"; "food security and agriculture"; "energy"; "transportation and communications"; and "urban and rural development". (Scores are only provided for: "democracy, civil society, and public administration"; "sustainable economic development"; "health"; and "environment policy"). For information about all stakeholder groups, regions and policy clusters, see the online Appendix.

<sup>89</sup> Significance tests were conducted if more than 30 assessments for one donor or development actor were available. As the number of responses received for individual donors and development actors varies, not all of them were included in every analysis.

### Individual performance of German development actors

- The three German development actors are perceived differently. More positive assessments of the German embassies in terms of their perceived influence, and of the implementing organisations (the GIZ and KfW) in terms of their perceived helpfulness, might be due to the division of labour among the three.
  - German embassies perform on par with the peer group average for influence and below par for helpfulness.
  - The GIZ performs on par with the peer group average for helpfulness and below par for influence.
  - The KfW performs on par with the peer group average on influence and outperforms the peer group average for helpfulness. Corresponding to the division of labour, the GIZ and the KfW reap a dividend in their assessed helpfulness in a direct comparison with the embassies.
- The disaggregated analyses show that all three actors are, on average, perceived as on par with the peer group among single-stakeholder groups as well as across different policy areas and regions. Only in a few areas do they perform above or below the peer group average.
  - German embassies receive lower scores on helpfulness in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration” among “government officials” and in the region “Sub-Saharan Africa”, which – as in the aggregated analysis – might be traced back to their mandate.
  - The GIZ only performs below par on perceived influence and helpfulness in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration”.
  - The KfW is assessed as particularly helpful in comparison to the peer group average as perceived by “government officials” and in the region “Sub-Saharan Africa”.

#### 5.2.1 Influence and helpfulness scores for Germany's official development cooperation

**Germany's official development cooperation is “quite influential” in agenda setting and “quite helpful” in policy implementation. In relative terms, Germany performs on par with the average of the peer group for helpfulness and below par for influence.**

The individual scores of the three German actors range between 2.89 and 3.41 for perceived influence and perceived helpfulness on a scale of 1 to 4<sup>90</sup>, which translates to an aggregate score for Germany's overall official development cooperation of 2.93 for influence in agenda setting and 3.18 for helpfulness in policy implementation (see Figure 5). Thus, in absolute terms, Germany is “quite influential” and “quite helpful”. In comparison to the peer group average of 3.02 for perceived influence and 3.23 for perceived helpfulness, the aggregate German score is below par in terms of influence and on par for helpfulness. Results indicate that Germany's aggregate score varies considerably between countries.<sup>91</sup>

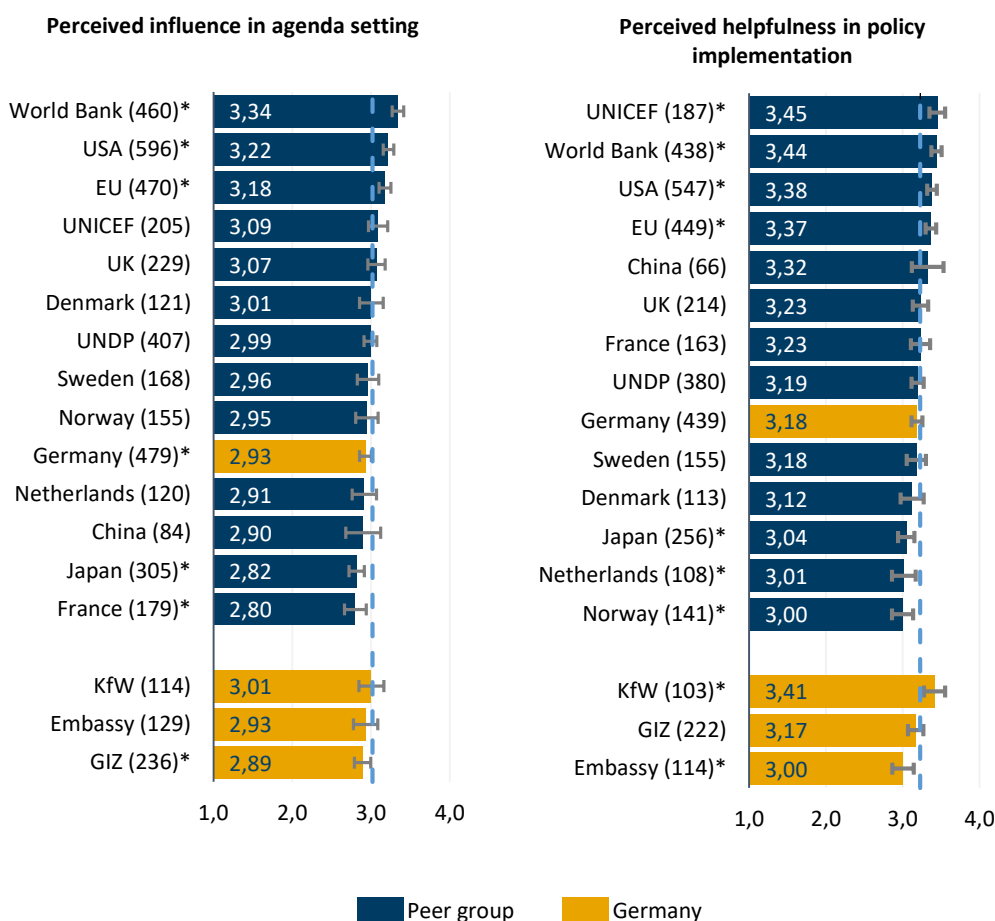
Concerning influence, the aggregate ranks 10th, with all multilateral donors (the World Bank, the EU, UNICEF, and UNDP) and some large (the USA and the UK) and small (Denmark, Sweden, and Norway) bilateral DAC donors ranking higher. China is ranked lower than Germany for its influence in agenda setting. Regarding helpfulness, Germany's aggregate score ranks 9th, again with all multilateral and most large DAC donors (the USA, the UK, and France) ranking higher. China performs higher than Germany's aggregate score in terms of helpfulness, while all small DAC donors perform lower (see Figure 5).

<sup>90</sup> Survey respondents selected from 1 = not at all influential/helpful, 2 = only slightly influential/helpful, 3 = quite influential/helpful, 4 = very influential/helpful, 5 = don't know/not sure, and 6 = prefer not to say. We omitted all responses that selected 5 or 6.

<sup>91</sup> For influence, Germany's aggregate shows a standard deviation of 0.84 and for helpfulness it is 0.76.

The case studies cannot further explain this performance on influence and helpfulness, but they support the survey findings by also indicating that there are considerable variations in Germany's official development cooperation performance in each country. For instance, Germany receives particularly positive assessments in Albania and Colombia, where interviewees perceive Germany as one of their major bilateral partners,<sup>92</sup> but receives rather neutral assessments by partner-country policymakers and practitioners in Cambodia and Malawi, where Germany is only one donor of many. Thus, although there is clear variance among responses from different countries, findings show that Germany is on average not necessarily the donor of choice. In order to explain why some donors perform higher or lower than Germany's aggregate, the differences are analysed in more detail in section 5.3.

**Figure 5 Partner assessments of donor influence and helpfulness in the BMZ's partner countries**



Note: Scale: 1 = not at all influential/helpful, 2 = only slightly influential/helpful, 3 = quite influential/helpful, 4 = very influential/helpful. Blue dotted line = average (adding all donors' average scores with N ≥ 30 and dividing the result by the total number of donors). Average influence/helpfulness = 3.02/3.23. Numbers in brackets refer to responses. Grey lines = 95% confidence intervals. An \* indicates a significantly different donor score from the peer group average (p < .05). See the online Appendix for information on the peer group agency level.

Source: 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey.

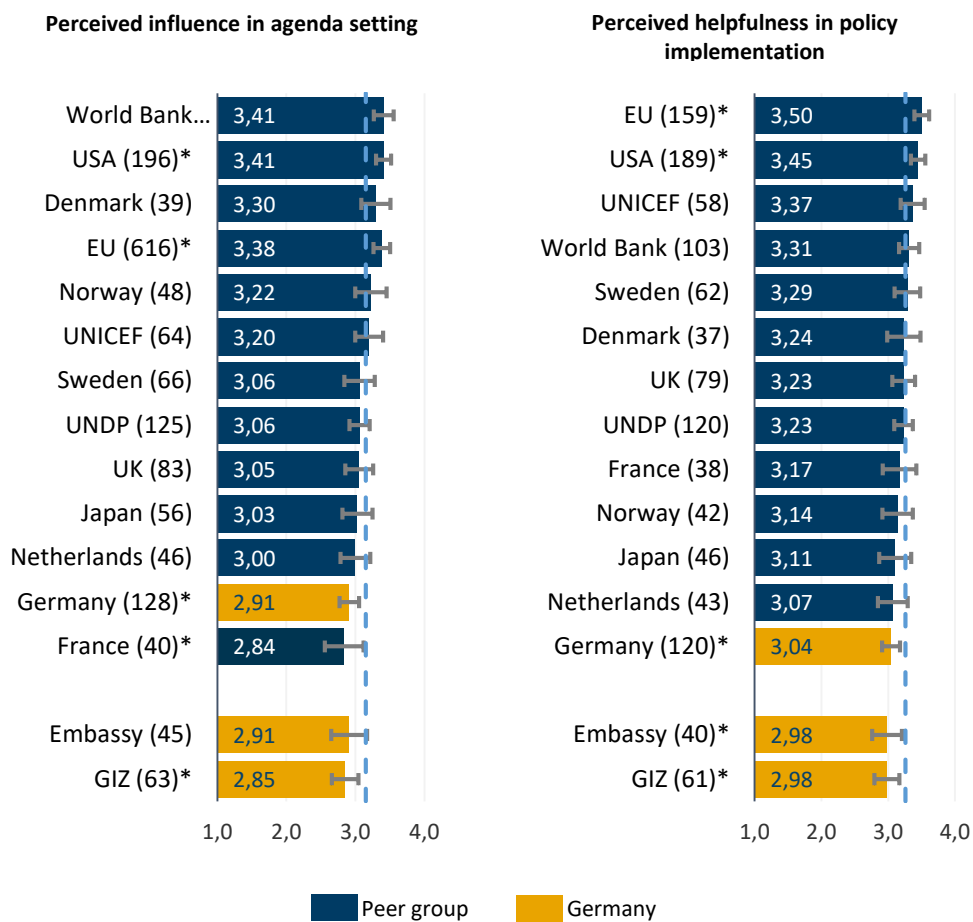
<sup>92</sup> In Albania, Germany is regarded as an influential donor due to its political power in the course of the Albanian EU accession process. In Colombia, Germany is perceived as influential and helpful as well, especially because its long-term relations with Colombia are particularly appreciated and its structured approach to development cooperation is valued (e.g., because characterised by precisely defined processes, for instance, in intergovernmental negotiations).

**The analyses across stakeholder groups, regions, and policy areas demonstrate that Germany's aggregate score is by and large on par with the peer group average in terms of influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation.**

Given the low number of assessments of Germany's official development actors, not all disaggregated categories (stakeholder groups, regions, and policy areas) could be analysed. Across the conducted analyses, Germany's aggregate scores are between 2.68 and 3.37 for perceived influence and perceived helpfulness; Germany's official development cooperation can thus be regarded as "quite influential" and "quite helpful" in absolute terms. It performs on par with the peer group average in terms of influence and helpfulness in the policy areas "sustainable economic development", "health", and "environmental policy"; the same holds true for the regions "East Asia and Pacific", "Europe and Central Asia", "Latin America and the Caribbean", "Sub-Saharan Africa", and "South Asia", as well as for the stakeholder groups "government officials" and "private sector". The aggregate score for Germany in the policy area "democracy, civil society and public administration" is 2.91 for influence and 3.04 for helpfulness, both lower than the peer group average (3.15 for influence and 3.26 for helpfulness) (see Figure 6). In fact, Germany's aggregate score ranks second to last for influence and last for helpfulness among the peer group (China is not included in this particular comparison due to the low number of responses). However, in absolute terms, Germany's aggregate score can be considered as "quite influential" and "quite helpful".

The results for the policy area "democracy, civil society and public administration" are notable, as Germany's official development cooperation continues to focus on this area. By 2017, it constituted the second-most important policy area in terms of quantitative representation in Germany's sectoral distribution in the BMZ's partner countries (Doc. 8). In addition, the low performance in influence in this policy area is persistent, as the first AidData-DEval report revealed similar results in terms of perceived influence in agenda setting (Faust et al., 2016). As the case studies do not provide data to explain the low performance in influence and helpfulness of Germany's aggregate in this policy area, we do not hypothesise about possible explanations.

**Figure 6 Partner assessments of influence and helpfulness in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration” in the BMZ’s partner countries**



Note: Scale: 1 = not at all influential/helpful, 2 = only slightly influential/helpful, 3 = quite influential/helpful, 4 = very influential/helpful. Blue dotted line = average (adding up all donors’ average scores with N ≥ 15 and dividing them by the total number of donors). Average influence/helpfulness = 3.15/3.26. Numbers in brackets refer to responses. Grey lines = 95% confidence intervals. An \* indicates a significantly different donor score from the peer group average (p < .05). Figure shows all development actors in the peer group with more than 30 responses, hence China (influence: 3.00 [15], helpfulness: 3.28 [11]) and the KfW (influence: 3.08 [20], helpfulness: 3.33 [19]) are not included.  
 Source: 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey.

**5.2.2 Influence and helpfulness scores for Germany’s official development actors**

**German embassies perform on par with the peer group average in terms of perceived influence in agenda setting and below par in terms of perceived helpfulness in policy implementation.**

On the 1 to 4 scale, German embassies score 2.93 on perceived influence and 3.00 on perceived helpfulness and thus can be described as “quite influential” and “quite helpful”. Compared to the peer group average score on helpfulness (3.23), as well as in comparison to the GIZ (3.17) and the KfW (3.41), the embassies are assessed less favourably by partner-country policymakers and practitioners in terms of helpfulness in policy implementation.<sup>93</sup>

The latter finding can be explained by the division of labour among the three German development actors. In contrast to the GIZ and the KfW, which are mandated to implement the largest part of Germany’s technical

<sup>93</sup> The finding is based on the regression analysis, in which we compared KfW versus German embassies and GIZ versus German embassies in terms of their perceived influence and helpfulness.

and financial assistance, the embassies (more specifically BMZ staff seconded to embassies and formally part of the foreign service) work on the policy sphere of development cooperation (see section 5.1) and are not directly involved in the implementation of policy initiatives. In addition, in the country case studies, partner-country actors describe their relations with German embassies as good overall, though there are some differences of opinion. While some assess the relationship with the embassies as a close partnership, others express the need for more dialogue with the embassies in order to be informed about Germany's comparative advantages vis-à-vis other donors. Thus, one explanation for why embassies receive rather average performance scores in terms of perceived influence in the survey could be that partner-country actors lack information on what Germany stands for in comparison to other donors.<sup>94</sup>

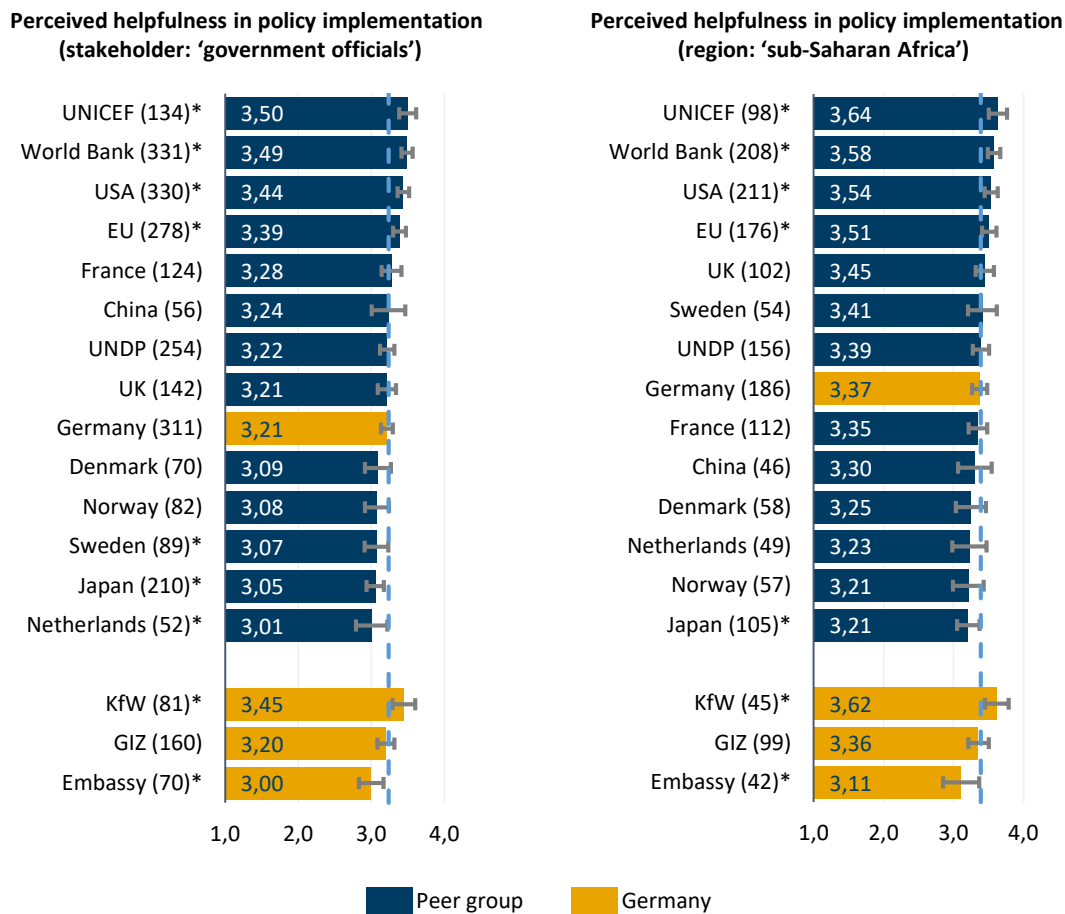
**The disaggregated analyses across stakeholder groups, regions, and policy areas show that the embassies, by and large, perform on par with the peer group average. In some areas, they receive lower assessments in terms of helpfulness in policy implementation, which – as in the aggregated analysis – might be traced back to their mandate.**

On a disaggregated level, the embassies receive lower assessments in terms of helpfulness in policy implementation from the stakeholder group “government officials”, in the region “Sub-Saharan Africa”, and in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration” (see Figure 7). In “Europe and Central Asia”, and with respect to assessments by the stakeholder group “NGOs/CSOs”, the embassies perform on par with the peer group average in perceived influence and perceived helpfulness. In the policy area “sustainable economic development”, the embassies perform on par with the peer group in terms of their perceived influence.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>94</sup> A few partner-country policymakers and practitioners mention that they were confused by commitments that were made in between government negotiations. According to BMZ processes, commitments that are not announced at government negotiations can be implemented throughout the year as intermediate commitments; however, this pathway should be an exception (Doc. 3). There is another path: departments that administer the BMZ's special initiatives (which consist of BMZ projects implemented with a special thematic focus) can inform partners via so-called “information notes” about commitments channelled to the partner country. Data from Cambodia and Malawi show that these intermediate commitments made up roughly 20–30% of Germany's total commitments and that they were not necessarily presented at one point in time but at several times between government negotiations (Doc. 9; Doc. 10). Although this feedback might not be directly related to partners' assessments of the embassies' influence in agenda setting, it might be related to Germany's predictability and thus indirectly affect influence.

<sup>95</sup> Due to the low number of responses for German embassies (fewer than 30) in many stakeholder groups, regions, and policy areas, comparisons between the embassies and the peer group could only be implemented for the presented disaggregated analyses.

**Figure 7 Partner assessments of donors' helpfulness from "government officials" and in "Sub-Saharan Africa" in the BMZ's partner countries**



Note: Scale: 1 = not at all helpful, 2 = only slightly helpful, 3 = quite helpful, 4 = very helpful. Blue dotted line = average (adding all donors' average scores with N ≥ 15 and dividing the result by the total number of donors). Average for "government officials" = 3.24; average for "Sub-Saharan Africa" = 3.39. Numbers in brackets refer to responses. Grey lines = 95% confidence intervals. An \* indicates a significantly different donor score from the peer group average (p < .05).

Source: 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey.

**The GIZ performs on par with the peer group average in terms of perceived helpfulness in policy implementation and below par in terms of perceived influence in agenda setting.**

The GIZ scores 2.89 and 3.17 on the 1-to-4 scale for perceived influence and perceived helpfulness respectively, and thus is perceived as "quite influential" and "quite helpful". In relative terms, the GIZ performs on par with the peer group average on perceived helpfulness (score: 3.02) and below par on perceived influence (score: 3.23) (see Figure 5). Corresponding to the division of labour between the German actors, the GIZ (and the KfW) also reap a dividend in their perceived helpfulness in comparison to the embassies.<sup>96</sup>

The lower performance of the GIZ in terms of perceived influence can also be traced back to its mandate (see section 5.1). Despite its work concerning policy consultation, which may affect agenda setting, the GIZ is mainly responsible for the implementation of projects on the ground and less for agenda setting. In addition, country case studies demonstrate that the GIZ's technical expertise and local knowledge are assessed as its main strengths. The relationships between partner-country policymakers/ practitioners and the GIZ are

<sup>96</sup> Again, this finding is based on the regression analysis in which we compared the KfW versus German embassies and the GIZ versus German embassies in terms of their perceived influence and perceived helpfulness.

predominantly described as good. However, country case studies also indicate room for improvement with respect to the GIZ's working processes (e.g., rigid timelines of tendering procedures, protracted processes at the inception phase of a project, and a lack of transparency with respect to internal timelines), with positive experiences reported in Albania in particular (e.g., ability to respond to partner needs at short notice). Finally, although the GIZ employs a large number of local staff in partner countries (GIZ, 2018), its employment of international consultants – who, in the eyes of partners, often take the experience they gained in the projects out of the country – was criticised in Albania, Cambodia, and Malawi.

**The disaggregated analyses demonstrate that the GIZ performs on par with the peer group average in almost all stakeholder groups, policy areas, and regions. It only performs below par in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration”.**

The disaggregated analyses show that the GIZ performs on par with the peer group average in terms of perceived influence and perceived helpfulness from the stakeholder groups “government officials” and “NGOs/CSOs”, in the regions “Europe and Central Asia” and “Sub-Saharan Africa”, and in the policy area “sustainable economic development”.<sup>97</sup> By contrast, it scores below the peer group average in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration” across both measures (see Figure 6).<sup>98</sup>

The lower performance of the GIZ in comparison to the peer group average in this policy area is not in line with the priority setting of the GIZ's project portfolio. The GIZ's work area “government and civil society, general” – largely consistent with the BMZ's policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration” – is one of its largest areas of work in terms of its overall budget and number of projects (GIZ, 2019b). Given the importance of this policy area and due to the results of the first AidData-DEval report – which found the GIZ to be perceived as less influential in agenda setting in this policy area than the selected peer group – this finding deserves special attention (Faust et al., 2016).<sup>99</sup> However, due to the low number of responses of partner-country policymakers and practitioners concerning this policy area, no additional interpretation can be presented based on the country case studies.

**The KfW outperforms the peer group average in terms of perceived helpfulness in policy implementation and performs on par in terms of perceived influence in agenda setting.**

The KfW scores 3.01 and 3.41 on the 1-to-4 scale for perceived influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in implementation respectively, outperforming the peer group average of 3.23 for perceived helpfulness. Overall, the KfW ranks 6th for influence and 3rd for helpfulness, with only UNICEF and the World Bank scoring higher for helpfulness (see Figure 5).

Since the KfW operates mainly at the implementation level, its high score for perceived helpfulness in policy implementation reflects its mandate (see section 5.1; BMZ, 2008). However, the KfW also appears to be assessed as “quite influential”. At first glance, this is counterintuitive, since one would expect that influence in agenda setting predominantly takes place during government negotiations, which are led by the BMZ. Since the KfW, as well as the GIZ, support the BMZ with its expertise in preparing and undertaking these government negotiations, our finding suggests that the KfW may also indirectly exert influence in agenda setting during the negotiations. The KfW's good performance on influence may be explained by the fact that it often provides significant funds and, compared to technical assistance, provides relatively large-scale projects in terms of financial size (e.g., infrastructure projects such as power plants). This, in turn, is likely to

<sup>97</sup> Comparisons between the GIZ and the peer group could only be implemented for a reduced number of disaggregated analyses, due to the low number of responses (fewer than 30) for the GIZ in some stakeholder groups, regions, and policy areas.

<sup>98</sup> Although the GIZ does not score above the peer group average for helpfulness (score: 3.27) in the policy area “sustainable economic development”, it ranks third among all peer group donors in this policy area (score: 3.44, see the online Appendix).

<sup>99</sup> Our findings point in the same direction, but do not mirror exactly the same sub-components as the first report due to other policy classifications (Faust et al., 2016).



affect strategic decisions in partner countries and, thus, might explain partner-country policymakers' and practitioners' assessments of the KfW as influential.<sup>100</sup>

**The disaggregated analyses reveal that the KfW is perceived as more helpful than the average of the peer group among the stakeholder group “government officials” and in the region “Sub-Saharan Africa”.**

The disaggregated analyses show that the KfW's performance is particularly strong for perceived helpfulness by the stakeholder group “government officials” and in the region “Sub-Saharan Africa”. On the 1-to-4 scale, it scores 3.45 for perceived helpfulness by “government officials” (peer group average: 3.24). Only UNICEF, the World Bank, and the USA are perceived as more helpful. In “Sub-Saharan Africa”, the KfW scores 3.63 for perceived helpfulness (peer group average: 3.39), with only UNICEF ranking higher (see Figure 7).<sup>101</sup>

In contrast to the survey data, country case studies provide mixed feedback about the KfW's performance. On the one hand, “government officials” characterise their relationship with KfW counterparts as good and as enabling open communication and capacity development. Moreover, the KfW is considered as being aligned and well-structured in its work. On the other hand, partner-country policymakers and practitioners report that cooperation with the KfW is not always easy (e.g., due to strict compliance with written commitments, justified by the KfW's responsiveness to taxpayer concerns and due diligence) and they point to options for improvement with regard to the KfW's flexibility (e.g., inhibited by detailed processes and in-depth analyses that prolong and complicate processes).<sup>102</sup>

### 5.3 What explains how Germany performs in the eyes of its partners?

In this section, we present factors that explain how Germany's official development cooperation performs with regard to influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation as seen by its partners. We split the section into three parts. Sub-section 5.3.1 presents Germany-specific results for factors, which are also investigated in the all-donor analysis (section 4.2). Sub-sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 describe the findings for those factors that particularly reflect the German development cooperation system, including the reforms of 2011. As in the previous section, we restrict the analysis to the BMZ's partner countries and draw upon insights from the four country case studies to provide additional contextual information.

#### Box 9 Key findings II: Germany's official development cooperation

- In general, the actionable factors we identified as being relevant to the perceived helpfulness and influence of all donors are equally relevant in the case of Germany. In particular, “adherence to ownership” is found to be positively related to perceived influence in agenda setting.
- The survey analysis does not show positive or negative effects for most of the examined Germany-specific factors (e.g., duration of Germany's official bilateral development assistance and number of staff abroad) on perceived influence in agenda setting and perceived helpfulness in policy implementation.
- As of 2011, Germany introduced comprehensive reforms of its official development cooperation. However, the study did not find any effects of this reflected in Germany's score for influence and helpfulness in the eyes of partner-country policymakers and practitioners.

<sup>100</sup> For instance, the average financial value of a GIZ project is about 8.9 million euro (calculated as the total financial volume of all currently ongoing GIZ projects divided by their number) (GIZ, 2019b). By contrast, the average financial volume of a KfW project is 21.8 million euro (calculated as the total financial volume of KfW's new commitments for projects in 2016, 2017, and 2018, divided by the total number of projects on which these commitments are distributed) (KfW, 2019a).

<sup>101</sup> Comparisons between the KfW and the peer group could only be implemented for a reduced number of secondary analyses, based on the low number of responses (fewer than 30) for the KfW in the other stakeholder groups, regions, and policy areas.

<sup>102</sup> Beyond the feedback from partner-country actors, donor staff in three of the four country cases mentioned that the KfW could pursue and promote stronger support for donor cooperation. Two of them considered cooperating with the KfW, but felt that the KfW either sought to work on its own or that its procedures did not facilitate cooperation.

### 5.3.1 Relevance of factors identified in the cross-donor analysis for assessments of Germany's official development cooperation

In this section, we investigate whether the actionable factors that were identified as being relevant to the perceived helpfulness and influence of all donors (see section 4.2) are equally relevant in the case of Germany.

**Consistent with findings presented earlier on all donors, the regime type and the aid dependency of a partner country are not found to be related to Germany's influence and helpfulness scores. The same is true for countries where Germany coordinates with other donors. Suggestive evidence points to a negative relationship between aid fragmentation and Germany's score for helpfulness.**

The study does not indicate that the *regime type* (level of democracy or autocracy) of a partner country is related to Germany's scores for perceived influence in agenda setting and perceived helpfulness in policy implementation. This is in line with the Germany-specific findings from the first joint AidData-DEval report (Faust et al., 2016) and the all donors-analysis in this report (see sub-section 4.2.1).

We assumed that the more *aid dependent* a partner country is, the more a donor is assessed as influential in agenda setting and helpful in policy implementation. The underlying expectation was that highly dependent partner countries have less bargaining power with donors than other countries. However, as in the all-donor analysis, aid dependency is not found to be related to Germany's influence and helpfulness scores. This indicates that the aid dependency of a partner country is not related to partner-country policymakers' and practitioners' assessments of influence or helpfulness. The fact that our findings do not point in a negative direction supports the results of Whitfield and Fraser, who argue that the level of aid dependency does not determine the success of partner countries when government negotiations on development assistance take place (2010). Instead, other structural conditions, such as debt crises or the partners' self-confidence in their ability to translate country conditions into bargaining capital, are decisive factors for achieving positive outcomes as a result of negotiations (Whitfield and Fraser, 2010).

Evidence of the relationship between *aid fragmentation* and partners' assessments of influence and helpfulness is not consistent across all regression models. However, it provides suggestive evidence that aid fragmentation is negatively related to how helpful Germany is perceived to be in the eyes of its partner-country actors. This finding points in the same direction as the first AidData-DEval report (Faust et al., 2016) and our all-donor analysis (sub-section 4.2.1) and might be explained by additional transaction costs that arise through aid fragmentation (Bourguignon and Platteau, 2015), limited local government capacity, and less coherence among donors in such a setting.

In the Germany-specific analysis, the study uses "EU joint programming"<sup>103</sup> as a proxy for *donor coordination*, and we expected positive effects with respect to partner perceptions. However, as shown in the all-donor analysis, the benefit of higher assessment scores does not accrue to individual donors who coordinate more, but rather is a collective benefit for all donors at the country level. It is therefore not surprising, and in line with the all-donor analysis, that the Germany-specific finding reveals no positive relationship between donor coordination and Germany's influence or helpfulness.<sup>104</sup> Another possible reason for the missing relationship is the issue of reduced visibility of single donors when they launch joint programming or pooled funding projects (Michaelowa et al., 2018).

<sup>103</sup> We used the "EU joint programming" indicator (i.e., the partner country was part of the EU's Joint Programming strategy, in which Germany was involved) for the Germany-specific analysis, since we consider this indicator a better proxy for the donor coordination of Germany's official development cooperation than pooled funding, which is focused on funding only and leaves out other types of cooperation, such as common strategies among donors. In addition, Germany provided only 2.2% of its ODA to low- and middle-income countries as pooled funds in 2015 (2.3% in 2016; 1.1% in 2017).

<sup>104</sup> The relationship between joint programming and perceived influence is not consistent in all models, but models show suggestive evidence that joint programming may have positive effects.

**Consistent with the analysis for all donors, the internal support for policy initiatives and the relevance of projects from the GIZ and the KfW in a partner country are related to Germany's score for influence.**

As in the all-donor analysis and in Faust et al. (2016), *partner-country support*<sup>105</sup> – which is measured as the number of partner-country stakeholder groups that support a policy initiative – is found to be positively related to Germany's score in the BMZ's partner countries in terms of perceived influence. Neither a negative nor a positive relationship could be identified between partner-country support and perceived helpfulness.<sup>106</sup>

In addition, the *relevance of projects*<sup>107</sup> by the KfW and the GIZ in a partner country is related to Germany's score for influence. We find that Germany's score is higher for influence in the BMZ's partner countries where KfW and GIZ projects are considered more relevant. More precisely, the more projects conducted in a partner country that are considered relevant by GIZ and KfW internal project evaluations between 2010 and 2015, the higher Germany's score for influence in agenda setting. The relevance factor appears to be the strongest Germany-specific factor in our econometric analysis and points in a similar direction as the finding of partner-country support in the all-donor analysis.

The definition of the "relevance" indicator used in the Germany-specific analysis (see footnote 107) might explain why this finding is restricted to perceived influence. Relevance pertains to strategic policy decisions, such as the embedding of projects in partners' strategies, and does not address issues that concern the actual implementation of policies. However, reverse causality may also contribute to this result – meaning that projects are retrospectively assessed as relevant because Germany's official development cooperation has either been perceived as influential or has indeed been influential in agenda setting in a partner country. Nevertheless, when taken together, our evidence is in line with current research showing that ownership remains a requirement of international cooperation and is "key to the effective use of public funding" (Keijzer and Black, 2020: 1–2). Thus, our results on the effects of both partner-country support and the relevance of projects indicate that donors' adherence to ownership is positively related to partner assessments of donors' influence.

**Unlike the findings shown for all donors, no evidence was found with regard to the relationship between the share of Germany's provided aid in a partner country and Germany's scores for influence and helpfulness.**

There is no evidence in the data of a statistically significant positive correlation between the relative share of Germany's *provided aid*<sup>108</sup> in a partner-country's total received aid and Germany's scores. Although the relation was not found for Germany's official development cooperation (which could be related to the small number of cases in the Germany-specific analysis), there is no reason to believe that the findings from the analysis of all donors do not apply to Germany. Moreover, the findings of the all-donor analysis are consistent with the results of the first AidData-DEval report (in which the share of provided aid in a partner-country's total provided aid is related to greater influence; Faust et al., 2016).

<sup>105</sup> See footnote 76.

<sup>106</sup> See section 4.2 for more information on the caveat for this indicator.

<sup>107</sup> In their internal evaluation, the GIZ and the KfW define relevance as "the extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies" (BMZ, 2006: 3). This definition stresses, among other things, the importance of partner countries' ownership. The "relevance scores" are based on internal project evaluations conducted by the GIZ and the KfW between 2010 and 2015. These projects were evaluated on a scale of 1 (lowest grade) to 4 (highest grade). We calculated a "relevance mean" for each country, which considers all project evaluations – regardless of their total amount – during those six years. We then examined whether this single "relevance score" for each country correlates with Germany's aggregate score for influence in the respective country.

<sup>108</sup> "Share of provided aid" is measured by using a donor's share of CPA in a partner country in relation to the total CPA that partner country receives. Where we identify that a higher share is related to greater perceived influence in agenda setting and/or helpfulness in policy implementation, we conclude that an increase in a donor's share is related to an increase in that donor's perceived influence and/or helpfulness. This conclusion is based on the assumption that an increase has the same effect as a higher share.

### 5.3.2 Relationship between Germany-specific factors and assessments of Germany's official development cooperation

Like the all-donor analysis, the Germany-specific analysis focuses on investigating actionable factors, taking particular account of the specific characteristics of Germany's official development cooperation system (see section 2.2). As for all donors, only factors for which quantified measures were available could be included in the empirical models.<sup>109</sup>

**The survey analysis shows neither positive nor negative effects for most of the examined Germany-specific factors (e.g., duration of Germany's official bilateral development assistance and number of staff abroad) on perceived influence in agenda setting and perceived helpfulness in policy implementation.**

#### Intensity of development cooperation

Our study also examined whether the intensity of development cooperation between Germany and its partners is related to Germany's score for perceived influence and helpfulness. Intensity is measured as the difference in Germany's performance in "A" and "B" countries.

In the 50 "A" countries, all German development cooperation instruments can be used and a maximum of three of 11 priority sectors can be addressed per country (Doc. 3). Germany additionally engages in 35 "B" countries, in which only one priority sector can be addressed, either with a thematic orientation or in the context of regional programmes (Doc. 3). The study does not find significant differences between "A" and "B" countries; in other words, we do not find any positive relationship between Germany's performance in influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation and a higher intensity of cooperation between Germany and its partner countries.

In the remaining "C" countries, no official bilateral development cooperation takes place, but non-governmental development cooperation may be deployed and funds for the BMZ's special initiatives or for transitional aid can be invested (Doc. 3). Due to missing values for "C" countries in our econometric analysis, no comparisons with "C" countries were drawn. However, in addition to the regression analysis, we conducted mean difference tests on perceived influence and helpfulness among the different country categories. These tests show that Germany's official development cooperation may be reaping a performance dividend from prioritising its bilateral cooperation programmes in "A" countries, where policymakers give Germany slightly higher influence and helpfulness scores than their counterparts in "C" countries (see the online Appendix).

#### Duration of Germany's official development assistance

Country case studies indicate that the duration of cooperation between donors and partners affects partner assessments, because long-term relationships are related to a better understanding of local structures and contexts on the donor side. Moreover, partners with enduring relations with a single donor seem to understand the institutional structure of that donor's development cooperation system more accurately. Consequently, partners get along better with these donors or development actors and assess them as more influential. However, survey analysis provides evidence that this holds true for Germany only within specific contexts, rather than across all partner countries.

<sup>109</sup> Due to the fact that the analysis is based on observational data with only a low number of responses (and not experiments), the absence of evidence of a positive relationship does not imply that we found evidence of no positive effect (Alderson, 2004).

### Number of staff deployed to partner countries from the BMZ (seconded to German embassies), the KfW, and the GIZ

The relatively large staff size that is deployed to partner countries by the German development actors – especially the GIZ – is a specific characteristic of Germany's official development cooperation.<sup>110</sup> The study therefore investigates whether the number of staff is related to Germany's performance in influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation. In fact, survey data reveal no evidence that the number of staff from each of the three German development actors is related to Germany's scores.<sup>111</sup> Interestingly, this holds true for all three German development actors, regardless of the notable differences in the number of their staff abroad (see section 5.1).<sup>112</sup>

At first glance this is surprising, since the 2015 OECD DAC Peer Review report acknowledges the past and (planned) increase of personnel abroad of the KfW and the BMZ (p. 58). However, there are reasons why no positive relationship appears in our analysis between a larger number of deployed staff and a more positive performance of Germany in terms of influence and helpfulness. First, higher staff numbers are likely to be related to more projects on the ground, and thus do not necessarily imply that more staff are available for individual projects. For instance, the GIZ allocates its staff abroad according to a personnel quota for each project, thereby ensuring that the number of staff available for each project remains constant. Accordingly, our findings might be related to the number of projects, which potentially overcompensates for the presumed positive effects of having more staff abroad. Second, the effects of individual partner-country characteristics on partner assessments of deployed staff and reverse causality cannot be ruled out. One could argue that each of the three development actors intentionally deploy more personnel in partner countries in which development cooperation is particularly challenging, and thus in countries where Germany's official development cooperation might already have been less influential and helpful before. Finally, country case studies indicate that aspects such as personal relationships between partners and donors as well as qualitative characteristics of staff abroad are related to assessments of a donor's influence assessment (see 4.2.3).

Another particular aspect of Germany's development cooperation is the GIZ's presence with project offices outside capital cities in provinces and regions of Germany's partners. The study therefore also analysed the relationship between the number of locations with GIZ offices in a country and Germany's scores for perceived influence or helpfulness.<sup>113</sup> On the one hand, with more offices at subnational level one may expect greater perceived influence and helpfulness, as this may equip Germany's development cooperation with more detailed information on the particular challenges in a sector or region and enable it to offer context-adapted solutions. On the other hand, more offices might also imply difficulties for partners in identifying the right contact person, which may be related to lower perceived influence and helpfulness. As such, we do not find a relationship between the local presence of the GIZ and how Germany's official development cooperation is perceived.

<sup>110</sup> About 20,700 people were employed by the GIZ as of December 2018 (of whom about 70% were working on local contracts in GIZ country offices) (GIZ, 2019a). USAID, the largest US agency for international development and humanitarian efforts, employed around 9,600 staff (of whom about 6,500 are employed overseas) as of 2016 (USAID, 2016), the UK employs about 3,600 overall (DFID, 2020), and Japan employs about 1,900 people overall (JICA, 2020).

<sup>111</sup> In the case of the GIZ and the KfW, we include delegated and local staff. For the BMZ, we include delegated staff only (measured as the number of BMZ staff seconded to German embassies in partner countries in the years 2010–2015). For more information, see the online Appendix.

<sup>112</sup> We found suggestive evidence that the increase of KfW and BMZ staff abroad could have a negative relationship with Germany's performance on influence in agenda setting. However, this relationship is not robust to different model specifications, particularly in our full model.

<sup>113</sup> The number of GIZ office locations was measured as the number of offices per country for the years 2011–2015, with offices in the same city or town counted as one. Individual experts embedded within a partner institution ("Entwicklungshelfer\*innen" and "CIM specialists"), were not counted as office locations.

## State fragility

We initially hypothesised that higher levels of state fragility would negatively affect partners' assessments of influence and helpfulness (see section 2.2). However, the study indicates that Germany's official bilateral development cooperation does not perform worse in fragile states.<sup>114</sup>

### 5.3.3 Germany's official development cooperation reforms of 2011

In addition to the other Germany-specific factors, we also investigate whether recent internal reforms of the BMZ are related to Germany's score for influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation. Initially, we assumed the reforms would affect partner assessments, because they aimed to create a more coherent representation among German development actors abroad – for instance, by sharpening the BMZ's mandate and by merging Germany's largest technical assistance organisations into the GIZ. (For background information on these reforms, see section 5.1.)

**There is no evidence to suggest that Germany's official development cooperation reforms of 2011 have resulted in improved scores for influence in agenda setting or helpfulness in policy implementation for Germany.**

We address the question of whether the reforms of 2011 entail a higher score for Germany for either influence or helpfulness using four approaches, the first three based on survey data, and the last on data from the country case studies: (1) we compare the relative rankings of donors in the 2014 RES and the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey; (2) we use pre- and post-reform responses based on the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey only; (3) we compare scores across the two surveys;<sup>115</sup> and (4) we present how partner-country policymakers and practitioners in the four country case studies assess differences between the pre- and post-reform situations and how they currently understand Germany's official development cooperation system. (For details on these four approaches, see the online Appendix.) We recognise that each of these approaches has limitations and none can conclusively determine the relationship of the reforms to Germany's score for influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation in partner countries. However, combining the four approaches mitigates the limitations of each individual approach. For example, while we use the two survey datasets for a longitudinal analysis (approach 3), we also divide the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey to control for differences between the two survey questionnaires, such as wording (approach 2). In summary, across all approaches, the study does not find evidence that Germany's official development cooperation reforms resulted in an improved score for influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation.

A possible explanation for the absence of a positive relationship between the reforms and influence and helpfulness comes from the qualitative data. Within the country case studies, partner-country policymakers and practitioners emphasise that they consider the reduced number of German official development actors a positive development. However, despite the fact that most are familiar with the division of labour within Germany's official development cooperation system, they still understand it as consisting of many independent players pursuing different strategies (e.g., participating in different partner meetings, working

<sup>114</sup> Findings on state fragility could be of interest for all donors. However, in the interest of parsimonious models in the all-donor analysis and due to fact that more than 50% of Germany's partner countries are affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (BMZ, 2013: 3), state fragility was tested in respect of partner perceptions of Germany's development cooperation only. Wencker and Verspohl's (2019) results serve as an explanation for the finding of this study. Based on an analysis of 471 evaluation reports by the GIZ and the KfW, they demonstrate that Germany's official development cooperation achieves project success to the same extent in fragile contexts as in non-fragile ones.

<sup>115</sup> In the three quantitative approaches, we include all low- and middle-income countries (not just "A" and "B" countries), because the reforms also modified the BMZ's priority countries.

in distinct districts and projects, and highlighting their individual strengths rather than overall synergies).<sup>116</sup> Thus, statements made in the four country case studies suggest that a more coherent collaboration among the German actors might be needed to affect partner assessments positively on a statistical level. Although we cannot identify positive relationships between the reforms and influence and helpfulness, Meyer et al. (2016) find that the reforms had a positive effect on Germany's technical assistance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, and the OECD DAC Peer Review report of 2015 also found indications that the merger was related to increased efficiencies (OECD, 2015).

<sup>116</sup> In some cases, individual German development actors (predominantly the KfW) are not regarded as being part of Germany's official development cooperation system. Overall, partner-country policymakers and practitioners who had more contact with German embassies (for instance, participating in government dialogues) seem more familiar with Germany's official development cooperation system than those with less contact. In addition, country case studies show that partner-country policymakers and practitioners need time to understand the complex structure of the German development cooperation system.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



This chapter presents the main conclusions (section 6.1) and recommendations (section 6.2) for bilateral and multilateral donors in general, as well as Germany’s official development cooperation in particular.

## 6.1 Main conclusions

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The rapid proliferation of new providers of financial and technical development assistance has empowered partner countries to access and choose from a wider spectrum of financing sources and policy ideas (Janus et al., 2015; Klingebiel et al., 2016; Parks et al., 2015). At the same time, many low- and middle-income countries have experienced substantial economic growth. This has boosted their bargaining power, so that donors have come under increasing pressure to remain a donor of choice in the future and hence be able to contribute to the achievement of development outcomes in partner countries. In addition, policymakers and practitioners in partner countries can be expected to be among the best suited for assessing donors’ support of internal policy processes. This study therefore measures donor support for partners’ own policies in the eyes of those who receive and use that support. We posit that experience-based assessments by partner-country policymakers and practitioners are a meaningful measure to evaluate the quality of donor support.

Resting upon a simplified model of countries’ policy cycles, the study identifies agenda setting and policy implementation as two important entry points for donor support in partner-country policy processes. The study therefore examines how policymakers and practitioners in low- and middle-income countries assess donor performance at these two stages (influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation) and which factors explain donor performance at these points.

The study draws upon the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey<sup>117</sup> and four country case studies<sup>118</sup> to answer the report’s guiding questions: Which donors do partner-country policymakers and practitioners in low- and middle-income countries assess as influential in agenda setting and helpful in policy implementation, and why? The report analyses these questions with respect to bilateral and multilateral donors in general, as well as Germany’s official development cooperation in particular.

### Main conclusions for bilateral and multilateral donors

- The common approach of bilateral and multilateral donors – to (1) contribute policy ideas to a partner’s agenda-setting process and (2) provide support for the implementation of partner policies – can foster progress on policy initiatives and is, by and large, valued as positive by partner-country policymakers and practitioners.
- Although most donors are assessed as “quite influential” in agenda setting and “quite helpful” in policy implementation, partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess some donors as significantly more (or less) influential and helpful than the donor average. For instance, a number of multilateral donors are assessed as significantly more influential and helpful than the average of all donors.
- Besides the marked differences between bilateral and (a number of) multilateral donors, variations in how policymakers and practitioners assess donor support in partner–country policy processes is related to factors at three levels: (i) strategic decisions about aid allocation and country selection (macro level); (ii) adherence to aid effectiveness principles (meso level); and (iii) donor-partner interactions in the partner country (micro level). Thus, both multilateral and bilateral donors can take action at any of these levels to improve their support in the eyes of their partners. Given the diversity of donors, they might consider different actions as appropriate depending on their resources, mandates, organisational structure, or degree of decentralisation in decision-making, as well as the specific donor-partner interaction in each country.

<sup>117</sup> The 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey provides information about the first-hand experiences of nearly 2,400 policymakers and practitioners from low- and lower-middle-income countries.

<sup>118</sup> The four country case studies were conducted in Albania, Cambodia, Colombia, and Malawi, including interviews with 193 policymakers and practitioners, of which 101 were from the partner countries.

### Main conclusions for Germany’s official development cooperation

- In absolute terms, the support of the three German development actors included in the survey (German embassies, the GIZ, and the KfW) is assessed as “quite influential” in agenda setting and “quite helpful” in policy implementation.
- When aggregated into an overall score for Germany’s official development cooperation, in relative terms, Germany’s score is on par with the average of the peer group of bilateral and multilateral donors for helpfulness and below par for influence. These results confirm the findings of the previous AidData-DEval study on the topic (Faust et al., 2016). In the current study, Germany’s performance on influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation is found to be predominantly average when disaggregated by stakeholder group, region, and policy area.
- Germany is the second-largest bilateral donor in the world (BMZ, 2019a) – with an institutionally and instrumentally highly differentiated development cooperation system. As such, Germany’s official development cooperation actors should reflect on this rather middling performance on influence and helpfulness and consider the options for action identified in this study in order to improve their perception in the eyes of their partners. In particular since the analysis does not find evidence that specific characteristics of Germany’s official development cooperation, such as its high number of staff abroad, necessarily represent a unique selling point in terms of partner assessments of agenda-setting influence and helpfulness in policy implementation. It would therefore seem safe to assume that the findings and options for action identified generally for all donors should be equally relevant for Germany and that Germany’s official development actors can improve their performance in the eyes of their partners by following the recommendations formulated for all donors below. In this respect, the ongoing efforts to further optimise Germany’s official development cooperation system (most recently in the context of the BMZ’s 2030 strategy) appear to be strongly supported by the results of this study.

## 6.2 Recommendations

Every donor–partner interaction is different, as both donor systems and country contexts vary widely. Accordingly, the findings and conclusions of this study cannot be applied homogeneously to each of these individual settings. There can be no one-size-fits-all blueprint as to how donors can improve their agenda-setting influence and helpfulness in policy implementation in the eyes of their partners.

We therefore formulate only one overarching recommendation that in principle applies to all donors. We then identify options for action, which each donor can carefully assess to see if they represent a viable way to improve how they are perceived by their partners.

As this study has a specific focus on Germany, each option for action is reflected in light of Germany’s particularities as a bilateral donor and its current strategic framework “BMZ 2030”. Although the BMZ itself is not assessed in the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey, it is responsible for Germany’s official development cooperation and is therefore the main addressee of recommendations for Germany’s official development cooperation.

The chapter concludes with a specific recommendation for Germany’s official development cooperation to review its engagement in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration”.

### *Recommendation for all donors*

**Donors should examine whether they can identify appropriate strategies or measures to improve how their support for domestic policy processes is assessed by their partners, taking into account options for action at the macro, meso, and micro levels.**

Donors should take action to improve how their performance in agenda setting and policy implementation is viewed by policymakers and practitioners in their partner countries for two reasons. First, in times of increasing competition among providers of policy ideas and implementation support, pressure is growing on donors to remain donors of choice for their partners and continue to contribute to the achievement of

development progress in their partner countries. Second, if donors accept that the policymakers and practitioners working with them in their partner countries are among the best judges of how influential and helpful their support to policy processes is, then donors should take partner-country assessments into account when reflecting on their support.

This is also supported by our country case studies, which find that partner-country policymakers and practitioners value donor contributions in terms of their influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation. Moreover, the study reveals that partner assessments of donor helpfulness are positively related to their assessment of progress on a policy initiative. Consequently, donors can contribute to progress on a policy initiative in partner countries by focusing on strategies that make them more influential and helpful in the eyes of their partners.

Almost all donors in the survey sample are assessed as “quite influential” and “quite helpful” (on a scale from “not at all influential/helpful” to “very influential/helpful”). Yet variation between donors suggests that donors can improve on their performance in the eyes of their partners, and this study identifies actionable factors to do so.

However, given donors’ limited resources, the diversity in individual development actors’ mandates, their organisational structure, the degree of decentralisation in decision-making, and diverse partner-country contexts as well as specific donor–partner interactions, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all strategy or measures to recommend across all donors. Instead, donors need to choose carefully among a range of options for action identified at three levels that best fit them: first, strategic decisions about aid allocation and country selection (macro level); second, adherence to aid effectiveness principles (meso level); and third, donor–partner interactions in the partner country (micro level).

**Specification for Germany:** When compared to the peer group of donors, Germany (the second-largest bilateral donor in the world; BMZ, 2019a) shows an overall rather middling performance in terms of influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation in the eyes of its partners. In order to improve how they are assessed by their partners, Germany’s development actors, above all the BMZ, should therefore consider the options for action identified below with a view to whether they can provide avenues in line with the BMZ’s 2030 strategy to further improve how Germany’s support for partners’ policy processes is assessed by those very partners.

#### *Options for action at the macro level: Strategic decisions on aid allocation and partner-country selection*

Donors should gauge whether it would be possible to increase their allocations or – if they have an (over-)diversified portfolio of partner countries – concentrate their resources on a smaller number of countries. This would increase a donor’s individual share in its partner-countries’ aid budgets, which is associated with increased influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation as assessed by partners.

A donor’s relative share in a partner-country’s total aid budget (CPA) is associated with the donor being assessed as more influential in agenda setting and more helpful in policy implementation. Given limited resources, in most cases increasing a donor’s relative share of total aid in a partner country is only possible through a concentration of its aid. To avoid this recommendation becoming self-defeating, however, and to avoid the concentration of aid resources on a handful of donor-darlings and the emergence of aid orphans, such concentration processes should be carefully coordinated among donors (see also the options for action on donor coordination at the meso level).

**Specification for Germany:** While the BMZ’s budget has increased substantially over the past few years (BMZ, 2019a), the diversification and fragmentation of Germany’s bilateral cooperation have continued to be a topic of discussion (OECD, 2010, 2015). Within the framework of the BMZ’s 2030 strategy, the ministry is now in the process of further focusing its bilateral ODA (both thematically and geographically), by reducing the number of topics and partner countries for its bilateral cooperation (BMZ, 2020a: 25). This strategy is supported by the findings of this study. Experience, however, also suggests that such processes should be carefully coordinated with other donors and that exit processes need to be carefully managed to avoid undermining past achievements or damaging bilateral relations.<sup>119</sup>

Bilateral donors should assess whether they can make more effective use of multilateral channels in supporting partner-countries’ policies.

As in the first joint study by AidData and DEval (Faust et al., 2016), we find that, on average, multilateral donors are assessed more favourably than bilateral donors by partner-country policymakers and practitioners with regard to their influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation. This may be linked to the advantages of multilateral donors commonly discussed in the literature, such as being less politicised, more selective in terms of poverty criteria, more demand-driven (Gulrajani, 2016: 15), and less fragmented than bilateral cooperation.

Bilateral donors should therefore assess whether they can make more strategic use of individual multilateral donors’ influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation – for example, by increasing contributions, seeking to gain more influence on the multilaterals’ policies, and improving coordination with multilateral actors. Whether these are viable options for any particular bilateral donor, however, needs to be considered in light of realities such as the alignment of objectives and policies between the respective multilateral and bilateral donor or the possibility for a bilateral donor to have a say within a multilateral organisation and thus to be able to influence decision-making processes within that organisation. Moreover, it is important to note that the superior performance of multilateral donors does not apply to all multilaterals to the same extent (or even at all). Further, shifting allocations to multilateral channels comes at the potential cost of limited visibility of bilateral donors (Michaelowa et al., 2018) and reduced resources for bilateral cooperation.

At the same time, the finding that multilaterals are perceived as more influential and helpful than bilaterals overall is certainly relevant for the ongoing broader political debate on multilateralism that reflects limited support for multilateralism by nation-states and illustrates a global state of multilateralism in crisis (Brühl, 2019; Henökl, 2017; von Staden, 2018). The study enriches this debate and indicates that a greater use of multilateral channels is related to more influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation in the eyes of partner-country policymakers and practitioners.

**Specification for Germany:** The findings of this study – as well as the precursor study by Faust et al. (2016) – support the BMZ’s current efforts within the framework of the “BMZ 2030” strategy to strengthen and make more effective use of the multilateral system to tackle global challenges in close coordination with bilateral efforts (BMZ, 2018: 6). The “BMZ 2030” strategy envisages working more closely with the EU and other multilateral organisations such as UNICEF and UNDP. The strategy calls for engaging more effectively within these institutions and in their strategic agenda setting (e.g., through more active engagement of seconded staff). In addition, the strategy sets out to improve coordination with these actors, e.g., through a division of labour in certain sectors (Doc. 11). In doing so, the BMZ plans to focus on those multilateral institutions that show the political will to push international reform and development agendas and in places where Germany can exercise its influence (e.g., because of substantial financial contributions or high-ranking seconded staff) (Doc. 11). This strategy would seem in line with the recommendation formulated

<sup>119</sup> DEval is currently undertaking a synthesis study on the lessons learned from donors’ concentration and exit processes in the past.

above. Whether it would be a viable option for the BMZ to choose to channel more of its ODA resources through the multilateral system than in the past, however, needs to be weighed in terms of congruence of policy objectives, Germany's influence in a particular multilateral organisation, the need for bilateral visibility, and so on. In the years 2015–2017, the multilateral share of Germany's ODA stood at 21%; for the BMZ's budget, the figure is about 30% (BMZ, 2019b; Doc. 12).

#### *Options for action at the meso level: Adherence to aid effectiveness principles*

To improve partner assessments regarding influence in agenda setting and helpfulness in policy implementation, donors should consider whether they can improve on their adherence to aid effectiveness commitments, in particular with regard to coordination, alignment, and predictability of their support.

The study provides evidence that adherence to certain aid effectiveness commitments is related to more positive assessments by partners of donor support for domestic policy processes. Thus, bilateral and multilateral donors should consider whether they can improve on their compliance with aid effectiveness principles. Although most OECD donors, such as Germany, already adhere to these principles to a certain degree, they do not fully meet their commitments. The non-binding nature of the aid effectiveness principles, political challenges in implementing the principles in practice, or weaknesses in partner-country systems that might impede achievement of the commitments, are presumably at least in part responsible (OECD, 2011b; OECD and UNDP, 2016). As the study shows, aid effectiveness principles – whose prominence in the international debate has waned in recent years (McKee et al., 2020) – remain important from a partner perspective with regard to donors' support.

*Coordination of donor contributions:* Our study shows that close coordination of financial contributions matters for partners' assessments of donors' support for their policy process. In general, policymakers and practitioners in low- and middle-income countries where donors coordinate their activities better (e.g., by pooling funds) are more likely to assess these donors as influential and helpful. This benefit does not accrue to donors individually, but appears to apply collectively to all donors in countries where such coordination takes place. These findings are in line with literature that emphasises efficiency gains and reduced transaction costs as positive aspects of donor coordination (Anderson, 2011; Bourguignon and Platteau, 2015; Bigsten and Tengstam, 2015; Klingebiel et al., 2017). They are also in line with literature that underlines the importance of donor coordination despite existing downsides, such as potential political costs and reduced visibility as a bilateral donor, that might come along with donor coordination (Bourguignon and Platteau, 2015; Carbone, 2017).

**Specification for Germany:** Although there is no direct link between an individual donor's efforts to coordinate with other development partners and how that donor's influence and helpfulness is assessed by policymakers and practitioners in partner countries, collectively donors are assessed as more influential and more helpful in countries where they coordinate their activities well (e.g., in the form of pooled funding arrangements). Germany's current ambition to foster coordination with other development partners through co-financing and pooling mechanisms and to promote not only Joint Programming but also Joint Implementation among EU donors (Doc. 11) is thus supported by the findings of this study and it should therefore be examined whether it could be strengthened across Germany's bilateral portfolios.

*Use of country systems and alignment with partners' priorities:* The study finds evidence that a greater share of aid on budget is positively associated with partner perceptions of donor influence and helpfulness and the provision of general budget support is associated with higher levels of donor influence. The study findings also suggest that donor support for policies that enjoy broad domestic ownership is associated with favourable assessments by partner-country policymakers and practitioners. Providing assistance through partner-countries' own budgetary systems (or at least reporting on budget) and thus aligning support with partner-countries' priorities (Birdsall and Kharas, 2010; OECD, 2008a: 9; OECD and UNDP, 2016: 38; Prizzon, 2016) can thus help donors to be assessed as more influential in agenda setting and more helpful in policy implementation. Providing support in this way has to be weighed against other relevant aspects for donors'

strategic decision-making, such as donors' own priorities and strategic objectives<sup>120</sup> and their confidence in partner governments and fiduciary systems.

The findings of this study add a partner perspective to the mounting evidence on the benefits of budget support (e.g., Orth et al., 2017), and thus an additional argument for donors to (re-)consider the provision of general budget support or similar instruments where appropriate conditions exist.

**Specification for Germany:** Our results for all donors suggest that providing aid through (or at least on) budget – and thus aligning with partner-countries' systems and priorities – makes a difference to how influential and helpful this donor support is assessed by policymakers and practitioners in partner countries. The proportion of Germany's development cooperation funding that is reported in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) 2019 progress report as provided on budget, however, is a mere 52.7% (2016: 48.0%; GPEDC, 2020), a far call from the target of 85% formulated for 2015 by the GPEDC (OECD and UNDP, 2016: 38).

The positive relationship between use of countries' own budgetary systems and assessment by partners of donors' influence in agenda setting is particularly pronounced for the instrument of budgetary aid. The results for Germany confirm the finding that the provision of general budget support is related to a more positive assessment by partners of Germany's influence in agenda setting. While Germany has incrementally stopped its use of budget support as an aid modality during the last decade, it has recently begun offering incentive-based policy reform credits to a handful of selected countries within the framework of its "reform partnerships". These results are thus in line with the BMZ's current strategy to give more weight to the strategic use of modalities such as (policy) reform credits where conditions allow (Doc. 11). This strategy would appear to be supported by this study with regard to improving partner perceptions of Germany's official development cooperation's influence and helpfulness.

*Provision of predictable development cooperation:* The study shows that predictability of policy support (measured as the share of development cooperation funding to a government policy area that is disbursed in the year for which it was scheduled; GPEDC, 2020) is linked to donors being perceived as more influential and more helpful by policymakers and practitioners in partner countries. Thus, in order to improve how they perform in terms of influence and helpfulness in the eyes of their partners (among other good reasons), donors should assess whether they can increase their efforts to provide predictable support.

**Specification for Germany:** In the 2018 GPEDC monitoring round, annual predictability of resources provided by Germany's development cooperation<sup>121</sup> is reported at a strong 91.1%. While there is some room for improvement, Germany's official development cooperation will probably not be able to greatly increase its influence and helpfulness as perceived by partners by further improving the predictability of its disbursements. The picture is somewhat different at the level of transparent and forward planning,<sup>122</sup> for which Germany scores only 75.1% in the 2018 GPEDC monitoring round. Although this indicator of predictability was not used in the analysis of this study, it would seem that Germany's official development cooperation could do better in this regard, potentially improving partner perceptions of its influence and helpfulness. This echoes the recommendations of the latest OECD DAC Peer Review, which recommends that Germany strengthen the predictability of its programmes and strategic planning (OECD, 2015: 19).

<sup>120</sup> See Hartmann et al. (2019) for a discussion of how donors need to balance their country portfolios strategically in relation to various demands, including donors' own priorities, partners' priorities, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, and the activities of other donors.

<sup>121</sup> This is the share of development cooperation disbursed in the year for which it was scheduled (GPEDC, 2020).

<sup>122</sup> This is the share of development cooperation funding covered by indicative forward expenditure or implementation plans shared with the government (GPEDC, 2020).

*Options for action at the micro level: Donor–partner interactions on the ground*

Donors should scrutinise to what extent they can build on staff competencies and responsive processes at the micro level of donor–partner interactions to improve their helpfulness in the eyes of their partners.

While most aspects of direct donor–partner interactions at the micro level of development cooperation are intangible and thus do not lend themselves readily to quantitative analysis, the qualitative case studies conducted for this study provided strong indications of the importance of day-to-day development cooperation activities for how partners assess donor helpfulness. At the personal level, factors that impact how partners perceive individual donors include the specific expertise and soft skills of staff and a truly cooperative partnership characterised by trust, respect, and honest communication. At the agency level, factors such as flexibility and the ability to respond quickly to partner needs particularly affect how partners perceive donors.

**Specification for Germany:** Germany’s official development cooperation is characterised by a comparatively large number of staff present at the country level (see Chapter 5). While the quantitative analyses conducted for this study do not provide any evidence that the number of staff in a country impacts how helpful partners assess Germany’s support for domestic policy processes, case study evidence suggests that the expertise provided by Germany’s official development cooperation on the ground is highly appreciated by partners, suggesting little potential to improve at this level. By contrast, partner perceptions are less favourable with regard to the flexibility of processes and responsiveness of Germany’s official development cooperation. It could therefore be useful for the BMZ, the GIZ and the KfW, to scrutinise whether there is room to introduce more flexibility in certain processes without compromising quality and integrity. This recommendation was also made by the OECD DAC Peer Review for Germany in 2015 (OECD, 2015: 18).

*Specific recommendation for Germany’s official development cooperation*

**The BMZ should review its strategies, concepts, and instruments in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration” based on solid evidence on the effectiveness of the support it provides in this area.**

This study finds that in the policy area “democracy, civil society and public administration”, the GIZ performs below the peer group average in the eyes of partners in terms of agenda-setting influence and helpfulness in policy implementation. This is supported by findings of the precursor study by AidData and DEval (Faust et al., 2016), which found a below-par performance of Germany’s agenda-setting influence in the wider policy field of good governance support. Furthermore, it is in line with the results of a recent GIZ evaluation, which assigns to the GIZ’s engagement in this sector rather “modest” results (Gomez, 2020: 58) and identifies weaknesses in particular at the level of its strategies and concepts for governance support.

Even though the average scores for Germany’s official development actors in the 2017 Listening to Leaders Survey in this policy field still fall in the categories “quite influential” and “quite helpful”, this remaining below-average assessment by partners is of particular concern for Germany’s development cooperation for two reasons. First, the promotion of good governance constitutes the second-most frequently funded policy area in Germany’s bilateral portfolios (as of 2017; Doc. 7). Second, and more importantly, Germany prides itself on pursuing a “values-based” concept of development cooperation. This is particularly reflected in the BMZ’s commitment to good governance criteria that have provided a reference framework for all of Germany’s official development cooperation since the mid-1990s. Germany’s clear commitment can be traced back to the so-called “Spranger criteria” of 1991. Understood as a reference framework for Germany’s official development cooperation, these were further developed as concrete action fields for the BMZ in 1996. Against the background of the Millennium Development Goals, the BMZ revised the criteria once more in 2006 (Wagner, 2017). They are still reflected in various BMZ concepts and strategies, for instance the cross-sectoral strategy concerning human rights in development policy (BMZ, 2011). The high relevance of good governance for Germany’s official development cooperation is also demonstrated by the internal BMZ

process for assessing the governance situation in the partner countries (BMZ, 2009). Similarly, the promotion of good governance also plays an essential role in current key BMZ strategies, such as “BMZ 2030” (Doc. 11) and Marshall Plan With Africa (BMZ, 2017), both important landmarks for the future orientation of Germany’s official development cooperation.

Given the high relevance of this policy area within Germany’s official development cooperation, the below-par performance in the eyes of its partners makes it important to review Germany’s engagement in the policy field and consider revising and improving strategies, concepts, and instruments based on solid evidence on what works and what does not in this area.



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## 8. APPENDIX

## 8.1 Timeline, team members, and responsible persons

**Table 4** Timeline of the evaluative study

Year	Month	Activity
2017	November	Start
2018	April	1st reference group meeting (draft inception report)
2019	July	2nd reference group meeting (preliminary results)
	October	3rd reference group meeting (draft report)
2020	3rd quarter	Publication and dissemination

**Table 5 Team members, support, and responsible persons**

Last name	First name	Function
<b>Team members</b>		
<b>Guffler</b>	Kerstin	Team Leader (DEval)
<b>Eppler</b>	Mirko	Evaluator (DEval, since July 2019)
<b>Heinelt</b>	Marie-Sophie	Evaluator (DEval, since August 2019)
<b>Sethi</b>	Tanya	Team Leader (AidData)
<b>DiLorenzo</b>	Matthew	Analyst (AidData, until July 2018)
<b>Harutyunyan</b>	Ani	Analyst (AidData, June 2018–July 2019)
<b>Support</b>		
<b>Custer</b>	Samantha	Director of Policy Analysis (AidData)
<b>Vogel</b>	Teresa	Project Administrator (DEval, until June 2018)
<b>Orth</b>	Caroline	Project Administrator (DEval, July 2018–June 2019)
<b>Bornemann</b>	Amelie	Project Administrator (DEval, since June 2019)
<b>Schmitt</b>	Johannes	Case Study Support (Malawi)/Methodical Support
<b>Orth</b>	Magdalena	Case Study Support (Albania)
<b>Bruder</b>	Martin	Case Study Support (Cambodia)
<b>Faust</b>	Jörg	Case Study Support (Colombia)
<b>Gabel</b>	Sabrina	Intern
<b>Degutsch</b>	Rebecca	Intern
<b>Stander</b>	Jennifer	Intern
<b>Grimminger</b>	Anna	Intern
<b>Weitekamp</b>	Elena	Intern
<b>Sach</b>	Anna	Intern
<b>Aretz</b>	Nicole	Intern
<b>Richter</b>	Johanna	Student Assistant
<b>Herbert</b>	Janine	Student Assistant
<b>Bèr</b>	Monica	Student Assistant
<b>Dürr</b>	Maren	Student Assistant
<b>Responsible</b>		
<b>Leiderer</b>	Stefan	Head of Department (DEval)

## 8.2 Evaluation matrix

**Table 6 Evaluation matrix**

Guiding question	Indicator	Data source
<b>Development cooperation of all donors</b>		
1. How do partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess donor support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?		
a. Which donors do partner-country policymakers and practitioners assess as influential in agenda setting and helpful in the implementation of policy initiatives?	Influence in agenda setting Helpfulness in implementation	2017 Listening to Leaders Survey
b. To what extent are assessments of donor support in the policy process associated with perceived progress on policy initiatives in partner countries?	Influence in agenda setting Helpfulness in implementation Progress on policy initiatives	2017 Listening to Leaders Survey
2. What factors explain differences in partner-country policymakers' and practitioners' assessments of donor support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?		
	Influence in agenda setting Helpfulness in policy implementation	2017 Listening to Leaders Survey
	Share of provided aid	OECD's CPA data portal
	Regime type	Center for Systemic Peace
	Aid fragmentation	OECD
	Partner-country support	2017 Listening to Leaders Survey
	Use of country systems	GPEDC Progress Report 2016
	Aid predictability	GPEDC Progress Report 2016
	Aid on budget	GPEDC Progress Report 2016
	Budget support	AidData's Research Release version 3.1
	Untied aid	GPEDC Progress Report 2016
	ODA from non-DAC donor	AidData Research Release version 3.1
	Aid dependency (net ODA as % of GNI)	WDI
	Donor type (bilateral versus multilateral)	2017 Listening to Leaders Survey
	Donor coordination (use of pooled funding)	CRS

Guiding question	Indicator	Data source
<b>Germany's official development cooperation</b>		
3. How do partner-country policymakers and practitioners in partner countries assess Germany's support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?		
a. What are comparative strengths and weaknesses of Germany's official development cooperation?	Influence in agenda setting Helpfulness in policy implementation	2017 Listening to Leaders Survey
b. What are comparative strengths and weaknesses of Germany's main development actors, namely German embassies, the GIZ, and the KfW?	Influence in agenda setting Helpfulness in policy implementation	2017 Listening to Leaders Survey
4. What factors explain differences in partner-country policymakers' and practitioners' assessments of Germany's support at the stages of agenda setting and policy implementation?		
	Influence in agenda setting Helpfulness in policy implementation	2017 Listening to Leaders Survey
	State fragility	Center for Systemic Peace
	Intensity of cooperation	Doc. 4
	Implementing agencies	2017 Listening to Leaders Survey
	Number of staff abroad	GIZ database, KfW database, and BMZ database
	Programme relevance	GIZ and DEval databases
	Duration of cooperation	CRS database
	Donor coordination (joint programming)	BMZ
German reforms 2011	2017 Listening to Leaders Survey	

Note. WDI = World Development Indicators, CRS = Creditor Reporting System. For details on the indicators and the empirical models, see the online Appendix.