SNRD Working Group on Gender-Transformative Approaches in Rural Development (GTA-RD)

SECTOR NETWORK
SNRD Africa

Rural Development Africa

Shaking up the status quo, shaping Gender-Transformative Change!

OUR KEY MESSAGE

Inspiring bold and intersectional rural development projects that challenge structural inequalities and gender norms to transform the lives of and with women and men.

OUR VISION

| The status quo…	The change we want to see…
Women are more severely affected by hunger. Of the 690 million people who go hungry worldwide, **60% are women** or girls[1].	If women had the same access to resources as men, agricultural yields would rise and there would be up to 150 million fewer hungry people in the world[2].
At the current rate of progress, Africa could take more than **140 years** to achieve gender parity[3].	$316 billion could be added to Africa's GDP in 2025 if all countries matched the progress towards gender equality of their best-performing neighbour[4].
Women continue to face barriers in accessing education, in addition to their wages in rural areas being up to **60%** lower than men's.	When women acquire professional skills, not only does their access to paid work improve, but also their self-confidence[5] to negotiate equal wages and to stand up for their rights.
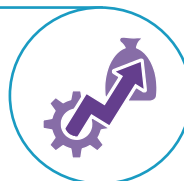
1 UN Women (2017): Op-ed: Women are pivotal to addressing hunger, malnutrition and poverty
2 FAO: Women hold the key to building a world free from hunger and poverty
3 McKinsey Global Institute : The power of parity – advancing women's equality in Africa
4 McKinsey Global Institute : The power of parity – advancing women's equality in Africa
5 UNESCO, The Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/14

What Motivates Us?

Agenda 2030 is a guiding principle for our daily work while the ambitious aim for gender equality and women's empowerment is clearly set out under Sustainable Development Goal 5: "To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."[6] Still, for too long gender equality and women's empowerment have been treated as afterthoughts or cross-cutting issues rather than the driving factors for sustainable development outcomes. There has been much talking, or window-dressing, without committed and concerted action.
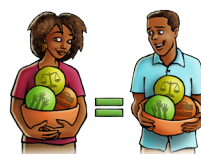
In most of our partner countries, women contribute most of the labour in any given agricultural value chain. However, they are often excluded or lack the necessary skills and resources to earn profits from the most lucrative segments. Not only is this an economic injustice, it also hinders countries from reaping the full benefits of agriculture made possible by the other half of the population in order to eradicate poverty, create jobs and to sustain growth. Undoubtedly, without a heavy emphasis on women in rural, agricultural areas,

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Gender Equality	Women's Empowerment
Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.	Women's agency to use these equal rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions.

the development agenda for social and economic growth is unlikely to succeed. Gender equality and women's empowerment are a necessity, not a "nice-to-have".

The status quo…

We need to nominate someone as Gender Focal Point.

Maybe our Junior can do it?

The change we want to see…

We noticed that our project activities only reach women.

We came up with new ideas aimed at benefitting and empowering women.

To achieve this, we need to be bold and address socio-cultural norms too!

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6 United Nations (UN), Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5
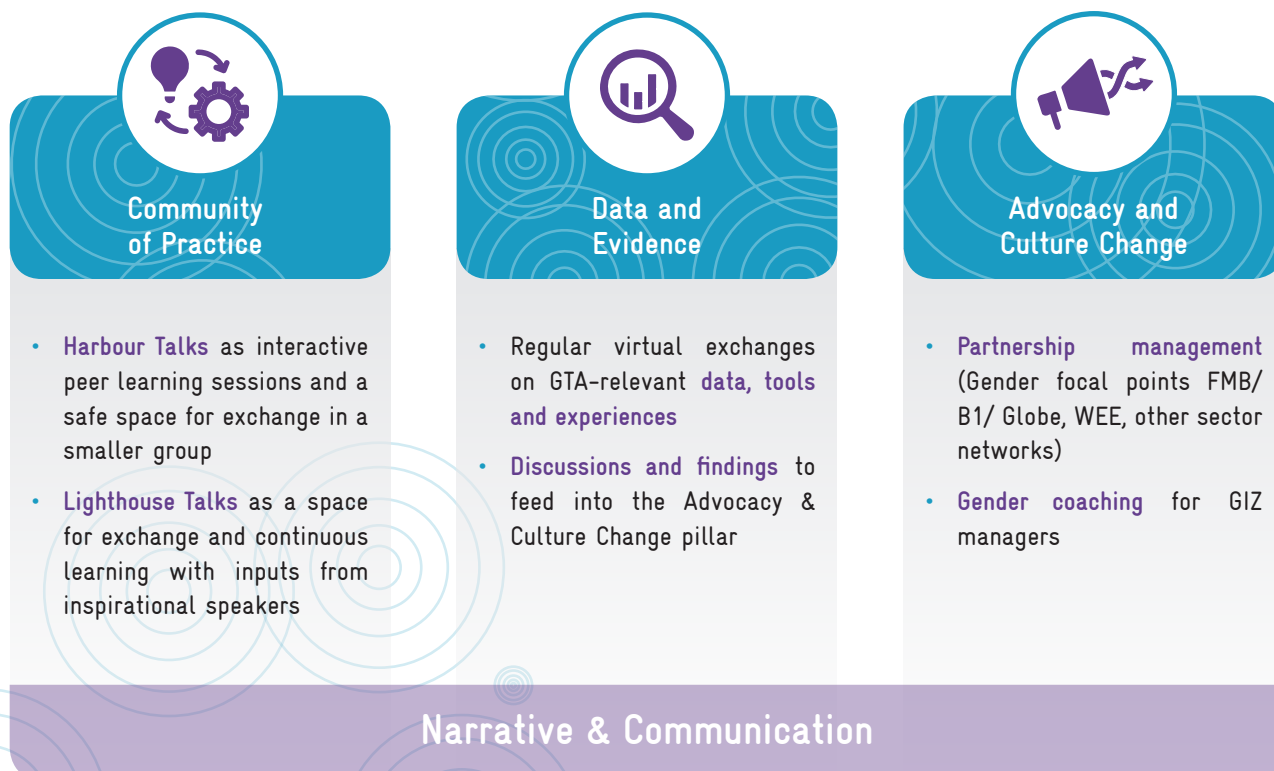
Who We Are

As part of the GIZ Sector Network for Rural Development (SNRD) Africa and the Sector Network Natural Resources and Rural Development Asia and the Pacific, the working group on Gender-Transformative Approaches in Rural Development (GTA-RD) is committed to doing things differently. We want to shake up the status quo and shape gender-transformative development outcomes by placing women at the heart of what we do. As dedicated changemakers, we work towards gender-transformative change by "addressing the structural causes of gender inequality and gender-based discrimination, including the active engagement of men and boys in challenging gender norms and stereotypes"[7].

For this purpose, the GTA-RD working group is working on three main pillars:

1. **Community of Practice (CoP):** To support our lifelong learning journey we want to facilitate exchange and stir up discussions. We offer innovative formats and aim to continuously engage our members as well as external guests. "The CoP is open to all members of the GTA-RD working group and other interested colleagues within GIZ."

2. **Data & Evidence:** To prove that our project interventions are leading to transformative change and to ensure that projects benefit from evidence-based learning. What approaches and tools have proven successful and why? What data and experiences exist that can continuously inform and improve our project strategy?

3. **Advocacy & Culture Change:** To channel insights, evidence and communication from all pillars with the aim of advocating for more emphasis on practical GTA within GIZ. The ultimate objective for us is to – yes! – inspire organisational culture change. In line with "shaking up the status quo" and doing things differently, we aim to enable more changemakers and to build strong partnership networks on GTA within GIZ and beyond through partnership management, networking aspects and more.

Community of Practice

- **Harbour Talks** as interactive peer learning sessions and a safe space for exchange in a smaller group
- **Lighthouse Talks** as a space for exchange and continuous learning with inputs from inspirational speakers

Data and Evidence

- Regular virtual exchanges on GTA-relevant **data, tools and experiences**
- **Discussions and findings** to feed into the Advocacy & Culture Change pillar

Advocacy and Culture Change

- **Partnership management** (Gender focal points FMB/ B1/ Globe, WEE, other sector networks)
- **Gender coaching** for GIZ managers

Narrative & Communication

7 European Commission, EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2184
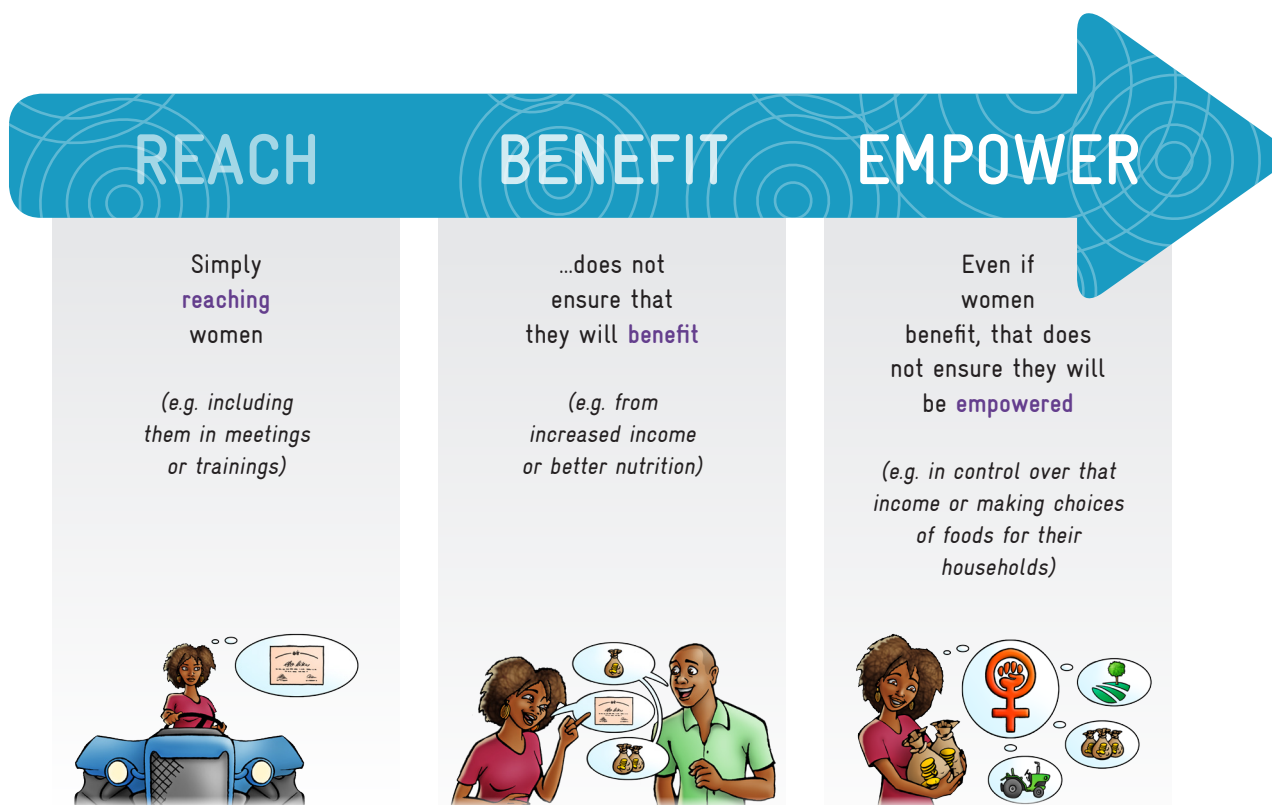
Our Vision & Approach

Rural development projects can be designed and implemented more effectively to contribute to women's equality and empowerment in a meaningful way. The project strategy should not only be informed by the explicit mentioning of gender in the results matrix or in the gender analysis, but should equally consider women's and men's realities, needs and opportunities in all project interventions. In particular, we should not shy away from challenging socio-cultural norms that hinder women's empowerment. Only reaching women is simply not enough. Our project activities need to address factors that currently disempower women (e.g. limited mobility, lack of influential group membership, over-burdening workload) for them to truly benefit from and be empowered by thoughtfully designed interventions. In doing so, our work should always follow a "do-no-harm" approach where the safety and wellbeing of the people we work with takes centre stage. We see GTA as the most meaningful and effective way to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. In order to get there, we need to change persisting narratives about women and men, including gender norms and stereotypes, and foster greater appreciation for the contribution and work done by women in agriculture, which remains socially and economically under-valued.

How do we get there?

Reach-Benefit-Empower

From the initial project planning phase, we need to ensure that activities not only reach (e.g. including women in workshops or training) but also benefit (e.g. increased income) and empower (e.g. expansion of choices and decision-making power) women. Going "beyond business as usual" means that our results matrices and indicators should track more than the basic reach level (e.g. 30% women trained). Anchoring GTA and a focus on empowerment in the initial project design is the best way to ensure commitment and success in the implementation stage. Beyond this, any project – with or without a GG2 marker – has the possibility to incorporate GTA and aim for empowerment.

REACH   BENEFIT   EMPOWER

Simply **reaching** women	...does not ensure that they will **benefit**	Even if women benefit, that does not ensure they will be **empowered**
(e.g. including them in meetings or trainings)	*(e.g. from increased income or better nutrition)*	*(e.g. in control over that income or making choices of foods for their households)*

We acknowledge the complexity of empowerment both as a concept and a goal. For us, the different levels of empowerment are best explained by four quadrants of change:

- The individual quadrant concerns personal empowerment, incl. self-belief and agency

- The relational quadrant concerns interpersonal relations, often connected to the household level, incl. power dynamics and decision-making power

- The socio-cultural quadrant concerns overcoming harmful gender norms and stereotypes

- The systemic or structural quadrant concerns an enabling environment for empowerment, incl. policy and institutional change that strengthen women's rights

All four quadrants form part of a holistic change process (i.e. gender-transformative change). This framework recognises that individual agency alone does not lead to sustainable change and that the other quadrants need to be equally addressed to achieve empowerment. Take the Reach-Benefit-Empower illustration (pg. 5 above) as an example. In the last step (Empower), the woman was able to negotiate a higher income which translates into an expansion of choices and agency. However, the woman's ability to pursue these new options (e.g. acquiring land or buying a tractor) are influenced by the other quadrants (e.g. socio-cultural norms or systemic laws that prevent land ownership). Therefore, gender-transformative approaches should take into account the four quadrants of change.

Four Quadrants of Change

Individual

Self-belief, agency

Relational

Power dynamics, decision-making

Socio - Cultural

Challenging norms and stereotypes

Systemic / Structural

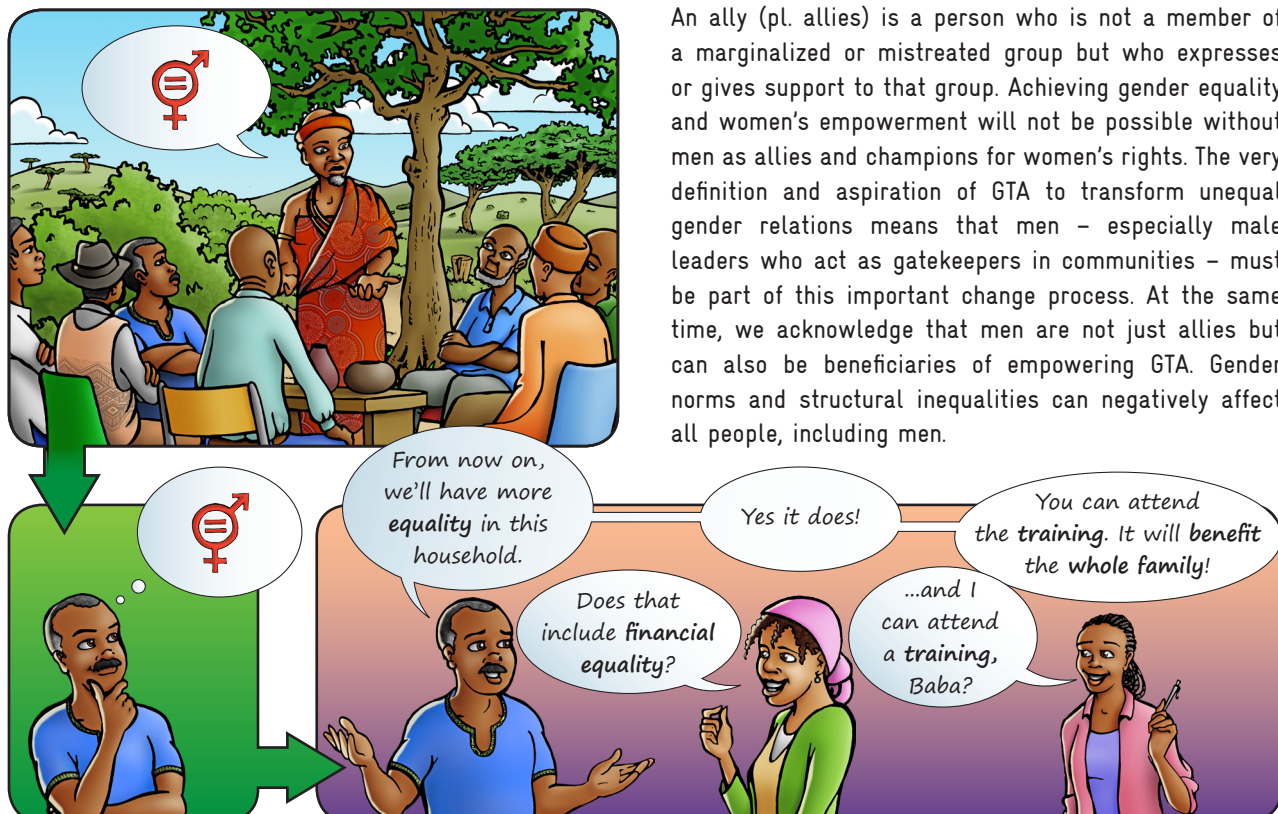Policy and institutional change, rights

Co-creation & Human-Centred Design

"Design for Her" is a widely cited principle in gender-sensitive development programming. Interventions that are intentionally designed to address women's realities and concerns to reach and benefit them are both necessary and commendable. However, what if we could go a step further and "design with her and him"? Co-creative and human-centred design aims to meaningfully engage those who will be impacted by our project activities from the very start of the process, and this includes men and boys. Co-creation honours different insights, especially the lived experience of the people we work with, thereby honouring local expertise and taking intersectionality into account.


Working with men as allies

An ally (pl. allies) is a person who is not a member of a marginalized or mistreated group but who expresses or gives support to that group. Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment will not be possible without men as allies and champions for women's rights. The very definition and aspiration of GTA to transform unequal gender relations means that men – especially male leaders who act as gatekeepers in communities – must be part of this important change process. At the same time, we acknowledge that men are not just allies but can also be beneficiaries of empowering GTA. Gender norms and structural inequalities can negatively affect all people, including men.

Evidence-based learning

All our projects should ideally follow a human-centred design approach that is informed by the lived experience and local expertise of the people who have the best context knowledge and understanding of what is needed. In the same vein, we believe that all our work should follow an evidence-based learning approach. What has proven successful and why? What data and experiences exist that can continuously inform and improve our project strategy? As GTA advocates in rural development, we must continuously monitor and evaluate if what we do is truly effective in working towards empowerment. In addition, we should be guided by the best available data and evidence.
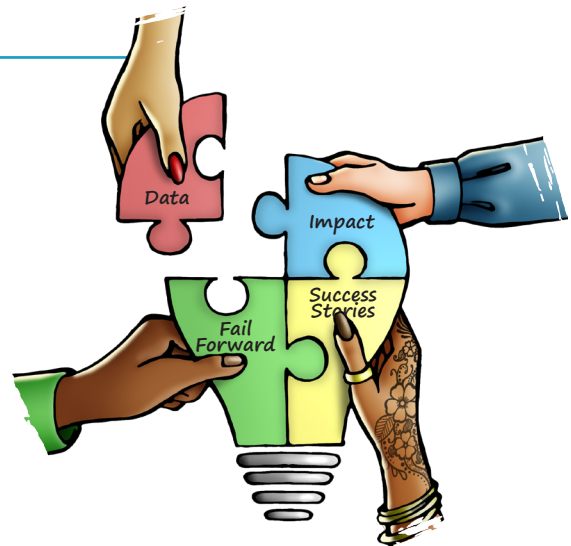

From critical thinking to action

Moving away from the status quo can mean discomfort. The role of a changemaker, who challenges established norms and structures, requires critical thinking: the process of actively analysing and evaluating circumstances to guide appropriate action. Our working group builds on work that has been done in this regard, primarily Black Feminist Thought from the 1980s (i.e. Crenshaw, Lorde). A leading example is "intersectionality" as a framework that sees inequalities are seldom the result of a single factor (e.g. race, class, gender, sexual orientation), but rather the outcome of intersections of different social locations, power relations and experiences. American law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term in 1989 as a result of working on legal cases that saw Black women exposed to a different set of structural inequalities than White women. Since then, intersectional feminism[8] has become a guiding principle for gender equality and

women's empowerment, reminding us that the realities and voices of Black, Indigenous and Women of Colour were too often left out in the fight for women's rights and – most importantly for us - international development efforts.

Aside from intersectional feminist thought, our critical thinking also includes applying an anti- or de-colonialist lens. We recognise the colonial history and legacy in the contexts we work in. Critically analysing and addressing inequalities that persist because of this colonial history is an important part in "decolonialising development". This also includes acknowledging Europe's responsibility in shaping gendered norms (i.e. the violent enforcement of the gender binary in Colonial India or Colonial Nigeria[9]) and to value critical thinking as a first step, to then follow up with action.
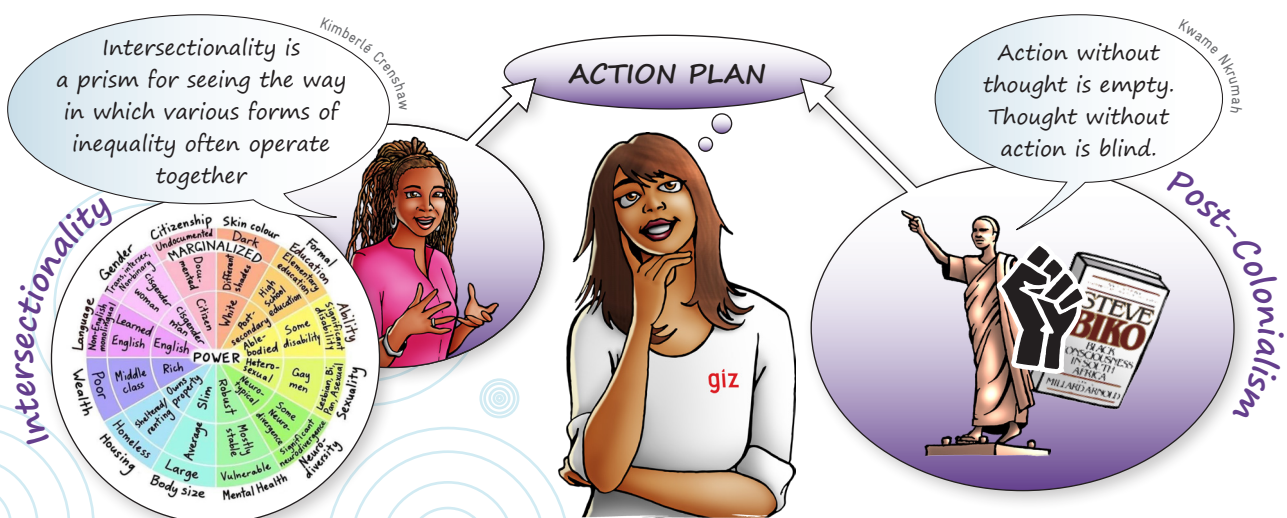
8 UN Women (2020): Intersectional feminism: what it means and why it matters right now
9 Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí (1997): The Invention of Women – Making an African sense of western Gender discourses + "Governing Gender and Sexuality in Colonial India", 2019, Jessica Hinchy

Conclusion

Our Gender-Transformative Approach

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

5 GENDER EQUALITY

Gender Equality
Women's Empowerment

Gender-Transformative Approaches

SNRD GTA-RD

Reach-Benefit-Empower

Co-creation and Human-Centred Design

Men and Boys as Allies

Evidence-based Learning

From Critical Thinking to Action

ACTION PLAN

Want to learn more or join us in our mission?

Get in touch with the SNRD GTA-RD Working Group!

Email: gta@giz.de