

# Learning Module 4: Localizing the SDGs through Decentralized Cooperation

# Learning Module 4: Localizing the SDGs through Decentralized Cooperation

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The Trainer's Guide



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Sverige

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# Presentation

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) establish a series of bold, yet essential, targets to be achieved by 2030, which combine social inclusion, economic development and sustainability. For local and regional governments (LRGs), the SDGs form a transformative Agenda that strives to: improve the delivery of public services to citizens; enhance peoples' engagement in public policy-making by breaking down dividing walls between different policy areas; and foster connections with, and between, different stakeholders.

LRGs must deal with the vast majority of today's most pressing challenges. These include: climate change, environmental pollution, social segregation and demographic change, waste management, energy efficiency, and local economic development. Equally importantly, all the SDGs have a territorial dimension. In fact, according to various studies, two thirds of these goals cannot be achieved without the direct involvement of local and regional government organizations.

Collaboration with, and between, cities and regions across the globe has produced positive results in terms of the development of efficient and responsive territorial policies. In addition, city-to-city and region-to-region initiatives, which are also referred to as decentralized cooperation, present new opportunities for achieving the 2030 Agenda. Decentralized cooperation (DC) forms an essential part of the modern process of the internationalization of cities. It is one of the main reasons why cities and regions search for good practices and solutions in the international arena, with which to solve their own domestic challenges.

Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, DC has been developed and improved. This has been achieved through collaborations between national associations of cities and local government organizations and by the implementation of local and regional government Agendas worldwide. DC aims to directly support local development, decentralization processes, and institutional reinforcement, among others. Thereby, it seeks to improve the designing of territorial public policy. DC has also been shown to offer specific advantages for local and territorial development and a key way to achieve the localization and implementation of the SDGs.

DC has also attracted increasing attention from international organizations. The European Commission has been supporting and co-financing DC for decades. Two OECD research projects (both launched in 2018) have analyzed the variety of decentralized cooperation practices, models and instruments and have highlighted their strengths and potential for responding to the challenges implicit in the 2030 Agenda. The pan-European coalition PLATFORMA<sup>i</sup> has also underlined the diversity and relevance of decentralized cooperation as a key strategy towards achieving more efficient and more sustainable development. Recent research commissioned by UCLG's Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group<sup>ii</sup> concluded that, if properly organized and reshaped, decentralized cooperation could serve as a powerful lever for bringing about the kind of transformation in public policy required by the 2030 Agenda.

Indeed, the SDGs provide a common language through which LRGs can work together across the world. The benefits for international cooperation are multiple. Firstly, SDGs can help to revitalise existing partnerships by providing a new, modern look at how different organizations can work together on projects, based on common objectives. They also offer a common entry point for creating new cooperation partnerships and/or exchanges of knowledge between LRGs. This can help to improve their capacities to design and implement public policy in line with the 2030 Agenda and its global development dimension. As underlined in SDG 17 (Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development), partnerships and cooperation are central to the elaboration and implementation of strategies for localizing the SDGs.

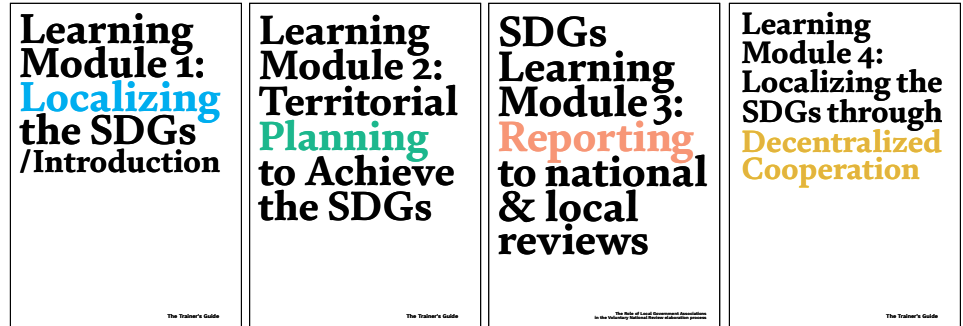
UCLG has joined forces with PLATFORMA to create the present training Module on how to link decentralized cooperation to the SDGs. This is the fourth UCLG Learning Module. As a global network of local and regional government organizations, UCLG is committed to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It does this by supporting its members, following the SDG localization processes and developing learning materials to train trainers and thereby: raise local awareness of SDGs (*Module 1*); aid local planning towards achieving the SDGs (*Module 2*), and; reporting on local processes involving the localization of the SDGs (*Module 3*). Together with its partners (UN-Habitat, UNDP-Art and the Barcelona Provincial Government), UCLG has successfully shown that the most effective way to promote the SDGs is to initiate and help anchor the localization process at the local and regional levels, integrating these efforts for the pursuit of global Agendas. This Module is therefore based on the interactive learning experiences previously offered by UCLG Modules 1, 2 and 3, on the Localization of the SDGs.

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<sup>i</sup> PLATFORMA is the Pan-European coalition of towns and regions involved in national, EU and global associations. The organization is proud to be a partner in this training initiative as it is very active in city-to-city and region-to-region cooperation to foster development.

<sup>ii</sup> The Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is a technical platform for professionals from Local Government Associations (LGAs) and individual local government organizations that are active in the field of capacity development and promoting greater cooperation between local government organizations.

## UCLG's Learning Modules on localizing the SDGs



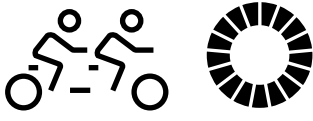
Before starting to use this Trainer's Guide we recommend you to read a set of important texts laid out at the beginning of each chapter.

### Module Objective and Methodology

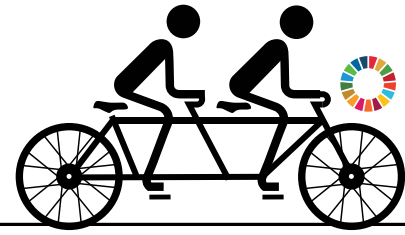
The main objective of this Module is to facilitate the training of trainers on SDG localization and decentralized cooperation (DC). It builds on the realities of local governments, associations and organizations that work in decentralized cooperation, considering their experiences, challenges and best practices. The Module serves as a didactic guide and learning tool for the training of new trainers, proposing a new, integrated approach to DC, in line with the framework, principles and targets of the SDGs.

The Module also provides a base for conducting learning events, such as workshops in which city officials, local and regional leaders and other stakeholders are trained on the topic and made more aware of the central role that DC can have for LRGs and their respective associations. The intention is that, after attending a workshop, participants should be able to run their own workshops, as a result of applying the "training of trainer" approach.

Learning activities can be based on the whole document, or they can be modular, and based on individual chapters. For a better understanding, the different chapters, lectures and expected outcomes are explained using the analogy of a bicycle to conceptualise the transformative nature of DC, drawing comparisons with a bicycle's structure and parts and identifying the best way that they can be set and used in harmony to achieve the SDGs.

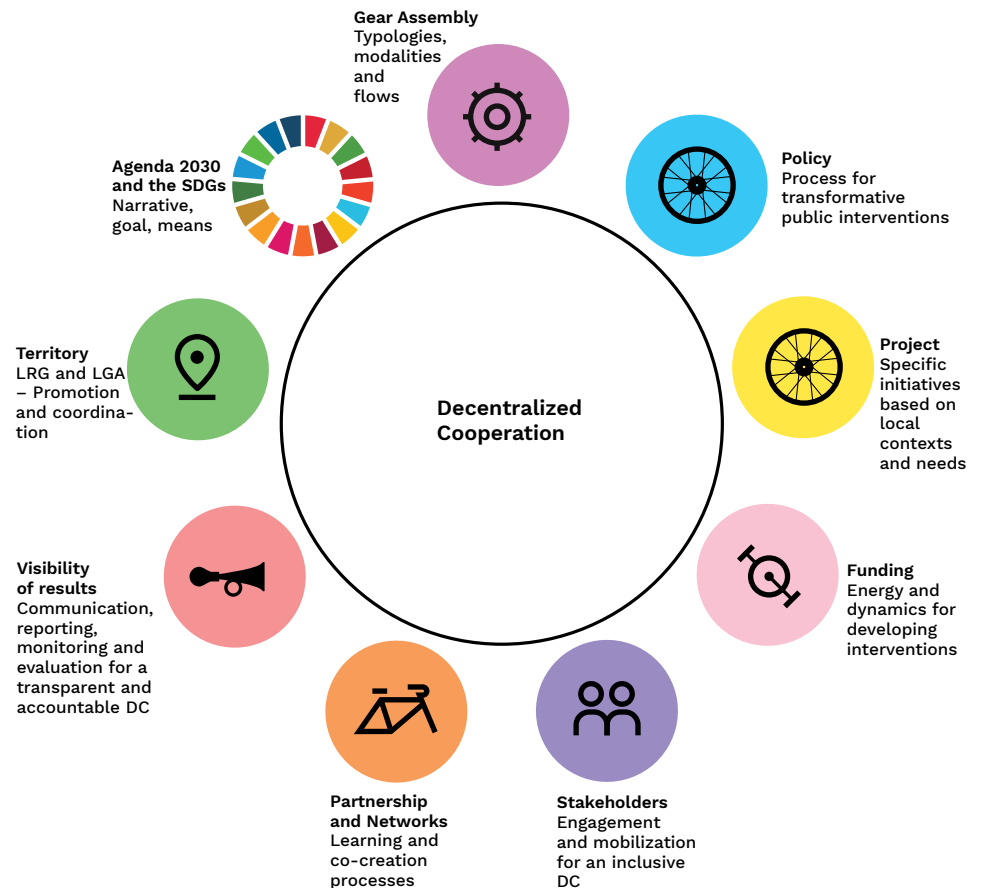


## Module's Logic



### Decentralized cooperation for the SDGs

A bicycle and its components will be used as a methodological tool to exemplify the different variables and interconnections needed for transformative decentralized cooperation for the SDGs.



Source: UCLG Learning Team 2020

### Target audience

The training program is aimed at LRGs and LRG associations (LRGAs), at the political and technical levels. It is also for other actors involved in local governance, who will be able to replicate this training with representatives from LRGs (representatives of states, international organizations and civil society organizations). Whenever possible, interested non-governmental stakeholders will also be included in the training sessions. These will include representatives of the private sector, civil society and academia.

It is important to note that the main focus will be on strategic, integrated, non-sectoral development plans with a local or regional scope. Participants should have a sound knowledge and understanding of local government processes, related to cities or other administrative levels. The Module is specifically designed to stimulate reflection on how the key principles of the 2030

















Agenda can help to improve local planning processes. It is not a guide for how to conduct local development planning in each and every context.

### What can you expect?

The following Module will allow you to understand and transform decentralized cooperation (DC) in the light of, and working towards, the SDGs. In Chapter 1, you will discover what DC is about, why it is important, and who is behind it. Chapter 2 examines the opportunities and challenges presented by the Agenda relating to financing development, the 2030 Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Chapter 3 focuses on putting DC into practice, and gives examples of different typologies, modalities and flows. Chapter 4 has a more “hands-on” approach, providing instructions on how to formulate a DC policy, design DC projects, and mobilize funds. Chapter 5 focuses on the particular relevance of SDG 17, providing an overview of how relevant stakeholders, networks, and international organizations can contribute to achieving the SDGs through multi-stakeholder territorial partnerships. Finally, the last chapter looks at the need for better communications, reporting and information and the monitoring and evaluation of DC initiatives. It also stresses the importance of doing this with a particular focus on local citizens.

## Module 4 Localizing the SDGs through Decentralized Cooperation

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>What</b> is Decentralized Cooperation?	
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Why</b> is Decentralized Cooperation important for the LRG Global Policy Agenda	 
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>How</b> does Decentralized Cooperation work in practice?	 
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>How</b> can we design Decentralized Cooperation in line with the SDGs? A step by step approach	  
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Who</b> are we doing it with? SDG 17: Mobilizing territorial partnerships	  
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Who</b> is Decentralized Cooperation aimed at? Communicating, reporting, monitoring and evaluating DC	  

### Technical information

The optimum group size for a training session based on this methodology is between 25-30 people for face-to-face training and 15-20 people for virtual training. For bigger groups, we strongly recommend having two or more trainers, especially for the exercises that require moderation.

For face-to-face training, the space where you will run the training session should be equipped with a projector, Wi-Fi (to play videos) and a flipchart. It should have movable chairs and tables so that you can easily rearrange the room for exercises. This will also allow the participants to sit and then move around according to the needs of each task. Having boards, or at least wall space, to display cards is also important. This will also facilitate the learning process if the training session involves people being physically present in the classroom.

For *virtual training*, in order to properly conduct the training session, you would need to use the Zoom and Mural platforms. Ensuring that trainers and participants have good access to cameras, microphones or head-sets can greatly enhance the training and learning experience for everyone.

### Iconography

Throughout the Trainer's Guide, you will see a series of icons. These are usually displayed in the left-hand margin. This will help you to find information more easily as you work through the different Chapters. The learning materials are divided into two general categories: lectures and exercises. These are identified with the following icons:



**Lecture**



**Exercise**

Every lecture and each exercise is accompanied by additional icons. As well as these icons, in the left-hand margin, you will also find tips and information as to whether any previous preparation or materials are needed, such as printing, or cutting materials etc.



**Time**

the estimated time required



**Slides**

slides available



**Resources**

resources required, such as publications, videos etc.



**Handout**

which handouts should be used



**Online training**

resources for virtual version

Below each section you will find additional resources such as links to useful publications, videos and websites.

## **Complementary materials**

**This Trainer's Guide is accompanied by complementary materials:**

**An initial survey** that you will have to give to the participants of the training session in order to get an overview of their existing knowledge of the SDGs and the localizing process. Based on the results, you will decide whether a more in-depth introduction to the SDGs is required or if you can go straight to the contents of this Module.

**A presentation** with a visual support for training based on the Trainer's Guide, highlighting the key information and graphics. The presentation is available in PowerPoint format and can be easily adjusted to meet the needs of each learning situation.

**Handouts** for the participants, which will include exercises, key information, and summaries of the different Modules etc.

Every exercise or lecture in the Trainer's Guide is accompanied by additional the information, in the margin, which indicates the corresponding slides and hand-outs. When preparing your learning sessions, bear in mind that the handouts will need to be printed in advance.

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## **Glossary**

**CEMR** – Council of European Municipalities and Regions

**CIB Working Group** – Capacity and Institution Building Working Group

**CSO** – Civil Society Organization

**C2C** – City to City Cooperation

**DC** – Decentralized Cooperation

**DDC** – Decentralized Development Cooperation

**EU** – European Union

**LG** – Local Government

**LRG** – Local and Regional Government

**LGA** – Local Government Association

**NGOs** – Non-Governmental Organizations

**ODA** – Official Development Assistance

**OECD** – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**SCI** – Sister Cities International

**SDGs** – Sustainable Development Goals

**SMEs** – Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

**UCLG** – United Cities and Local Governments

**UN** – United Nations

**UNDRR** – United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

**UTO** – United Town Organization

**VLR** – Voluntary Local Review

**VNR** – Voluntary National Review

**WWII** – World War II

# Chapter 1: What is Decentralized Cooperation?

## Learning outcome

- A basic understanding of the complexities of Decentralized Cooperation.

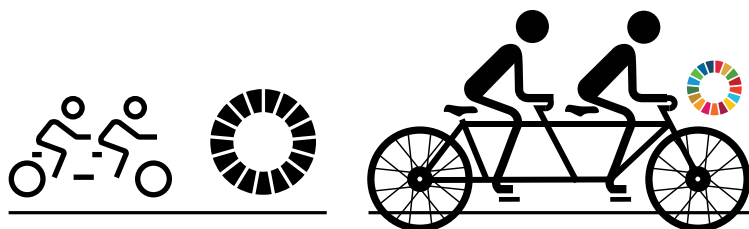
## Trainer's insights

Each of the chapters in this Module deals with one key question. In this opening session, we begin by asking the question: “what is decentralized cooperation?” (hereafter, DC)

Here, we unpack this complex concept, which has no single definition accepted by all academics and practitioners. For the purposes of this training session, and so that we are all on the same page, we understand DC as the development cooperation that takes place between local and regional governments (LRGs) and their associations (LRGAs) to mutually reinforce their capacities and to involve economic and social actors at the local and regional levels in development processes and interventions. This action to address development challenges often works across local, regional and even international borders.

In this introductory session, we will explore the main principles that underpin DC and reinforce this learning through a practical exercise. We shall then go on to examine the legislative imperatives, history and evolution of DC, before sharing the contemporary transformative conceptualisation of DC and of its role in furthering the Agenda for global sustainability.

In terms of our bicycle analogy, this chapter focuses on explaining different interactions with LRGs and LRGAs as promoters and coordinators of DC.



## WHAT is Decentralized Cooperation?

We emphasize that DC takes different forms in different settings and that each local and regional government (hereafter, LRG) has its own approach(es) to using DC as a mechanism for localizing the 2030 Agenda. It is therefore also important for trainers to familiarize themselves with different local contexts and localization efforts. Localization is understood as the strengthening and enabling of an environment for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda goals and its targets at the local and regional levels.

This training guide has drawn upon innumerable references from the vast literature on DC. It is recommended that trainers should read the following before giving this course.



### Some documents that will help trainers to contextualize the course:

- ↳ PLATFORMA Study: *“Decentralized cooperation to achieve the 2030 Agenda: Towards a new generation of multi-stakeholder partnerships”*
- ↳ PLATFORMA Study: *“How local and regional government associations bring the SDGs to life”*
- ↳ OECD Study: *“Reshaping Decentralized Development Co-operation: The Key Role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda”*
- ↳ OECD Report: *“Decentralized development co-operation, Unlocking the potential of cities and regions”*
- ↳ UCLG Study: *“City to City a guide to UCLG Learning universe”*

- ↳ UCLG-CIB: *“Policy paper on Aid effectiveness”*
- ↳ UCLG-CIB Study: *‘Work in progress - Three years down the road. An overview of CIB member’s strategies towards implementation of the SDGs’*
- ↳ UCGL –Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD V): *‘The Localization of the Global Agendas’*
- ↳ UCLG-CIB Report: *“The SDGs and Decentralized Cooperation”* PLATFORMA VNG publication: *“A concise overview: how EU Member States’ national and regional programs support local governments’ development activities in partner countries”*
- ↳ VNG publication: *‘The SDGs: Global commitment, International Cooperation, Local Action’*



### Exercise



15 min

## Introductory exercise

### Learning outcomes

- Presentation of the participants.
- Creation of a more participative environment.
- A quick assessment of participants’ existing awareness of decentralized cooperation.

It is always a good idea to begin a training session with a round of introductions. This helps the trainer to create a more participative environment and to build trust within the group. As the training is designed for groups of up to 30 participants, we recommend the following ice-breaker:

### Exercise instructions

1. Participants can “break the ice” by each introducing themselves and the city they are from, or where they currently are based. Everyone is thanked for their participation. As a link with the introductory lecture, each person is then asked to write one word, or phrase, on a piece of card that best captures the essence of decentralized cooperation for them. Examples could include: “knowledge-sharing”, “technical exchanges” or “global solidarity”.
2. All the cards (including your own) are then collected and placed on a board at the front of the room. The cards and ideas can be grouped together to get a general idea of what the group initially understands as “decentralized cooperation” before doing the training course. It is always a good idea to take a photograph of this mosaic for learning and documentation purposes.
3. For a virtual scenario, we recommend using options such as Mentimeter or using the same methodology as the cards and setting the Zooms options in a gallery view once all the cards are displayed. Alternatively, facilitators can make use of a tool such as Mural for this exercise. For this purpose, UCLG Learning has prepared a Mural template with two sections: on the left, a world map, where participants can write their name and city and add it to the map; and on the right, a board where participants can add their word or phrase which best captures the essence of DC, as described above. The template can be requested at [learning@uclg.org](mailto:learning@uclg.org).



## Lecture 1.1



15 min

## Unpacking decentralized cooperation



### What exactly is decentralized cooperation?

At the outset, it is important to note that the terms “decentralized development cooperation” (DDC) and “decentralized cooperation” (DC) tend to be used interchangeably. Furthermore, reading the main literature on DC reveals that there is little consensus among practitioners and academics as to the exact definition of this elusive term. In fact, only seven of the 28 EU countries have an official definition of DC<sup>1</sup>. American federal states, for instance, are not allowed to enter into treaties, alliances or agreements with foreign powers. They can, and do, however, regularly engage in development and co-operation initiatives in collaboration with foreign nations.<sup>2</sup>

Historically speaking, DC has been understood as a way of cooperating together to promote economic development that is managed by actors that are not central governments. These cooperating parties may include representatives of civil society, local governments, and universities, amongst others.<sup>3</sup> Most of the current literature envisages DC as partnerships involving peer LRGs and/or their associations for the purpose of providing development-related services that spread across borders.<sup>4</sup> It must be underlined that there are diverging views as to whether DC only refers to development cooperation between local and/or regional-level authorities and partners in participating countries or if it can be extended to also include partnerships with other non-local authority actors. Following a comprehensive survey, the OECD found that, in practice, most countries combine several modalities and seldom rely on only city-to-city or region-to-region DDC.<sup>5</sup>

More recently, increasing emphasis has been placed on strengthening and enhancing the institutional and operational capacities of sub-national administrations and their ability to mobilize key economic and social actors, such as civil society, the private sector (and particularly SMEs), cultural institutions, universities, research centres, and other public bodies. A useful working definition that captures this idea, and which we have used for this training session, would be:



Decentralized cooperation is development cooperation between LRGs and their associations acting across borders to mutually reinforce their capacities and to involve economic and social actors at local and regional level to address development challenges.

**What are the main shared principles that underpin decentralized cooperation?**

Given the complexity of conceptualizing DC, it is useful to take into consideration some shared principles that best define most of the decentralized cooperation that is currently underway. Here, we present five of the most important principles highlighted in the UCLG-CIB Report on the SDGs and Decentralized Cooperation (2020)<sup>6</sup>:

**Table 1.1. Principles of Decentralized Cooperation**

1. Reciprocity and horizontal relations	Relationships between partners in DC are horizontal and mutually beneficial. They are different from the more typical donor-recipient relationships. There is symmetry and respect between DC partners.
2. Proximity and participations	Unlike states, LRGs and their stakeholders are well placed to address the challenges inherent to DC. As they are closer to the communities involved, it is usually easier for them to find appropriate solutions. This can be achieved through dialogue with local actors and through participatory processes.
3. Multi-stakeholder, multi-level geographical governance	The longer-term aim of DC is to improve local governance by mobilizing the respective local authorities and stakeholders. DC processes can foster collaboration and encourage joint decision-making involving non-state actors.
4. Geographical alliance based on exchange and mutual learning	Unlike conventional state-driven cooperation, DC is based on partnerships between decentralized government agencies in countries from both the North and South. Such alliances call for shared political agendas, goals and results obtained.
5. Greater possibilities for solidarity	Unlike typical state-driven cooperation, DC experiences tend to be subject to fewer diplomatic and/or trade-type limitations and constraints.

Source: UCLG-CIB (2020)

**From these principles, we have tried to summarize why many LRGs engage in decentralized cooperation:**

- To promote solidarity, peace and goodwill.
- To learn from and improve local practices.
- To strengthen the capacities of local staff and professionals.
- To improve local and regional public policy.
- To initiate innovative projects.
- To ultimately improve local public services and the living standards of local citizens.

As explained in Chapter 5, DC involves a wide range of critical stakeholders that include more than just local and regional government bodies. The private sector, academia, civil society organizations, other spheres and levels of government, other agencies and networks, and also international multilateral organizations, all play a key role in shaping the final outcomes.



**Exercise 1.1**



**15 min**



**Handout 1.1**

### Principles underpinning decentralized cooperation

In order to reinforce learning relating to the five core principles underpinning DC, it is recommended to organize the following short, group exercise:

1. The trainer divides the participants into groups of five.
2. Each group is provided with five cards, which are placed face down on the table.
3. The first participant chooses a card and starts to explain the Principle of Decentralized Cooperation, but without mentioning it by name, or any of the other three “forbidden words” that appear on the card. If the participant uses any of the forbidden words, the card is excluded from the game and their turn is over.
4. The rest of the group has 30 seconds to guess the word on the card.
5. When the group has guessed the word, or runs out of time, the next participant takes a new card. The game ends when all the cards have been used, even if the participants have not managed to guess all of the words.
6. To finish the exercise, the trainer asks all the groups how many of the DC Principles they were able to guess.

#### Requirements for the exercise

Handout 1.1 should be given to each group of five and it will be necessary to cut out five cards for the game.

#### Requirements for online training

1. The trainer creates Zoom Breakout Rooms with five participants per room.
2. The trainer sends one card to each of the five participants before the exercise starts. The cards for virtual training are available upon request at [learning@uclg.org](mailto:learning@uclg.org).
3. The rest of the steps follow the offline version of the exercise, explained above.



**Online Training**



**Lecture 1.2**



**15 min**

### What is the legislative framework that guides decentralized cooperation?

While each country regulates DC in accordance with its own internal legal structure and rules, certain common trends have been identified.<sup>7</sup> Firstly, a relatively small number of countries have drawn up very specific legal instruments to regulate the international action of their respective local and regional government organizations. France and Ecuador, for example, have created highly-innovative, tailor-made legal tools to help finance DDC. Some European countries with federal, or semi-federal, legal systems have also in-

stituted regional laws governing international cooperation. Examples of this would include Belgium and Italy. It is clear that numerous permutations are possible.

<p>Countries that have crafted specific legal instruments to regulate the international action of their local and regional governments (France and Ecuador /Belgium and Italy/ Brazil)</p>	<p>Countries that opted to facilitate decentralized cross-border activities through“international legislative package” (Spain and Mexico)</p>
<p>Countries that acknowledge DC in legislation that deals with the territorial organization of the State (Morocco and Ecuador)</p>	<p>Countries that do not provide any legal framework to govern DC but accept and support DC, employing a range of legal modalities (Association of Netherlands Municipalities -VNG)</p>

A second group of countries have opted not to use internal legal structures, but instead to facilitate decentralized cross-border activities via legislation that covers the international development and cooperation policy of their respective national governments; in other words, they can make use of an “international legislative package”. This applies in the cases of Spain and Mexico. It is interesting to note, at this point, that some of Spain’s local government organizations invest 0.7% of their budget in DC.

A third group of countries acknowledge DC in legislation relating to the territorial organization of their own state. For example, has a Municipal Charter that enshrines the rights of municipalities to establish DC agreements. This must be done, however, under the 'tutelage' of the country’s central government. Another interesting case is Ecuador, where local governments have delegated authority to manage international cooperation, according to the country’s Constitution (Article 264, paragraph 14).

The fourth, and largest, group of countries does not provide any legal framework to govern DC. It must, at the same time, be noted, however, that these countries accept, and indeed even actively support, DC and use a range of different legal formulas to pursue it. A good example of this is provided by The Netherlands, a global reference for its strong and efficient system of coordination between the country’s Central Government and VNG International, the international cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG).

In summary, it is clear that just as there is no single definition for DC, there is also a great variety of ways in which cooperation is legislatively governed from country to country. We shall now look at how DC originated and, more importantly, how it evolved from its early post-WWII beginnings to its current dynamic and context-specific iteration.



Lecture 1.3

15 min

## The evolution of decentralized cooperation

### Learning outcome

- Appreciation of the long history of DC and how it has evolved over the years.

The history of DC is long and interesting and it highlights the increasing importance of LRGs on the world stage. A knowledge of this history is NOT, however, important for training purposes. Having gained an insight into what DC involves, in this next learning session, it is enough to acknowledge its evolution and the importance that it has assumed in global development today. This lecture is particularly important as it presents a proposal for the current SDG-linked DC framework and suggests a methodological approach adopted in this Module.

### The evolution of DC: From North-South to horizontal partnerships

One of the earliest forms of DC was municipal twinning, whose origins can be traced back to the reconstruction of Europe following WWII. At that time, it was employed to promote peace and unity, to develop inter-cultural ties, to promote international solidarity, and to build institutional capacity<sup>8</sup>. It seems that many Western European municipalities also used twinning to establish partnerships with local authorities in developing countries during the decolonisation period.

In the 1960s, a partnership model of “cooperation twinning” was developed between cities in the global North and South. It is relevant to note that during this early phase, networks of cities and regions, such as the United Towns Organization (UTO), the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and Sister Cities International (SCI) were instrumental in promoting twinning<sup>9</sup>. One key milestone on the DC timeline was the UN General Assembly’s recognition of municipal twinning as a tool for international cooperation, in 1971.

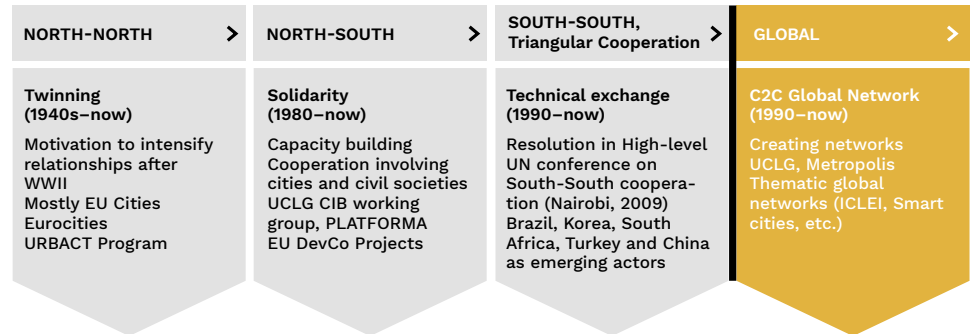
DC slowly evolved from bilateral municipal twinning to more complex multi-stakeholder partnerships and networks. It was first popularized at the European Union’s Lomé Convention, in 1990, and reinforced town twinning in order to promote better development strategies.

UNCED’s 1992 Rio Conference provided global recognition of the role of LRGs as agents of development in their own right and resulted in many countries subsequently decentralizing development-related responsibilities to municipalities, thus further facilitating the promotion of city-to-city exchanges.

The 1996 UN-Habitat City Summit in Istanbul, the 2001 Istanbul + 5 Summit and the 2002 Summit on Sustainable Development, focused on horizontal cooperation and are clear examples of the important efforts made by the UN and allies to constitute what Campbell (2012) terms an “international institutionalization and endorsement of municipalities’ active participation in local urban development”.

Perhaps the most significant of all the meetings, however, will remain the Istanbul Summit of 1996, as it was there that the creation of UCLG was conceived, along with its future role of providing a single voice for cities and their associations and it being authorized to speak at the UN.

**Figure 1.1. The evolution of City-to-City cooperation.**



Source: Adapted from UCLG (2016:9)

Over time, more subnational actors (such as public authorities and agencies) joined their city counterparts to expand these partnerships, not only in terms of the number of participants but also in terms of their sectoral focus.<sup>10</sup> The nature of these partnerships then evolved to produce “complex partnerships fostering reciprocal cultural, educational, municipal business, professional and technical exchanges and projects”.<sup>11</sup> This set the stage for the emergence of new forms of DC and marked a move away from the binary notions of North-South, rich-poor, donor-recipient relations.

As practitioners of DC, it is important for us to understand the reasons for its adoption. To help explain its role in DC, the United Nations emphasizes how DC has evolved from what were essentially a series of relationships based on the promotion of friendship, peace, and solidarity, twinning, and sister city arrangements to “complex partnerships fostering reciprocal cultural, educational, municipal business, professional and technical exchanges and projects”<sup>12</sup>.

It should be noted that against a backdrop of efforts to improve the impact of Official Development Aid (hereafter, ODA), these transnational bonds would later assume the additional role of serving as mechanisms by which Western donors could deliver development assistance to countries in the South; this effectively gave rise to the concept of decentralized cooperation (DC).

It is important to know this history because according to the OECD, the first of the two main driving forces behind DC was the need for more effective ODA flows with a greater impact. This was particularly relevant in more fragile contexts where obtaining the cooperation of central governments was more of a challenge.

Within this context, DC was seen as a source of external development finance, provided by subnational levels of government, to support partner countries. In 2008, for example, the European Commission used the concept of DDC ‘to describe the publicly and privately funded aid provided by, and through, local authorities, networks and other local actors. It therefore used the term to refer to aid provided by local authorities and civil society actors<sup>13</sup>.

**Figure 1.2. The evolution of the different modalities of DC.**



Adapted from UCLG (2016:15)

More than being a mechanism for transferring funding, the second important driving force behind DC, and the one that we shall focus on here, was the emergence of LRGs as important, and highly relevant, players in international relations.

The international community increasingly recognized the clear comparative advantages that LRGs had for promoting effective development cooperation, and particularly so when non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or national development agencies were involved.

LRGs are often better placed than national governments, when it comes to performing these functions, as they are closer to the ground and have more know-how and expertise relating to local development, service delivery, planning and community engagement<sup>14</sup>.

More recently, as part of the evolution of DC, there has been a gradual shift from North-South and donor-recipient relations to a more partnership-based approach, with the strengthening and enhancing of institutional and operational capacities. More and more emphasis is now being placed on the non-ODA component of DDC and, most notably, on peer-to-peer teaching and learning involving local and regional government organizations.

As practitioners, it is important to note that the DC approach is more inclusive than other forms of development aid. It includes LRGs in the Global South and is more expansive than traditional approaches, adopting new concepts and principles of development cooperation, such as the notion of development effectiveness as opposed to aid effectiveness<sup>15</sup>.

This latest form of DC is exciting as it breaks with the old notions of North-South and rich-poor to facilitate innovative (tangible and intangible) exchanges between territories, based on the concept of co-development.<sup>16</sup> Please note that some examples of good practices involving lateral exchange are included in Chapter 3.

Here, it is important to stress that the evolution of DC has promoted the emergence of non-financial peer-to-peer partnerships that foster peer-to-peer learning activities and exchanges of experiences and best practices amongst partners.

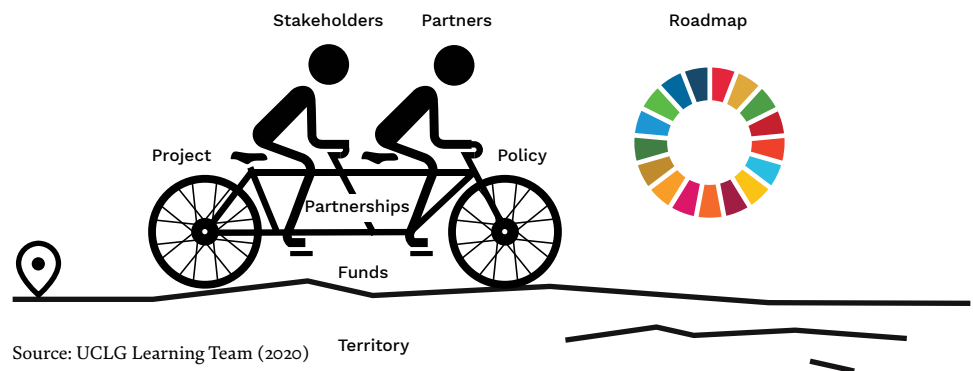
### **The transformative nature of DC: Aligning with and activating the SDGs**

DC has evolved, adapting itself better to new development narratives and dynamics. Nowadays, the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs have become DC's key roadmap and it is used to mobilize many stakeholders and to strengthen the channels that they use to liaise, connect, communicate and coordinate to make DC actions and efforts more meaningful and lasting.

The new development Agenda has also provided a new opportunity for LRGs to renew their political commitment to development and the way in which they plan, work, implement and report their DC strategies. In this way, DC has become a process that is not just project-centered, but designed and linked to developing and/or informing society about a public policy framework for international cooperation. This process, which is supported and sustained by strong networks and partnerships, fosters learning and co-creation and contributes to the configuration of a transformative form of DC that promotes sustainable development.

**Figure 1.4. The Global Agenda on the move.**

Logic for a transformative DC for the SDGs



The current Module will focus on this approach and examine DC as a process that involves different variables and has many interconnections. Going back to the analogy of a bicycle, the SDGs serve as roadmap and narrative to guide us on our journey. This map is based on territorial wants and needs, with projects acting like the back wheel of the bicycle, which can be designed and made to suit to the, often changing, political priorities of the administrations and actors involved. These projects need to be guided by a front wheel that can steer the bicycle forwards. This can be done through international cooperation and public policy.

Of course, having a fully functional bicycle without a rider would be meaningless. The resources, strength, and energy of key partners and related stakeholders are critical in determining the direction of cooperation. To be successful, DC must be based on territorial partnerships that can direct efforts and actions towards achieving sustainable development.

Within this approach, LRGs are destined to be the key actors. They must provide coordination, maintain balance, manage challenges, and engage with, mobilize and harmonize stakeholders and interests. In short, their task is to make DC catalytic and meaningful. As highlighted in the bicycle graphic above, all of these different parts are essential for the smooth-working of the DC framework/process. They must all be in their place and have an essential role to play in getting DC, and the Global Agenda, on the move.

**Exercise 1.2****30 min****Handout 1.2**

### Personalize your DC bicycle — Decentralized cooperation in line with and for the promotion of the SDGs

The aim of this exercise is to reflect on the unique characteristics of each territory. This activity is complementary to the metaphor of the bicycle, explained above, and is meant to deepen our understanding of the challenges facing each participant.

1. The trainer will give a copy of handout 1.2 to each participant. The participants will then work individually.
2. The trainer will explain the goal of the exercise: participants must choose relevant parts and personalize a bicycle that would be suitable for their territory.
3. The participants will have 10 minutes to not only personalize their bicycle but also to think about any additional parts that could make the bicycle even more resilient.
4. The trainer will finish the exercise by asking the participants to describe their bicycles and explain which parts they have chosen and why they think that they are appropriate for the challenges facing their respective territories.

**Online Training**

#### Requirements for online training

5. The trainer creates Zoom Breakout Rooms for participants from the same municipality or region.
6. Handout for MURAL is available upon request at [learning@uclg.org](mailto:learning@uclg.org). You can see the preview in Annex 2 – Virtual Handouts.
7. Read the descriptions next to each bicycle part and select the ones which best suit your project, organization, or territorial context. ‘Drag’ the part to the centre and place it on the bicycle. Discusses whether any additional parts are necessary and add a note to explain why.

**Discussion****10 min****Handout 1.3**

#### Summary and Discussion

To close Learning Session One, it will be useful to briefly summarize the main points that have been covered:

- The main principles of DC.
- The legal framework underpinning DC.
- The evolution of DC from North-South to horizontal partnerships.

Next, use a quick round of questions and answers to clarify issues and get an idea of participants’ understanding of DC. It is important for knowledge to be shared and clearly understood early on, as this knowledge base will then be built upon over the next days. We can close the session by doing the following quick exercise:

Refer back to the set of cards that the participants placed on the board at the beginning of the session. Then, place the phrases that were cut out from Handout 1.3. on the board. Ask the participants if the ideas on the cards align with the cut-out phrases and whether they were covered in the lesson. This is a good way to reinforce learning.





## Chapter References

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- ↳ 2. OECD (2019), Development Policy Paper NO 22. *Decentralized development co-operation, Unlocking the potential of cities and regions*
- ↳ 3. Fernández de Losada, A. (2017). Shaping a new generation of Decentralized cooperation for enhanced effectiveness and accountability. CPMR & Platforma. <https://PLATFORMA-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/PLATFORMA-CPMR-Study-New-generation-EN.pdf>
- ↳ 4. UNDESA. Fernández de Losada, A. (2014). Study on Effective Decentralized Development Cooperation: Flows, modalities and challenges.
- ↳ 5. See note 1
- ↳ 6. UCLG-CIB (2020), Final Report on The SDGs and Decentralized Cooperation. Martinez, I. and Martinez, P. Colectivo La Mundial.
- ↳ 7. See UNDESA report – note 4 above.
- ↳ 8. Janssens, B. (2011), Winning through Twinning – Municipal International Cooperation in Flanders (Belgium), Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities.
- ↳ 9. Hafteck, P. (2003), An introduction to decentralized cooperation: Definitions, origins and conceptual mapping, Public Administration and Development Journal, Vol. 23, pp. 333-345.
- ↳ 10. Grupstra, J. and M. van Eerdt (2017), Public-Public Development Cooperation – Motivations and Practices of Dutch Subnational Public Actors in Development Cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa, Background Report, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency.
- ↳ 11. Hafteck, P. (2003), An introduction to decentralized cooperation: Definitions, origins and conceptual mapping, Public Administration and Development Journal, Vol. 23, pp. 333-345.
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- ↳ 13. Commission of the European Communities (2008), Local authorities: actors for development', Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions, Brussels: Commission of the European Communities 2008), p3. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/lexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0626:FIN:EN:PDF>
- ↳ 14. UNU-CPR, (2015), Decentralized Cooperation and the New Development Cooperation Agenda: What Role for the UN? United Nations University - Centre for Policy Research.
- ↳ 15. CPMR/Platforma (2017), Shaping a new generation of Decentralized cooperation for enhanced effectiveness and accountability – Research Study, CPMR and Platforma.
- ↳ 16. CeSPI (2010), La Cooperazione Decentrata Allo Sviluppo: Riflessioni Teoriche e Spunti Dall'esperienza della Toscana Nel Campo della Salute Globale [Decentralized Development Co-operation: Theoretical Reflections and Ideas from the Experience of Tuscany in the Global Health Field.

## Chapter 2: Why is Decentralized Cooperation important for the LRG Global Policy Agenda?

### Learning outcomes

- Appreciation of how Decentralized Cooperation promotes the localization of the global policy Agenda.
- Understanding how the SDGs can be localized through Decentralized Cooperation.

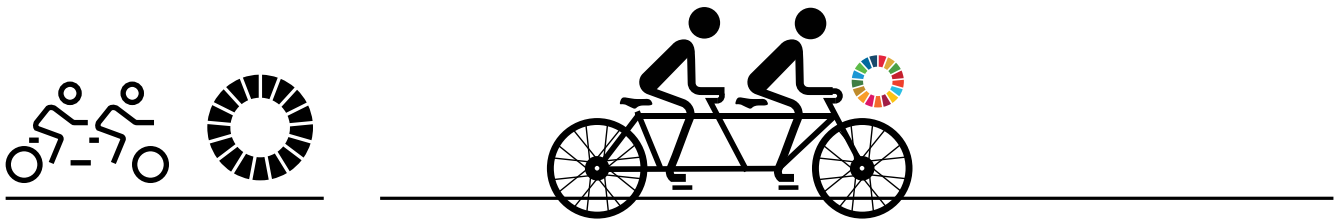
### Trainer's insights

As the trainer, it is important for you to know that of all the Chapters covered in this Training Guide, and of all the sessions in this Module, understanding the relationship between the global policy Agenda and decentralized cooperation is probably the most abstract!

In this session, we will try to show the links and make the necessary connections between the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs (that guide the global policy Agenda) and DC, a fundamental local vehicle to help LRGs achieving the global goals. Referring back to our bicycle analogy, the focus in this session is on the importance of steering the bicycle on its journey towards the destination of sustainability.

Given the more abstract nature of this session, it is important for us to present the content in the simplest way possible. After each section, it will be useful to check with the group to make sure that everyone is on the same page. This session will also include exercises that will help to break the monotony of the lectures and help to reinforce learning through individual and group work.

It should also be mentioned that Module 1 covered some basic concepts that will be revisited, in greater detail, in this Module.



**Some documents that it would be useful for trainers to familiarize themselves with:**

- ↳ *United Nations Resolution 70/1, Transforming our World: The Agenda for Sustainable Development*
- ↳ *United Nations Resolution 71/256, New Urban Agenda*
- ↳ *UCLG - The Sustainable Development Goals: What Local Governments need to know*
- ↳ *OECD report: "Decentralized development co-operation, Unlocking the potential of cities and regions"*
- ↳ *OECD study: "Reshaping Decentralized Development Co-operation: The Key Role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda"*
- ↳ UCLG Learning videos on localizing several SDG (3,4,6,8,11,16,17)
- ↳ *UCLG "Towards the localization of the SDGs Reports" 2017-2020*



**Exercise**



15 min

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**Note:** for a video tutorial on how to organize this exercise, please click [here](#)

## Introductory exercise: The bigger picture

### Learning outcome

- A practical demonstration of how using DC can help practitioners to understand ‘the bigger picture’ when working at the local and regional levels.

### Exercise instructions

This exercise sets the scene and will help participants to understand how DC can help localize the global policy Agenda.

1. Each participant will be given a piece of A4 paper and a pen, or marker, of the same colour.
2. The trainer will ask the participants to place the piece of paper in front of them (in landscape format) and to fold it in half and then open it again. There should then be a fold in the page.
3. The participants will then be asked to think of an SDG that they feel personally connected to. Starting at the fold, they must then draw a picture which visually expresses what that goal means to them on the left-hand part of the paper, without lifting the pen from the paper. Once started, this continuous line can go anywhere on the page, but it must end at the fold on the right-hand side of the piece of paper.
4. The participants will then be asked to join their drawings so that the folds meet, thereby creating a single, continuous-line drawing. These can then be either placed on the floor or, preferably, stuck on the wall, at eye-level.
5. The participants will then be asked to reflect on the drawing process and to explain how they think this relates to the connection between what is local and global.

It should now be apparent that while each drawing is complete in itself, and expresses a particular vision, a new and highly impressive image is created when all the drawings are put together. This is very relevant to the subject of SDGs and should help the participants to realize they are all part of a much larger whole.



**Lecture 2.1**



15 min

## Getting to grips with the Global Policy Agenda

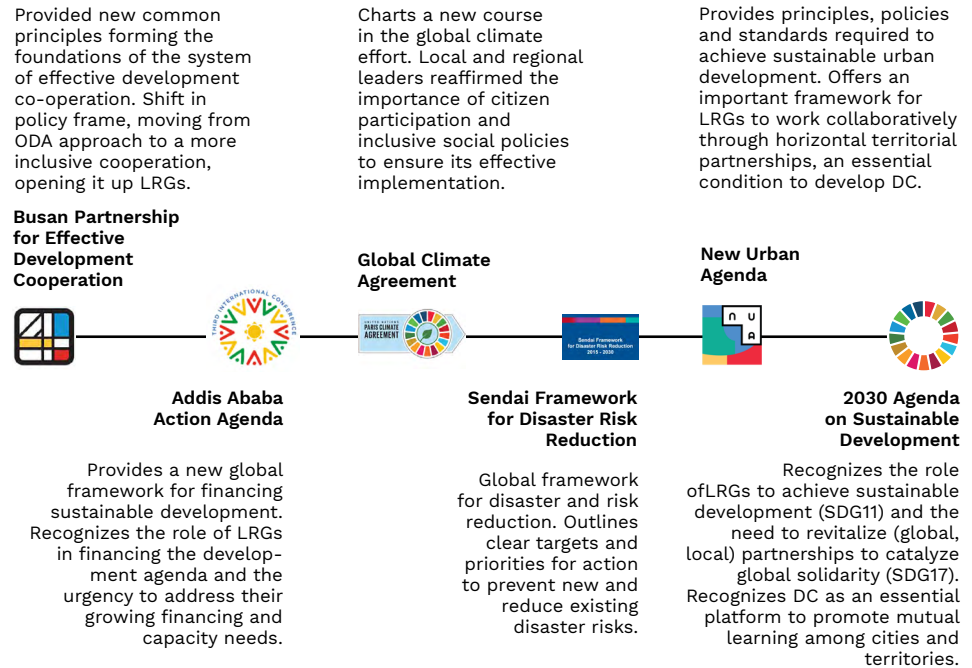
### Learning outcome

- To improve familiarity with, and basic understanding of, the global policy Agenda and other strategic policy frameworks.

### Trainer’s insights

It is important to let the participants reflect on the different SDGs and their own work before doing this exercise. The App called “*localizing the SDGs: what local governments need to know*” could be useful here, as well as the UCLG videos on localizing individual SDGs.

## From Busan to the 2030 Agenda: The opportunity for Decentralized Cooperation



As DC practitioners, it is important for all participants to have a basic working knowledge of the most strategic global policy frameworks that guide sustainable development. Each of these frameworks recognizes the important role that local and regional government play to facilitate and achieve these commitments and goals. As the participants will see, the frameworks described recognize that DC presents an important window of opportunity for both strengthening the role of cities and regions in the process of localizing global Agendas and advancing the social transformations needed to achieve sustainable development. We shall briefly examine the following frameworks:



### 1. The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

Building on the principles agreed within the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation was established as a result of the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, South Korea, in 2011. It introduced “effective development cooperation” as a new paradigm and sought to maximise the impact of development cooperation strategies by moving beyond the concept of aid.<sup>1</sup>

Busan provided new common principles that formed the foundations for a system of effective development co-operation. These four principles described below are key considerations for all DC practitioners crafting DC policy frameworks:



In this regard, it is important to highlight the fact that Busan provided an opportunity to modify the policy framework. It implied leaving behind the old, ODA approach to development and establishing the foundations for a new, more inclusive, form of international cooperation. It effectively opened up to development cooperation to the participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the private sector, philanthropic organizations, social economy actors, academia and local and regional government (which now form part of its Steering Committee, in acknowledgement of their important contribution to sustainable development and the cooperation system)<sup>2</sup>. Busan also broadened support to South-South and triangular cooperation and promoted a more efficient type of development cooperation, based on improving the managing and financing capacities of the actors involved, ensuring that the action undertaken would have a catalytic effect on development.



## 2. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda

The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA)* provides a new global framework for financing sustainable development. It aligns all financial flows and policies with economic, social and environmental priorities. It ensures that financing is stable and sustainable. Its relevance also lies in the fact that it clearly complements the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration by providing a sustainable model for any Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided to economically vulnerable countries. It also looks beyond the stringent red tape that often governs finance and which can result in less ODA being allocated. In other words, the AAAA prioritizes the distribution of approved international grants to the countries with the greatest needs.<sup>3</sup> It draws upon a wide range of sources of finance, technology and innovation, promotes sustainable trade and the sustainability of debt, controls data, and addresses systemic failures and other related issues<sup>4</sup>.

The AAAA also recognizes both the role played by LRGs in financing the development Agenda (Art.34) and the urgency with which it is necessary to



address their growing financing and capacity needs in order to maintain and improve the quality and impact of the development cooperation policies and interventions that they deliver.

### 3. The Global Climate Agreement

Popularly known as the *Paris Agreement*, this historic accord unites states from all over the world in the pursuit of a common cause: to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, and to provide greater support to help developing countries to do the same. As such, it has charted a new course in global efforts to combat climate change. The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change. It seeks to achieve this by limiting global temperature increases to well below 2° C above pre-industrial levels throughout this century. It also encourages efforts to limit increases in temperature even further: to less than 1.5° C. To achieve these ambitious goals, it will be necessary to ensure appropriate financial flows, a new technological framework, and enhanced capacity for all actors involved. The Paris Agreement contains aspirational goals, binding obligations regarding strategies for mitigation, a rigorous system of controls, and a nuanced way to differentiate between developed and developing countries which is compatible with their respective national objectives<sup>5</sup>.



### 4. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

The *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)* outlines seven clear targets and four priorities for action to prevent new, and reduce existing, disaster risks. It aims to achieve a substantial reduction in disaster risk and the associated losses of lives, livelihoods and health and of the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of citizens, businesses, communities and countries, over a 15-year period. This framework was officially adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held at Sendai, Japan, in 2015<sup>6</sup>.



### 5. The New Urban Agenda

The *New Urban Agenda (NUA)* is an action-oriented, 24-page document that provides the global principles, policies and standards required to achieve sustainable urban development and to transform the way in which we construct, manage, operate and live in cities. This Agenda guides efforts associated with urbanization for a wide range of actors, including national, city and regional leaders, funders of international development, the private sector, United Nations programs and civil society. It considers the synergies that all of the above can obtain from agreements to provide a holistic, transformational approach for addressing urbanization. It also offers an important framework for LRGs to work together through horizontal territorial partnerships, which is an essential prerequisite for DC.



### 6. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

Adopted by all UN member states in 2015, the 2030 Agenda provides a common blueprint for achieving peace and prosperity for people and the planet. This is to be achieved through partnerships<sup>i</sup>. At its heart lie the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action sent out to

<sup>i</sup> People, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership are identified as the 5 P's of the 2030 Agenda. This refers to the 5 thematic areas developed by the Agenda.

all countries – both developed and developing – to form a global partnership. The SDGs recognize that putting an end to poverty and other forms of deprivation must go hand-in-hand with strategies to improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur on economic growth. All of this must be achieved while, at the same time, tackling climate change and working to conserve our oceans and forests<sup>7</sup>.

More specifically, the 2030 Agenda recognizes the catalytic role that LRGs can play in helping to achieve sustainable development (SDG 11) and also the need to revitalize (global and local) partnerships to catalyze global solidarity (SDG 17). Particular importance should be given to SDG 17, as a way of boosting international cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to facilitate and advance the localizing of the SDGs. It also recognizes DC as an essential platform from which to promote and improve local efforts to achieve this localization and to promote mutual learning among cities and territories. As a result, SDG 17 offers a great opportunity to promote DC as a mechanism for fostering the key transformations needed to achieve sustainable development. (More information about the Agenda, SDGs and how they relate to DC can be found in the next section).

The 2030 Agenda focuses on the main issues stemming from the other international commitments mentioned before. It serves as an umbrella to reinforce their messages and promote awareness, advocacy and action for the achievement of their objectives. The other Agendas have subsequently re-focused their action plans in order to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and to complement them.

## Unpacking the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs



### Lecture 2.2



15 min

### Learning outcome

- Understanding the different dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and its importance and implications for LRGs

In essence, the 2030 Agenda has set the global development Agenda for the next ten years, identifying and stimulating crucial areas of action for both humanity and the planet. As local and regional government practitioners, it is important to understand the principles and dimensions of the 2030 Agenda in order to effectively localize it in our respective towns, cities and regions.

The 17 SDGs and 169 related aspirational global targets are action-oriented, global in nature and universally applicable. They are comprehensive in their scope and cover all the policy domains that are essential for sustainable growth and development. They are also strongly interconnected: progress in one area generates positive spill over into other domains. The SDGs require coherent policy design and implementation and multi-stakeholder engagement to help many different actors reach their shared objectives.

The implementation of the SDGs should therefore be considered in a systematic way and rely on a whole-of-society approach if citizens are to reap all of their expected benefits. LRGs are the levels of government that are closest to citizens; they therefore have a critical role to play in helping mobilize partners and acting to deliver the SDGs. In order to better appreciate the various dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, it will be useful to watch a short video *animated video* made by the UN Systems Staff College.



There are three key concepts that participants need to understand about the links between the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and DC, which will be examined in the following session: the SDG principles, the localization of the SDGs, and the specific importance of SDG 17. Their key points are outlined below:

### SDG Principles

A good introduction to the localization of the SDGs has already been provided in Module 1 of the UCLG training program. Here is a quick reminder the main principles of the SDGs:



### Localizing the SDGs

The effective implementation of the SDGs will largely depend on our ability to make them a reality in our cities and regions. It is important to note that all of the SDGs have targets that directly relate to the mandates of local and regional government bodies. LRGs have responsibilities for the delivery of basic services and local development. For this reason, they must be at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

Not only cities and regions are well-suited to translating the somewhat abstract 2030 Agenda into something more concrete and tangible. They can approach its goals and targets in a pragmatic way, whilst ensuring that they also fit into their own unique contexts. Moreover, cities and regions can work

closely with their citizens to engage them and ensure that they understand how local action contributes to the achievement of global goals.

While all 17 goals have an impact on cities and regions, it may be useful to pay particular attention to SDG 11, which focuses on sustainable cities and communities. The official UCLG video is a particularly useful audio-visual tool to share in order to close this section: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4iG-PnFoWzw>



### SDG 17: a global partnership for sustainable development

SDG 17 (Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development) is important for LRGs as it is at this level that coherent policies can be developed to address the multiple challenges associated with reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development. LRGs are in an ideal position to encourage and facilitate partnerships between public bodies, the private sector and civil society within our communities. SDG 17 is essentially about the need to form global partnerships in order to pursue the sustainable development Agenda. The traditional one-to-one partnership is increasingly being replaced by multi-level, multi-stakeholder partnerships that bring together key stakeholders across different levels, borders, and sectors to address key local challenges.

### Explaining the SDGs

#### Learning outcome

- Helping participants to make sense of the relationship between DC and the SDGs.

In this exercise, participants can be encouraged to share their own knowledge and experience and to explain how their organizations make sense of the relationship between DC and the SDGs.

#### Exercise instructions

1. The trainer will divide the participants into groups of four or five participants.
2. Use Handout 2.1 as a board for each group or draw the same circles on a Flipchart.
3. Each group will be assigned three SDGs (pre-selected by facilitators) and asked to imagine a DC project that incorporates all three. They must give it a title and a brief description, adding these to the inner circle. They can



#### Exercise 2.1



40 min



Handout 2.1

**Tip:** In the final circle, it is intended for the participants to connect the project back to SDGs 11 and 17 in order to highlight the importance of these to DC and vice versa.

refer to ‘What local governments needs to know’ for more information on their assigned SDGs.

4. In the second circle, participants are asked to describe the different needs that the DC project will have for its proper formulation and implementation.
5. In the third circle participants will be asked to add actors that are related to the needs identified.
6. For the fourth circle, participants will be asked to check the SDGs table alongside and add any other SDGs that can relate with the project from a broader perspective.
7. The trainer closes the exercise in the plenary by asking participants to share their different DC projects and results.



### Online Training

### Requirements for online training

1. The trainer creates Zoom Breakout Rooms with four or five participants in each room
2. The handout for MURAL is available upon request at [learning@uclg.org](mailto:learning@uclg.org). You can see the preview in Annex 2 – Virtual Handouts
3. Follow the instructions from the Virtual Handout 2.1.



### Lecture 2.3



15 min

### Building a common narrative: DC and SDGs



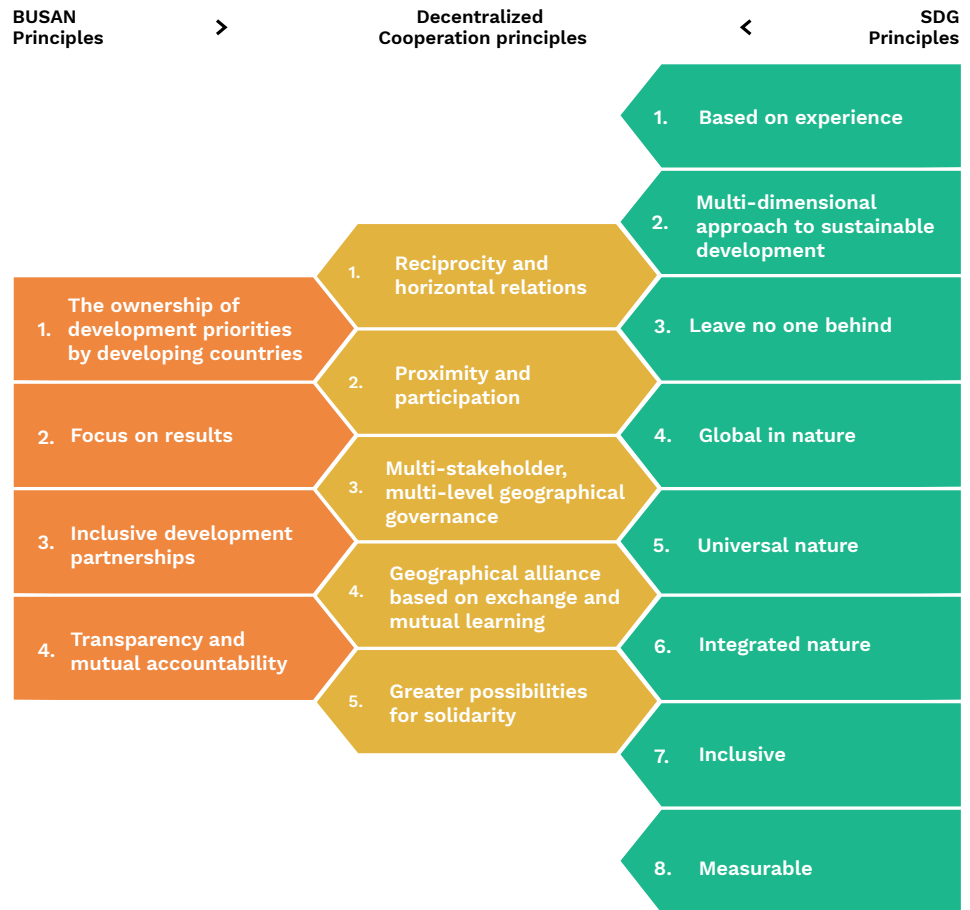
### Learning outcome

- Building a common narrative to develop and implement an SDG-linked DC
- Understanding the benefits of the SDGs for DC
- Understanding the role of DC in localizing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

### The narrative of the principles

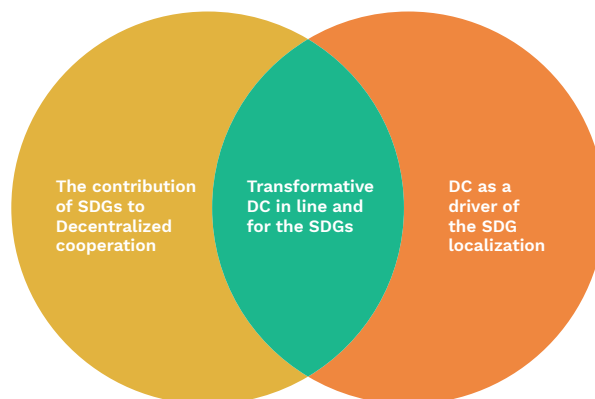
The first step towards identifying a common narrative linking DC and the SDGs is the fact that the principles of both Agendas (Busan and SDGs) are directly related and complementary. Furthermore, accomplishing both is related to the localization process and to a renewal of decentralized cooperation. Trainers can remind participants of this by using the following graphic to illustrate this relationship:

**Figure 2.1. Principles for SDG-linked DC**



**The narrative of the synergies**

More than ever, local authorities and their cooperation are at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to promote the deployment of the SDGs in the territories, it is necessary to highlight the synergies between the SDGs and decentralized cooperation. This can be done by analyzing how the SDGs can contribute to better DC and acknowledging DC as a key driver for the localization of the SDGs. **Trainers can explain this two-way approach based on the following key points:**



### **The contribution of the SDGs to Decentralized Cooperation: key points**

1. The SDGs bring a new **universal framework** that goes beyond hemispheres, geography and politics. LRGs from different parts of the world are called to work in collaboration, bring resources together, and empower citizens and organizations to contribute to the global Agenda; they can do this through DC and horizontal territorial partnerships.
2. The SDGs are a **roadmap to transform DC's discourse and practice**. The common narrative brought by the SDGs is regenerating DC, its topics, strategies and intervention approaches. This involves broadening its scope and exploring new actors, alliances, objectives and mechanisms to facilitate the path to sustainable development.
3. The SDGs **promote political cooperation and the exchange of knowledge** and technical know-how between LRGs to strengthen their capacities to design and implement sustainable development linked public policies.
4. The SDGs **highlight the foreign action of LRGs** as a major contribution to the international policy. Through the localization of the SDGs, the work carried out by a municipality can be seen through an international lens. As a result, partnerships created and action taken through DC are not excluded from the global arena.
5. The SDGs highlight the need for states and international organizations to provide local governments with the **necessary skills and resources** to match their commitment. The 2030 Agenda mobilizes domestic and international resources to foster local sustainable development. It therefore presents an opportunity to procure resources for DC.
6. The 2030 Agenda calls for the **strengthening of data collection and management** at the local and regional levels. DC can take advantage of this opportunity to promote action in this area and take advantage of locally generated data to formulate better projects that consider the needs of local contexts, thus producing more tangible impacts.
7. The 2030 Agenda aims to **improve monitoring and reporting systems** at the local level. Through their targets and indicators, the SDGs offer a unique reference framework for measuring progress in implementation. The SDGs also facilitate making comparisons between different local actors and can be used to assess DC activities and their outcomes.



### DC as a driver of SDG localization: key points

1. The 2030 Agenda is a local Agenda, with nearly 70% of all SDG targets requiring direct action by subnational levels of government. Action based on DC can facilitate localization processes by offering specific local approaches and a comprehensive view of local public policy.
2. DC is an excellent multi-purpose, multi-partner connector and can therefore be a powerful catalyst for bringing stakeholders together and for establishing connections based on trust, dialogue, transparency, horizontality, and solidarity.
3. By involving different territorial stakeholders (including citizens, knowledge-based institutions, and public and private sector entities), DC has the potential to promote innovative territorial partnerships that can contribute to SDG 17 and other SDGs. DC allows the expertise of different actors to be shared and increases its value, facilitating the mobilization of endogenous resources.
4. DC can help to raise local awareness and inform citizens about the SDGs and the importance of sustainable development. DC can be a tool for social transformation through the engineering of global citizenship by promoting learning, exchange, and dialogues around the localization of the SDGs.
5. DC promotes multi-level governance useful for the localization process. It strengthens local governance and has the potential to enhance coordination between different levels of government, thereby substantially contributing to the creation of strong institutions, SDG 16, and the successful implementation of the whole 2030 Agenda.
6. DC facilitates policy transfers, dialogue and common reflection on development models and local public policy. This approach can benefit the localization of the SDGs as DC can serve as a platform with which to systematize, share, learn from, and support LRG experiences relating to strategies for implementing the SDGs.
7. DC has proven capacity to promote and generate technical, technological, and managerial knowledge from the territories in order to encourage innovation for the implementation of the SDGs.

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### Example of SDG localization through Decentralized Cooperation - “Zaļā Bibliotēka / Green Freedom”

This organization has over 25 years of experience in initiating discourse with the government and people of Latvia on pertinent environmental issues. It advocates extensive environmental sustainability as it pushes back bound-

aries and engages in dialogue on topics associated with sustainable development, responsible consumption and enviro-friendly lifestyles. Part of the successes of the organization lies in its collaboration with a cooperative from Northern Ghana. This started with an initiative called “Baskets from Ghana”, which was initially confronted by a wide range of challenges. The project is now shattering stereotypes and has made an immense contribution moving away from the “saviour and victim” narrative of Europe and Africa and towards a model of partnership and cooperation. As a result, extended partnerships with journalists have emerged and updates regarding “Baskets from Ghana” are now widely disseminated. It is particularly interesting to note how SDG 10 and SDG 16 can be understood as objectives for such partnerships.

Source: Lapas website: <https://lapas.lv/en/SDGs/cases/partnership-for-goals/>

## The pathway to development – follow the Ps



### Exercise 2.2

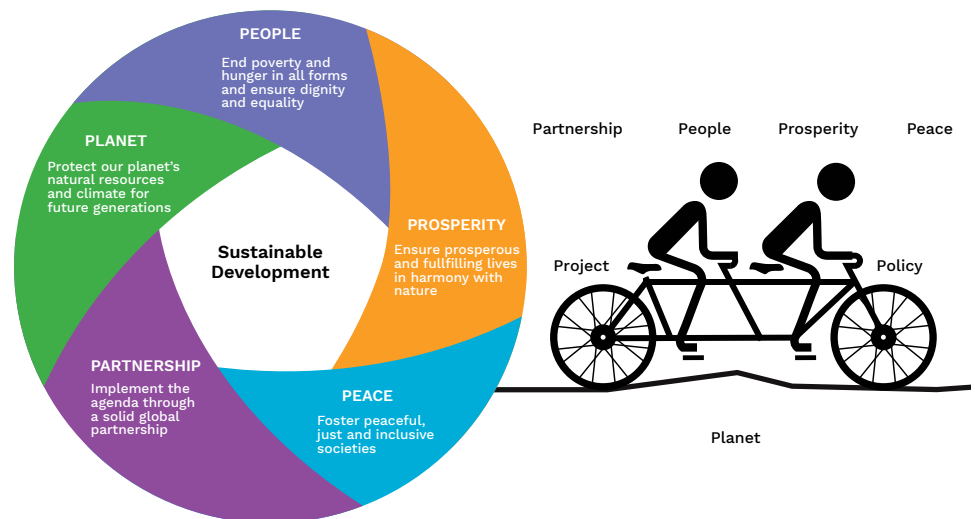


15 min

### Exercise instructions

1. Using the image of the ‘5 Ps’ and bicycle analogy, the trainer will briefly explain how DC adds ‘2 Ps’ to the ‘5 Ps’ of the SDG Agenda.

The SDG Agenda is based on ‘5 Ps’: planet, people, prosperity, peace and partnerships as illustrated in the following figure.



Imagine development dynamics as a way of moving forward towards a better future. The vehicle that municipalities and their partners would use is a bicycle. We can also add another 2 Ps through decentralized cooperation. These are ‘project’ and ‘policy’. While the ‘5 Ps’ related to the SDGs are the main concept and roadmap, the DC policy can be seen as the vision while the DC project can be seen as the drive. As in a bicycle we need both of the wheels (both of the Ps) to enable us to move towards sustainable development (the ‘5 Ps’). The idea is to get across to the participants the vision that DC, through policy and projects, is a way to bring the ‘5 Ps’ to the territory.

## 2. Having explained the analogy, the trainer will open a discussion based on the following questions:

- What policies are currently in place to help all the actors move forwards together? Are these policies linked to a road-map? How are they related to the '5 Ps'?
- What kind of projects are you aware of? Do they contribute to the SDGs? Are they connected?
- Who are your main policy drivers? Are the LRGs leading the ride?



### Discussion

## Summary and Discussion

To close Learning Session Two, it will be useful to quickly summarize the main points that we have covered:

- The key global policy frameworks.
- The importance of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
- A narrative to link DC and SDG localization.

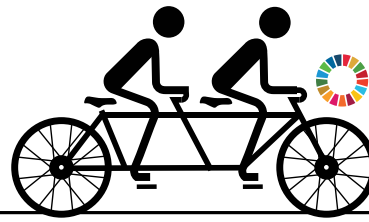
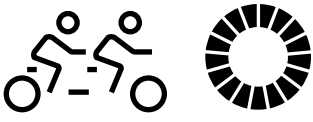
Next, have a round of questions to clarify issues relating to participants' understanding of the localization of the global policy Agenda. As it will now be close to lunch time, we shall not do an exercise to reinforce this learning.



## Chapter References

- ↳ 1. Observatory of Decentralized Cooperation EU-LA. "The International Action of Local and Regional Governments". Patón Santiago, O. Chapter one of the Online Course on Decentralized Cooperation. <https://www.diba.cat/documents/228621/146921844/Baseline+Document+Lesson+1.pdf/506e67b0-b656-476b-8e15-7019c9fb5709>
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- ↳ 4. UNDESA (2015) Briefing Note on Financing sustainable development and developing sustainable finance. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda. <https://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/DESA-Briefing-Note-Addis-Action-Agenda.pdf>
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## Chapter 3: How does Decentralized Cooperation work in practice?

### Learning outcomes

- Obtain a sound understanding of the typologies, modalities, flows and forms of decentralized cooperation and how it relates to the SDGs.
- Exposure to international examples



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### Trainer's insights

At this point in the training, participants have a sound conceptual understanding of DC. They also appreciate how DC can serve as an effective vehicle for implementing the global sustainability Agenda. Participants must now get to grips with how DC works in practice and the range of forms that it can take. In terms of our bicycle analogy, we now focus on the gear assembly: exploring the typologies, modalities and flows that DC can typically exhibit. It is important to re-emphasize the fact that knowledge and experience

flow in two directions: not just from donors to receivers or from developed to developing countries, but with all actors engaged in the same process and policy. The SDGs present an opportunity for more dialogue, partnerships, internalization, awareness and mainstreaming of sustainability and for a wider appreciation of the efforts taken to establish them as a key platform for innovation, inspiration and co-creation. This must be reiterated during the training session in order to challenge, or rather transform, the current understanding of cooperation and territorial development. In support of this transformation, the SDGs are based on the principle of universality.



**Some documents and online videos that may be useful to trainers and help them to familiarize themselves with this subject:**

- ↳ PLATFORMA Study: *Shaping a new generation of decentralized cooperation - For enhanced effectiveness and accountability*
- ↳ OECD Study: *Reshaping decentralized Development Cooperation: The key role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda*
- ↳ UCLG: *“Roadmap for Localizing The SDGs: Implementation and Monitoring at Subnational Level*
- ↳ UCLG Study: *“Seek, Sense, Share your City Practice in Networks”*
- ↳ The video link to de Fernández Losada Passols unpacking the typologies is most useful: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=3&dv=liig-JQKasWwandfeature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&dv=liig-JQKasWwandfeature=emb_title)
- ↳ UCLG - CIB Publication “SDG and LGA Study”: [http://cib-uclg.org/sites/default/files/SDGs\\_and\\_lgas\\_study.pdf](http://cib-uclg.org/sites/default/files/SDGs_and_lgas_study.pdf)



**Lecture 3.1**



**15 min**

**Unpacking Decentralized Cooperation typologies, modalities and flows**

**Learning outcome**

- Achieve a sound understanding of the types and modalities of decentralized cooperation.
- Raise awareness of the range of methodologies that decentralized cooperation can employ.
- Appreciate the complexity of the emerging flows of decentralized cooperation.

**Introductory summary**

To briefly reiterate, over time, the nature and form of decentralized cooperation modalities have evolved. As outlined in the previous sessions, the earlier vertical forms of cooperation, in which the added value was based on the transfer of aid and knowledge from the ‘rich North’ to the ‘poor South’, or on diplomatic relations, has now been transformed into a host of different horizontal partnerships. The 2030 Agenda reflects this most clearly through the principle of universality. As a result, due recognition is now given to the successes of partners working in less capacitated contexts with limited resources.

In the present horizontal partnerships, knowledge, expertise, and experience flow in different directions. Equally important, and as we will emphasize throughout this Module, it is the local and regional spaces that are now the main arena for exchanges involving all of the most relevant development players; and this has to be managed by LRGs.

While there are many sources of information in the DC literature that help us to make sense of the complexity of its typologies, we recommend using the PLATFORMA Report (2017). Table 3.1. summarizes the main types of decentralized cooperation that are found there, the related modalities, the most significant emerging flows, and the type of methodologies involved. As a lot of material is included in the table, for the purposes of training, the content has been presented in three parts:

- Unpacking DC types and modalities.
- Appreciating flows within DC.
- Exploring DC methodologies.

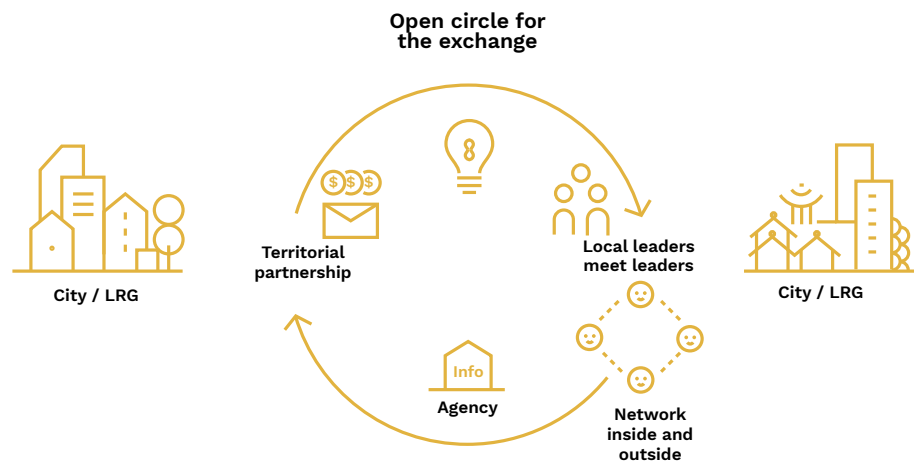
**Table 3.1. DC typologies, modalities, flows and methodologies**

Type of Cooperation	Modality	Flows	Methodologies
<b>Direct cooperation</b>	Vertical	North-South South-South	Aid funding Technical cooperation
	Territorial partnership	North-South South-South	Platforms for the exchange of knowledge
	Local Agency	Triangular	Learning and benchmarking
	Network	South-North	Policy development
<b>Indirect and delegated cooperation</b>	Through other actors (NGOs, international agencies, UN programs, private sector, etc)	North-South Triangular	Aid funding Technical cooperation Platforms for the exchange of knowledge Policy development
	Scholarships	North-South	Aid funding Technical cooperation Platforms for the exchange of knowledge
	Campaigns	North-South	Learning and benchmarking Policy development

Source: Adapted from Fernández de Losada, A. (2017). Shaping a new generation of Decentralized cooperation for enhanced effectiveness and accountability. CPMR & Platforma. <https://PLATFORMA-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/PLATFORMA-CPMR-Study-New-generation-EN.pdf>

As local and regional government practitioners and stakeholders involved in DC, it is important for all participants to have a good understanding of the many forms that this can take. Under the broad concept of DC Typologies, we shall use this introductory lecture to present different types of cooperation and its modalities. This is important, particularly when we consider the complexity of DC and how it varies from context to context.

**Figure 3.1. Direct cooperation scheme**



**1. Direct cooperation** - Best understood as a partnership between LRGs, is the most common and entrenched type of decentralized cooperation encountered globally. Originally, this type of cooperation was conceived as a vertical form centred on the transfer of aid from North to South. Today, it has evolved towards the development of other forms in which different resources (funds but also knowledge and expertise) flow in different directions (North to South, South to South and South to North) with the territory as the centre of exchanges between development actors led by their LRGs<sup>1</sup>. In this broad context, different modalities of direct and decentralized cooperation can be identified. The approaches most commonly used by LRGs are:

**(i) The vertical modality**

This modality involves establishing bilateral or multilateral relations between LRGs. The classical version of this modality is the transfer of aid from the ‘rich North’ to the ‘poor South’. It must be emphasized at this point that this modality is commonly seen as inefficient, given the comparatively low levels of ownership involved. Partnerships are increasingly moving away from this arrangement and towards more horizontal approaches with multiple alliances.

**(ii) Territorial partnership modality**

In this type of modality, reference is made to the creation of solid and structured bilateral and multilateral horizontal relationships between individual LRGs and their territories. Unlike in the vertical modality, territorial partnerships contribute more substantially to the Busan principles outlined in the previous chapter. Rather than transferring aid, this type of modality’s

added value lies in its capacity to foster the exchange of knowledge, experiences, expertise, management skills and mutual learning and to develop shared, innovative pilot initiatives. As a result, territorial partnerships are usually more focused on reinforcing local strategies, with the ultimate aim of improving public policy and capacity.

**(iii) Local government agencies for international cooperation modality**

In specific cases, LRGs or their associations may create highly professionalized ad hoc structures and bodies to implement and promote cooperation. Through capacity building or peer-to-peer initiatives, the objective is to strengthen the operational capacities of LRGs or LGAs. The key outcomes here are to ensure the implementation of more effective public policies, foster innovation based on local knowledge, ensure a local footprint and promote more channels of cooperation (broad themes, wider scope of actors, etc.).

**(iv) Network modality**

This final modality emerged as a way to support DC, bringing together LRGs, their associations, and/or multilateral actors. They provide their members with platforms for training, mutual learning, exchanging experiences and the transfer of knowledge. Sometimes, these networks also promote advocacy initiatives aimed at developing the right kind of enabling environments that LRGs need in order to operate under appropriate conditions.

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**The URB-AL Project**

URB-AL was a European Commission (EC) program, which ran from 1995 to 2013. Its mission was to reinforce decentralized cooperation between European and Latin American cities, territories and communities relating to urban policy. The program was based on horizontal and territorial cooperation, involving reciprocal exchanges and territorial partnerships.

Developed in three phases, URB-AL started with the aim of creating a framework for partnerships and building up direct, and lasting, bonds between European and Latin American LRGs and communities in the search of collaborative solutions to local challenges. These links and partnerships were based on policy dialogue, knowledge exchange, the dissemination of good practices and the strengthening of local institutional capacities relating to urban policy. The program also sought to strengthen local government structures, foster decentralization, and local democratization processes, and enhance local capacities for the development of international action and strategies. The final phase of the program concentrated on the consolidation of existing partnerships and the promotion of social cohesion.

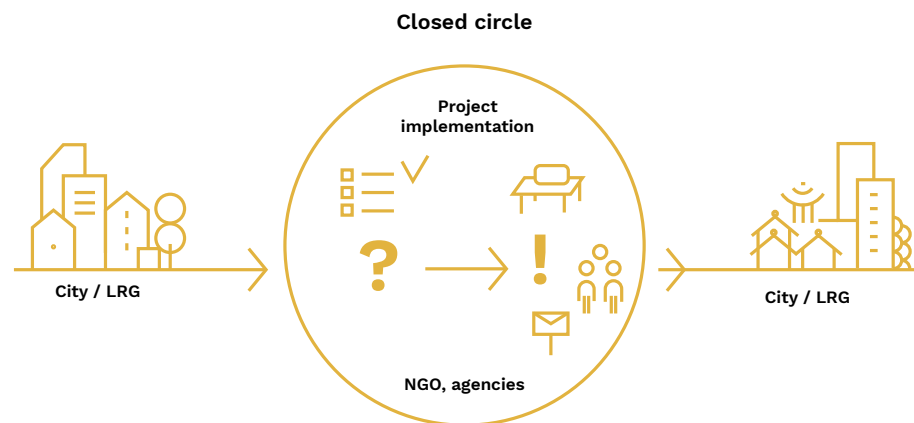
The program was carried out in 74 territories and had an impact on 500 Latin American municipalities, with a total population of 26 million people. It directly benefited more than 1.8 million people and more than 160 different organizations were involved as direct implementers of its activities. It proposed a new model for cooperation, based on North-South and South-South partnerships, shifting away from conceiving problems and actions with a vertical mindset and instead focusing on equity, reciprocity, solidarity, and mutual learning. It served as a laboratory for testing new experiences and dynamics of decentralized cooperation. The program gave a greater role to

the participating LRGs, not just as beneficiaries, but as drivers of the cooperation initiatives themselves.

URB-AL also shifted the focus from the project to public policy, working from a process-based perspective to ensure sustainability and real ownership, by both LRGs and other local actors. The model enhanced LRGs' know-how and qualities as driving forces behind the economic and social development of their territories and as catalysts for multilevel and multisector articulation. URB-AL also fostered the development of a series of interregional and intraregional links, relations, Agendas, networks, and dialogue spaces that remain active today. At present, URB-AL continues to be a key reference for DC, both in Europe and Latin America, as well as in other regions of the world.

Source: URB-AL III Program Orientation and Coordination Office – OCO (2013) Final report: Scope and lessons of the URB-AL III Program. Accessed at: <https://www.observ-ocd.org/sites/observ-ocd.org/files/2018-04/final-report-scope-and-lessons-of-the-urb-al-iii-program.pdf>

**Figure 3.2. Indirect / delegated cooperation scheme**



**2. Indirect cooperation** - This type of cooperation involves LRGs encouraging the actions of other actors to develop cooperation projects / strategies. It is usually structured around geographic and thematic priorities and involves co-financing schemes.

A common modality of indirect cooperation is through LRGs that provide support to local NGOs through calls for proposals for the implementation of development projects. One of the main characteristics of this type of cooperation is that, thanks to it, the local associative fabric, normally represented by NGOs, is committed, mobilized and strengthened, also contributing to generate development and greater social cohesion at the local level. However, it can contribute to the fragmentation of initiatives if it is not well aligned with direct decentralized cooperation strategies.

Alongside this, some LRGs, especially large cities and strong regions in federal countries, are using **DELEGATED COOPERATION**. Here, bilateral

agreements are suggested as framework and scope, but cooperation is managed by a third actor. There may also be direct agreements involving, for example, UN agencies.

**Figure 3.3. Engagement through education**



**3. Development education and awareness raising** – DC’s aims and funds are also used for these kinds of initiatives. They focus on encouraging and enhancing active local citizenship in the global arena and on promoting sustainable development, peace, and human rights. Usually developed by LRGs themselves through their associations and networks, this form can also be fostered by local NGOs that specialize in DC. A key example of this type of cooperation is the work done by the Spanish cooperation and solidarity local and regional funds<sup>(i)</sup> in the field of education for development. For many years, the Spanish Funds have been promoting and encouraging greater civic participation and global citizenship. At present, they are fostering local and regional awareness raising campaigns for the implementation of the SGDs and the 2030 Agenda.

Finally, DC is also the umbrella for scholarship programs that finance visits of students from partner countries. An example of this is the programs run by Germany’s federal states, which represent 11% of total German bilateral cooperation. This is because education falls within the competence of regions, which are responsible for activating these programs.

 Lecture

**New flows of Decentralized Cooperation**

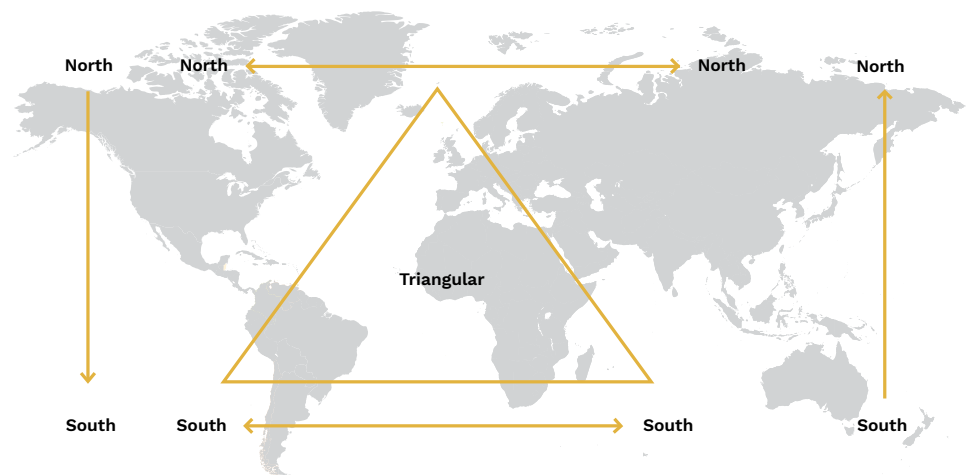
**Learning Outcomes**

- Participants learn about some of the new flows of cooperation that have recently emerged.
- Participants are shown the value and wealth of Southern partnerships, while also being made aware of limitations.

<sup>(i)</sup>The Spanish cooperation and solidarity local and regional funds are operational instruments, formed and led by LRGs, which were exclusively created to foster municipal cooperation. Based on solidarity and horizontality, they were originally developed as platforms to manage funding provided by different municipalities and to group these together in order to advance through a joint DC strategy. They have now evolved to become drivers of DC: representing LRGs, engaging and promoting the active engagement of local actors, professionalizing DC and making it more efficient and coherent, and, finally constituting their own characteristic model of cooperation. For more information visit: <https://www.confederaciondefondos.org/>

The top-down aid-centred approach to North-South cooperation has evolved and incorporated exciting new, horizontal modalities in which there is a strong spirit of mutual learning and sharing. New actors have brought new perspectives to the development system. They have encouraged emerging economies to take a more active role and have broadened leadership in such areas as trade, cooperation and knowledge. At the same time, and hand in hand with the previously mentioned aid effectiveness Agenda, the United Nations has recognized the targets of international cooperation as key actors within the process of defining projects and programs. Figure 3.1. below graphically represents the range of flows of decentralized cooperation worldwide.

**Figure 3.1. New flows of decentralized cooperation**



Source: PLATFORMA (2017: 11)

In this short lecture, we will focus on two flows that are regarded as efficient and cost-effective and believed to have a positive impact in terms of disseminating development solutions throughout the world:

- South – South cooperation.
- Triangular cooperation.

### **South-South cooperation**

This type of decentralized cooperation has been found to add enormous value to the partners engaged in such initiatives. This format does, however, entail a high risk of imposing practices without adapting them sufficiently to suit the local context. This is particularly true when there is little investment to ensure an adequate follow up.

Exchanges of experience and transfers of knowledge in horizontal partnerships have better impacts locally. Peers working in similar social, economic, cultural and political contexts in the South are better able to identify with complex, shared challenges of a type that they, themselves, are faced with on a daily basis. The strategy and policy responses that are developed in these South-South contexts are therefore more easily transferable. Over the last decade, there has been an increase in South-South collaboration involving



both LRGs and their associations. Whilst diverse, these interventions have tended to focus on:

- The mutual exchange of shared experiences.
- Transfers of knowledge and technology.
- Mutual learning.
- The mobilization of resources.
- Establishing mechanisms that facilitate and/or improve political dialogue and advocacy.
- The development of innovative pilot projects.

South-South cooperation partnerships generally focus on strengthening LRGs' operative and institutional capacities in order to ultimately improve public policy through resource optimization and the mobilization of all key local stakeholders. It is here that LRG networks have played a critical role, given their unique ability to promote dialogue, replicate experiences, mobilize forces for political advocacy and communicate with international actors. It is also important to acknowledge the dynamic role played by LGAs in facilitating and supporting decentralized South-South cooperation partnerships.

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### **Mercociudades South-South Cooperation Program**

Created in 1995 with the aim of strengthening the action of local governments in the field of regional integration, Mercociudades is an LRG network involving 353-member cities from 10 countries in South America, with a total population of more than 120 million. The network has promoted South-South cooperation actions since its creation by fostering horizontal work among its member cities, with more than 20 thematic peer learning working groups.

In 2016, the network established the "Mercociudades South-South Cooperation Program" (PCSSM) to improve the capacity of LRGs in leadership and the implementation of South-South cooperation policies; strengthen, optimize and provide a procedural framework for South-South cooperation based on technical cooperation and transfer of experiences and good practices; and to position the network as a key actor in the field of international cooperation. The program has two lines of action:

1. **Training in the formulation of regional projects** - This learning and exchange space offers tools to help design, implement and evaluate high quality and impactful projects. It provides information to help agencies access local, regional, national and international funding and cooperation tools. This initiative is fully funded by the network and is supported by several local government organizations, which offer to host face-to-face training. Calls for the financing of projects related to Mercociudades' main priorities, such as climate change, sustainable development, resilience, migration, the Right to the City, culture, innovation and regional integration, amongst others. The network invites applications for projects to access funding. Relevant areas for this include: the different modalities of technical assistance, exchanges of experts and officials, in-

ternships, forums, seminars, workshops, human resources training, and the development of dissemination products and communication tools. Project proposals should involve at least two governments and partners, including organisms representing civil society or academic institutions. A selection committee evaluates the applications on the basis of their feasibility, quality and consistency and the proposals selected receive funding for up to 50% of total project costs.

2. **Calls for proposals for the financing of projects related to the main priorities of Mercociudades** – Open call for projects that can range from technical assistance, to exchanges of experts and officials, internships, forums, seminars and workshops, and the development of dissemination products and communication tools. Project proposals must involve at least two governments and partners, including organizations representing civil society or academic institutions. A selection committee evaluates applications on the basis of their feasibility, quality and coherence, and selected proposals receive funding of up to 50% of total project costs.

To implement these lines of actions, the program mobilizes its own funds and develops key partnerships with universities, financial organizations and international actors. These partnerships have enabled Mercociudades to support more projects and to gradually extend its influence. As a result, a contribution of US \$ 20,000 was made by the program each year. This was used to support projects valued at a total of US \$ 51,782 in 2017 and US \$ 93,988 in 2018.

The program has reached out beyond its municipal partners and adopted a multi-stakeholder approach open to organizations from civil society, academic institutions and local, national and international entities. Partner organizations have included: the European Union, the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the Mercosur Social Institute, the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Observatory of Decentralized Cooperation, the Association of Universities Grupo Montevideo (AUGM) and the Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities (UCCI).

Over the years, PCSSM has gone beyond being just a call for funding; it now structures and connects different local stakeholders based on trust and partnerships, considering local and regional development perspectives.

Source and further information: <http://sursurmercociudades.org>

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### **Triangular cooperation**

Simply put, triangular decentralized cooperation, as the name suggests, involves LRGs from different countries in the global South relying on support from one or more LRGs from the global North.

In this triangular format, peers from the South can easily collaborate together on problem-based tasks, in the form of technical cooperation (see the following page). The other triangle partner (within the global network) can use their experience and contribute global value through knowledge management, visibility, analysis, and relations.

One of the most interesting partnerships, which is worth noting here, is that between the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UCLG. Together, they have undertaken a number of joint activities that have improved local actors' capacities through peer learning activities. This innovative program, which has been organized within the framework of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC), has demonstrated how to localize a Decent Work Agenda. It has practically demonstrated how DC can help to deliver SDG 8 by creating a platform for cities to promote decent work. More information on this program can be found [here](#).



### Exercise 3.1



45 min



Handout 3.1

## Applying typologies of decentralized cooperation

### Learning Outcome

- To internalize the terminology used in association with decentralized cooperation by relating abstract definitions to real-life experiences and common projects.

### Exercise instructions

1. The trainer team will identify three examples of DC initiatives / projects that have different typologies, modalities, and flows. These should be relevant to the trainee group's region and context.
2. The trainer will divide the participants into groups and each group will have one of the cases presented to them. They are invited to ask any clarifying questions on the case.
3. Using Handout 3.1, participants must work out the type of cooperation, the modality, the main interventions, and tools as well as the main flows of the project. They must also identify relevant SDGs for the project.
4. Participants must choose a representative to present their answers in plenary.

### Requirements for online training

1. Before the training, key aspects on the three examples should be uploaded in Mural.
2. The trainer creates Zoom Breakout Rooms and shares Mural link for participants
3. The handout for Mural is available upon request at [learning@uclg.org](mailto:learning@uclg.org). You can see the preview in Annex 2 – Virtual Handouts



Online Training



Lecture 3.2



15 min

## How to start: methodologies and ways in which to engage in DC to promote the SDGs

### Learning Outcome

- Learning about a range of methodologies and formats that can be employed in DC.
- Understanding how the main forms of DC work, their defining features, and why these are important.

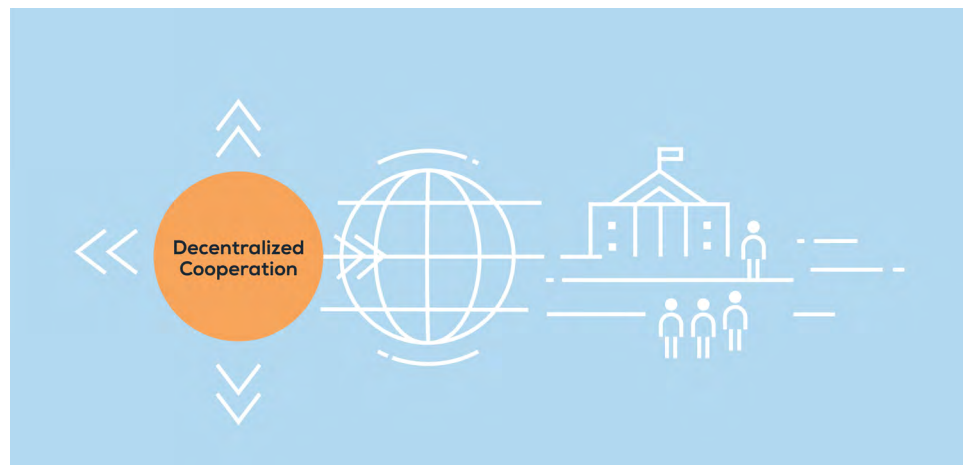
- Gaining greater familiarity with examples of international good practice.

For each type of decentralized cooperation, there is a broad spectrum of methodologies and formats that can be used and which should be effective for strengthening both the operational and institutional capacities of LRGs in their efforts to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the SDGs. For this Module, we consider the following five interventions to be good examples of direct cooperation:

### 1. Aid Funding

Some local and regional governments and their associations have budgets for investing in decentralized cooperation and act as donors. They also raise funding in an altruistic manner. For example, they fund proposals for under-resourced municipalities or provide seed funding to respond to disasters.

### 2. Technical cooperation



Technical cooperation is seen as one of the main mechanisms for the exchange of knowledge and experiences amongst local and regional governments. Ultimately, this is aimed at building local capacities, strengthening institutions and improving internal organization and the overall quality of service provision. The main targets of technical cooperation are specific departments or officials that receive technical support or are involved in exchanges in order to improve their skills. The entry point is having an interest in solving technical problems or in sharing, or applying, different methodologies, approaches and/or technologies. Besides facilitating advances in public policy areas related to specific SDGs, this kind of cooperation can also be used to enhance capacities regarding the localization of the SDGs (i.e. the integration of the SDGs into territorial planning and policy prioritization; facilitating stakeholder participation in SDG implementation, conducting follow ups and reviews; analyzing and mapping SDG interlinkages and policies; monitoring SDG data, reporting and communication strategies; among others).

Whilst the nature of cooperation differs in each context and depends on the local situation, the sector, and the partners involved, it is important that the framework for interaction is well-defined and allows for the sharing of needs, challenges, interests and solutions.

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## Examples of technical cooperation for the implementation of SDGs carried out by Local Government Associations\*

### Ghana

The National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) has been working with the CSO Platform on SDGs, and development partners like the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), on a program to help align development plans to local economic development and SDG 11 targets: the Metropolitan Assembly metro-wide LED strategy, which targets women, vulnerable groups and school drop-outs focusing on tourism, fish processing, auto-mechanics and skill development (SDG 8); the Nadowu-Kaleo District Assembly climate-smart demonstration gardens (SDGs 1, 2 and 13); the Asunafo North Municipal Assembly economic project for the empowerment of women and young people and small and medium sized enterprises through rice and cocoa production (SDGs 2 and 8); and the Ayensuano District Assembly food processing centres for palm oil, gari and cassava dough (SDGs 8 and 9). Further information available [here](#).

### Latvia

The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG) supports a multi-stakeholder approach to SDG localization and is cooperating with the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (of CSOs). Since 2018, the LALRG has participated in the annual global day of action on SDGs and it also works with academia. Funding for this work has been provided under dedicated PLATFORMA/EU programs and the LALRG has emphasized the importance of having access to such external resources.

### The Philippines

The League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) has actively undertaken SDG partnership activities with UCLG and ICLEI and co-leads the SDG cluster of CityNet in the Asia-Pacific region. It has documented the extent to which its member cities are engaged in various activities relating to SDG implementation, including: UN Habitat's Building Climate Resilience through Urban Plans and Design project; ICLEI's Ambitious City Promises program in Southeast Asia; the Urban Nexus and CityFOOD projects; the Global Initiative for Resource Efficient Cities projects; and a number of other local economic development and PPP projects. The 2017 ASEAN Mayors Forum co-hosted by LCP also committed to implementing global goals such as the SDGs.

### Rwanda

The Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA) has also encouraged its members to align local development strategies (DDSs) with SDG targets and assessed the level of integration of SDG indicators under the existing DDSs 2017/18-2023/24. This has involved training programs, within a CLGF/EU program, in three pilot districts (Bugesera, Gicumbi and Ruhango) and has resulted in the development of an SDG assessment tool that uses a fact sheet template to monitor SDG implementation. It is planned to roll-out the results in all other districts. RALGA has also deployed resources provided by the central government and the DDS for this work. It should be noted, however, that there is an ongoing need to raise awareness of the SDGs and further expertise and resources will be needed to continue this work on the SDGs and SDG alignment in the other 27 districts.

\*Examples and information taken from the UCLG - CIB Publication "SDG and LGA Study": [http://cib-uclg.org/sites/default/files/SDGs\\_and\\_lgas\\_study.pdf](http://cib-uclg.org/sites/default/files/SDGs_and_lgas_study.pdf)

### 3. Platforms for the exchange of experiences and knowledge

Another important mechanism is provided by international platforms that promote exchanges of knowledge and experiences amongst LRGs. This could help to facilitate the localization of global Agendas by focusing on specific thematic areas and gathering knowledge about the different SDGs. Several networks and agencies have invested in the documentation of good practices and in providing contact points in the case of interest in applying such practices. Due to digital enrolment and self-learning by public servants, these tools have become increasingly popular over time.

**In understanding the nature of this intervention, it is important, however, to distinguish two types of platforms:**

- Those that are organized by LRGs themselves, within the framework of their respective collaboration networks. Global taskforce and UCLG members make great efforts to identify, evaluate, award and document practices such as the *Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation*, the *International Award UCLG – Mexico City: Culture 21* and the *Urban Sustainability Exchange (USE) Platform* of Berlin and Metropolis, to name just a few examples that have aligned their practice to the SDGs.
- Knowledge programs that are established and promoted by large multilateral organizations. In particular, there is the Local2030 Initiative (originally called “Localizing the SDGs”) of the United Nations Development System, and the European development days.



#### **Guangzhou and Hangzhou as examples of Chinese Decentralized Cooperation**

In 2012, the city of Guangzhou, working together with UCLG and Metropolis, boosted its decentralized cooperation on urban innovation with the launch of the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation. This became a cornerstone for local and regional governments, which were recognized as relevant actors that could help to promote more innovative cities worldwide and ones that are more sustainable, egalitarian and open to everyone. Since 2020, the Guangzhou award has served as a platform for sharing

and exchanging innovative practices relating to the local implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

Another important Asian initiative began in 2017, when the cities of Hangzhou and Fuzhou and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) created the committee on Belt Road Local Cooperation (BRLC) and another committee: the 21st Century Maritime Cooperation Committee (21CMCC), within the UCLG Asia Pacific Section (ASPAC). This initiative has been aligned to Chinese foreign policy since its beginning.

The BRLC has adhered to its policy of "open, cooperative, sharing and win-win" and striven to build a global platform for innovative and entrepreneurial exchanges, to enhance its working mechanism to achieve greater influence, to forge closer ties between BRLC members through online communications, and to promote international cooperation in the fight against COVID-19. The initiative has helped to intensify foreign relations and focuses on promoting exchange through different events involving sister cities, youth groups, the private sector, and global meetings on urban development. It is curious to see that it was the Guangzhou award that brought Hangzhou closer to other international city networks. In fact, as a result of this, Hangzhou's efforts were awarded a prize in 2014. Hangzhou launched China's first public bicycle project in 2008. This initially began with 2,800 bicycles, and 61 stations. By 2015, it had become the largest public bicycle system in the world, with 90,000 bicycles and 3,500 stations. The 'Hangzhou Model' was subsequently adopted by many other cities in China, some of whose systems and performance have even surpassed those of Hangzhou. Beijing, Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City have also adopted similar initiatives. Guangzhou applied this practice, as well as other award-winning lessons, as part of its own transport policy, and the technicians involved also took part in mutual learning.

Today, UCLG ASPAC is considered a meeting point for ad hoc initiatives and projects. Several Chinese cities, such as Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Fuzhou and Xi'an, have engaged in small project with other Asian cities and their leaders. Examples include: hospitals and healthcare centres in Dhulikhel and Bangladeshi cities; exchanges and projects on transport; telemedicine during the COVID-19 pandemic; scholarships for local government officials; and projects to improve nutrition and schooling, to name just a few.

From there, various training programs and learning exchanges were implemented, involving not only members of UCLG, but also their sister cities throughout the world. To promote the brand of UCLG ASPAC BRLC and enhance contacts and interaction among members, an official website was launched: [www.brlc.org.cn](http://www.brlc.org.cn). UCLG ASPAC had also run the "Webshare 17" program, in collaboration with CPAFFC and Chinese Cities. The aim of this initiative was to strengthen local government cooperation between UCLG ASPAC members and to share the Chinese cities' experience of responding to COVID-19, focusing on challenges and strategies for building back better, faster and stronger. This program reflects the interest of Chinese cities in expanding their relations and establishing partnerships with other cities in the Asia Pacific region.

Source: UCLG ASPAC and UCLG Learning Team

#### 4. Learning and benchmarking

The fourth intervention that we would like to highlight here is the tried and tested tool of learning and benchmarking aimed at strengthening the capacities of LRGs. This is intended to provide LRG representatives, managers and staff with a suite of updated, relevant knowledge and learning strategies to apply when taking on different functions. These usually focus on developing relevant skills and target a range of general management competencies that are relevant to LRGs (such as: leadership, motivation, delegation, problem solving). The methodologies allow both individual and group learning and encourage all participants to reflect on their day-to-day practice and on how to appreciate it and/or improve it. In particular, peer learning gives opportunities to LRGs to show and reflect on their experiences and to strengthen relations that may be useful for further networking or bilateral cooperation.

Learning and benchmarking also improve technical capacity in the fields of SDG planning, budgeting and implementation. Alternatively, learning could be on specific sectoral issues, such as resilience, climate change, local economic and sustainable development.

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#### The Observatory of Decentralized Cooperation

Created in 2005, within the framework of the URB–AL Program, the Observatory of Decentralized Cooperation (ODC) is a key instrument which was developed and led by the Provincial Government of Barcelona in collaboration with the City of Montevideo and their partners from the European Union and Latin America. It seeks to collect, systematize, investigate, propose and share knowledge and practices relating to public decentralized cooperation. For more than 15 years, the ODC has promoted and defended the role of regional and local governments and their associations within a framework of shared governance and international decision-making processes. It has also fostered the role of decentralized cooperation as a key instrument of public policy to promote development. Its portfolio includes key work on topics related to local and multilevel governance, triangular cooperation and aid effectiveness.

The ODC is in constant evolution and has expanded its area of influence into other regions. It has adapted its practices and activities to the new context of the international scene, to the new global Agendas and to the changes and evolution of decentralized cooperation.

As part of this effort, the ODC has worked very actively on the localization of global Agendas, and more specifically on the 2030 Agenda. It has done this by facilitating and promoting the exchange of experiences and knowledge and improving the capacity of LRGs and LGAs to implement the SDGs at the local level. As a unique observation space, and due to its accumulated experience, the ODC has become an outstanding hub for analyzing decentralized cooperation and the international action of local governments and their relation to global Agendas. As such, it has helped to develop a framework of analysis, dialogue and exchange and to identify territorial challenges, trends and solutions.

Source: <https://www.observ-ocd.org/en>

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## 5. Policy development for cooperation

If an LRG is interested in advancing in an international cooperation strategy, it could be useful to frame, schedule and finance activities through a specific cooperation policy/plan that include the development of networking and/or project proposals. This will help each LRG to advance towards greater dialogue with other government departments, guaranteeing inter-sector and territorial coordination, coherence and sustainability.

Policies that promote DC can be included as part of a broader and more comprehensive strategy to internationalize the actions of LRGs. Setting up an International Relations office (or a specific agency/department), that could work on political engagement, skill development, intermunicipal cooperation, and service provision can also help to structure DC strategies in a fully-integrated perspective. For further information on these issues, please refer to the Metropolis' and Proyecto AL-LA's publication: *"The Internationalization of Metropolitan Spaces"*.

In the following chapter, we will provide guidance on drafting a policy and also a project for decentralized cooperation.



### Discussion

## Summary and discussion

- In this chapter, we have outlined the five types of cooperation that DC can include. Paying particular attention to direct cooperation, we have unpacked the different modalities: the vertical, territorial partnership, agency, and network modalities.
- We also learned about flows of DC and how they evolved from being predominantly North-South, to more reciprocal, rich and rewarding South-South and triangular forms of cooperation.
- Having understood the theory, we then offered five methodologies explaining how to use DC to promote the SDGs. We moved from the very basic, and simple, aid funding option through to technical cooperation, establishing platforms for knowledge exchange, learning and benchmarking, and then developing policy to support cooperation, which is further developed in the next chapter.
- As we close this session, it is important to emphasize that all the different ways of structuring DC are essentially based on mutual aid, social solidarity, networking and partnerships.
- If DC have the power to meaningfully connect everyone, there is a need to seriously invest in knowledge management and digital networking in order to ensure the effective delivery of the SDGs. LRGs need to put capacities and systems in place that can ensure effective communication, participation and transparency so that all the main actors and stakeholders are able to work together to find effective solutions at the local level.
- As DC practitioners and policy-makers, we need to think more about how to achieve greater alignment with development networks, ensuring the resources to achieve that.



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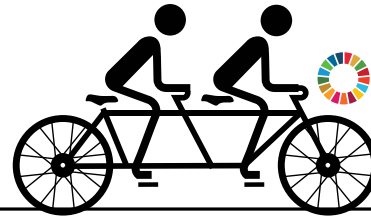
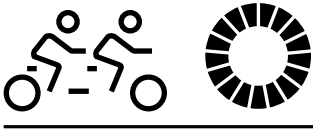
# Chapter 4: How can we design Decentralized Cooperation in line with the SDGs? A step by step approach

## Learning outcomes

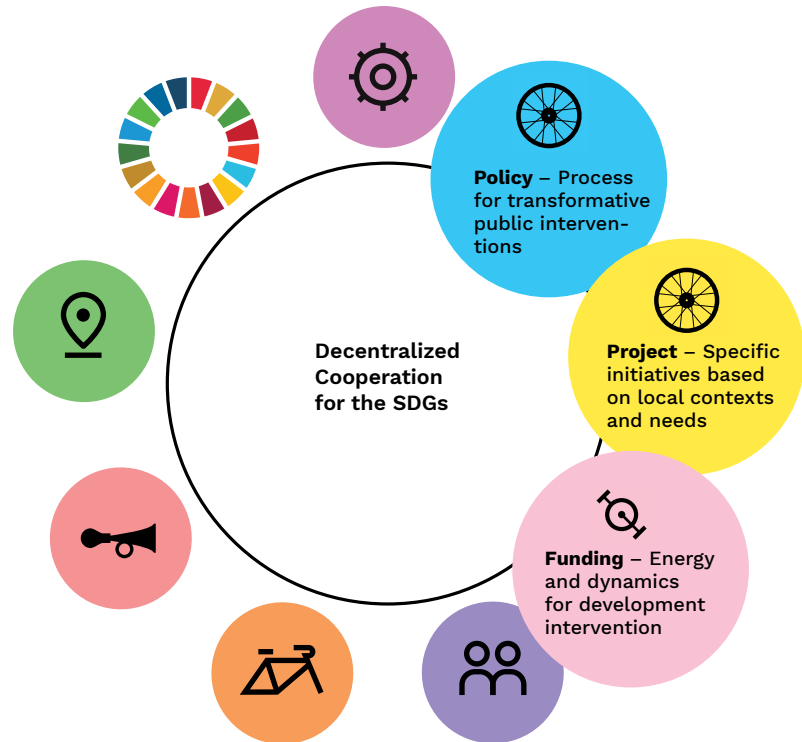
- The ability to craft a simple, but effective, SDG-linked DC policy.
- Different options available for financing DC projects to help achieve the SDGs.
- Empowering people to manage a successful DC project to achieve the SDGs.

## Trainer's insights

We acknowledge that the last learning session on decentralized cooperation typologies and approaches (types, modalities, interventions and flows) was very theoretical. Participants who may have been felt overloaded with new concepts and definitions can now look forward to some more practical training sessions. We will change gear in the next session and expose participants to practical tools that will help them to design and implement DC initiatives. This is a very important session in terms of our bicycle analogy, as it focuses on three critical components that enable the vehicle to move forward and achieve our goals. The front wheel of the bicycle represents providing strategic orientation. Here, participants will learn the essentials of crafting a DC policy that will help to achieve the SDGs. Even so, setting policy is ineffective without the second wheel, which involves actual project management. In this session, participants will learn about the key elements of designing and managing a successful DC project. However, the two wheels of the bicycle can only move forward if they are propelled by concerted actioning of the pedals. Following our analogy, this is where we introduce participants to the important role of financing in DC. Here, participants are exposed to new ways of thinking about funding and will share some practical tips.



## How can we design Decentralized Cooperation in line with the SDGs? A step by step approach



Some documents / online videos that may be useful for trainers and help them to familiarize themselves with the subject would include:

- ↳ PhD Study: *City-to-City Learning in Urban Strategic Planning in Southern Africa: Unearthing an Underground Knowledge Economy*
- ↳ UCLG Study: “*Seek, Sense, Share your City Practice in Networks*”
- ↳ Change management DC: <https://www.vng-international.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/paper-Peter-J.pdf>



Discussion



15 min

### Introductory discussion - The importance of a DC policy

#### Learning Outcome

- Participants must acknowledge the importance of having a policy framework to guide decentralized cooperation (DC) and how this can be a driver for SDGs implementation.

Before starting the formal lecture, it would be a good idea to spend some time on discussing policies, their role, and importance and on determining how many of the participants actually have effective policies currently in place. This will serve as a good forerunner to learning how to craft such policy.



Lecture 4.1



30 min

## How to craft an effective decentralized cooperation policy linked to the SDGs

### Learning Outcomes

- Participants are introduced to a policy writing process that will enable them to draft a simple, but powerful, SDG-linked decentralized cooperation policy framework.
- Participants are empowered by being given the tools required to craft their own, simple and effective, policy framework for an SDG-linked decentralized cooperation project.
- Strategic orientation of leadership for the design and management of projects and programs

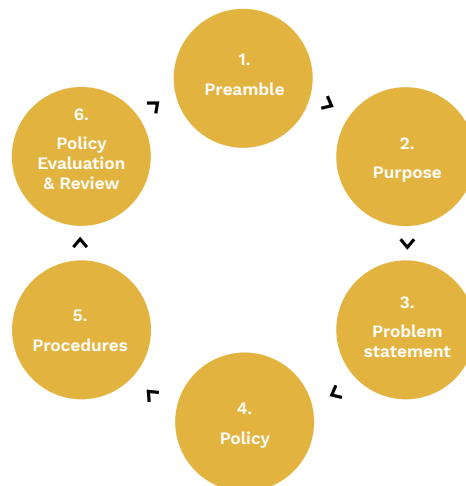
### Trainer's insights

In this short session, we shall focus on HOW to craft an effective SDG-linked DC policy. It is important to remember the role of the political leadership / council in decentralized cooperation. The leader, who has to support any policy, including those of cooperation, need to commit politically. In consequence, the practitioners needs to brief and prepare partnerships in the logic of policy making. The session will comprise of a lecture and a quick learning exercise. This section has been adapted from work done by a local government practitioner tasked with training senior managers in the art of simple, but effective, policy writing<sup>1</sup>. Each DC practitioner must be able to adapt to their own, unique, reality and broader policy context. The framework is, however, generic enough to help guide the structure of general policy, not only for cooperation, but also for international engagement. The 6 steps Policy Format will be presented. This approach will first be introduced in general terms and then unpacked for the more specific context of decentralized cooperation.

### The 6 steps Policy Format: A brief introduction

This is based on good practice in drafting policy documents, which should be simple, clear and effective. We recommend the following policy format approach:

Figure 4.1. The 6 steps' Policy Format



Source: Kerr, C. (Undated)

1.  
Preamble

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**1. Preamble:** This introductory section broadly explains why local government are international actors, reminds about the local and global relation, and what Decentralized Cooperation policy is all about. Note that this is not always required. You may consider providing a short preamble if you feel that the participants lack sufficient background knowledge of DC or that the context facing their LRG(s) is complex.

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2.  
Purpose

**2. Purpose:** This is an important section that explains exactly why you have taken the time to draft a policy for decentralized cooperation and why should it be linked to the SDGs. It reminds the reader about the transformative opportunity of the SDGs in the territories, as explained in Chapter 2, and about the municipal movement's Global Taskforce, promoting the principle of leaving no one and no place behind. This section will outline the goals and the objectives of the DC policy.

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3.  
Problem statement

**3. Problem Statement:** In this section, the background to the need for a DC policy should be summarized as clearly, concisely, and transparent as possible. It can cover whatever you think best explains the “problem”. The problem can be in your territory or in the territory of the partner. The interest and need for capacity are as legitimate as the shortfall in certain service provision, or the urgent need of specific groups or Agendas the cooperation could address. It should be clear and include all important aspects related to the drafting process, research conducted, consultations involved and any possible compliance issues. The problem statement should be shared with partners, as it is a key for mobilization.

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4.  
Policy

**4. Policy:** This is the heart of the framework and spells out exactly what rules are put in place. The policy entails the commitment of leadership, to achieve specific and generic targets. The decentralized cooperation cannot be separated from the internationalization strategy that was explained in the former chapters. If followed, it should be possible to achieve the target outcomes through a developmental approach to decentralized cooperation.

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5.  
Procedures

**5. Procedures:** This section addresses how to achieve the task. Here, it is important to remember the mandates and competences of local government departments. Making them work together for achieving the SDGs is time intensive, but motivates integrated and people centered work. It provides a set of guidelines or rules as to how to make policies effective and recognizes engagement of technicians beyond departments and beyond the municipality. It may also include the outline for an implementation plan.

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6.  
Policy Evaluation & Review

**6. Policy Evaluation and Review:** This concluding section outlines how we evaluate what we have done. The international Agenda is an opportunity to show the work of cooperation, as well as the municipal services that help to achieve the SDGs. The evaluation suggests mechanisms for checking achievement and amending policy, as well as reporting and communicating on the work done. This ensures that policy remains relevant in an ever dynamic and changing socio-economic and political context.

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**Exercise 4.1**



45 min



Handout 4.1

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**Note:** The participants should be notified that the handout has been designed as a tool to help them formulate their DC policies and to imagine different context for labour policy.

## 6 steps: Policy in practice

### Learning Outcome

- Introduction to the art of crafting effective policy to guide SDG-linked DC practice.

### Exercise instructions

You are a fast-growing LRG but you do not have much technical support. You have just obtained approval from the local council to formalize a triangular DC partnership with a peer LRG from an emerging economy and a highly capacitated LRG. Given the high levels of unemployment in your respective settlements, the partnership will focus on SDG 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all). You are program managers and your team has been asked by the Mayor's Office to draft a simple consultative policy framework to guide administrative processes.

1. The trainer ensures that there are 6 groups for the exercise.
2. Each group is allocated one "P" to work on, using the handout provided.
3. The trainer should allow participants to make assumptions and be as creative as possible. Note that the objective is merely to learn more. It is accepted that since groups work separately, the overall policy may well not be very coherent.
4. After 15 minutes of group work, each group will be given 2 minutes to present their "P" in the whole group.
5. The last 15 minutes could be spent reflecting on the exercise, what was most challenging in terms of crafting the policy element, and perhaps what was learned.

### Requirements for online training

Materials for virtual training are available upon request at [learning@uclg.org](mailto:learning@uclg.org).



Online Training

## Reading the room: How much collective experience do we have in managing DC projects?



**Exercise 4.2**



15 min

### Learning Outcome

- To share and understand the collective experience of the participants in designing and managing real-life DC projects.

It would be a good idea to begin the session by determining the collective experience and expertise of the participants with respect to project design and management linked to SDG projects. This will help determine the level at which to pitch the session.

### Exercise instructions

1. The trainer will ask how many of the participants have been involved in directly managing an SDG-linked DC project. This will be done through a simple show of hands. If there are not many people with experience, the trainer could ask how many have designed or managed general projects and in what roles.
2. The trainer will give different participants one minute to share their experiences of managing a project. They could let everyone know what the project was about and perhaps highlight one project management challenge.
3. Having obtained a sense of where the participants are, in terms of project experience, we can then proceed and share a framework to help guide them through the process of managing SDG-linked DC projects.



### How to design an impactful SDG-linked DC Project

#### Learning Outcomes


- The participants will be equipped with the knowledge required to design an effective SDG-linked project.
- The participants will learn to recognize the importance of ensuring that the project outcome has the desired impact.
- The participants will be introduced to various different approaches for the implementation of DC projects. Attention will be focused on the opportunities, limitations and challenges that arise when localizing the SDGs.

#### Trainer's insight

In this practical session, participants immerse themselves into the world of the SDG-linked DC project. It is important to stress, however, that this learning session only provides ideas for quite high-level design. It is assumed that participants will already have a basic knowledge of project management. The

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 Lecture 4.2

 15 min

 Handout 4.2



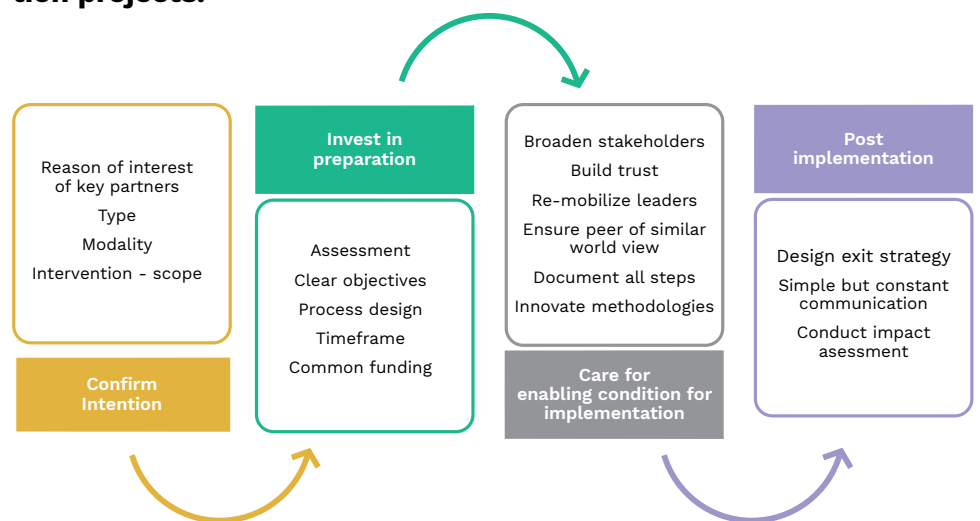
session will therefore focus on the application of project management principles to DC broadly aligned with the principles of SDG 17. We will start with a short group discussion to determine participant experience and expertise in designing projects. See exercise 4.2. above. This will be followed by a lecture that outlines a broad framework and guidelines that are useful when designing DC projects. **It will cover the following elements:**

- Conceptualizing the SDG-linked DC project.
- Determining project needs and structure to enable effective SDG localization.
- The stages in a typical C2C learning project and how the SDGs can be incorporated.
- Managing a SDG-linked DC project: stakeholders, resources and timeframes.

There are numerous ways to structure interesting and engaging SDG-linked DC projects. The intention is NOT to prescribe a blueprint for success. We accept that each LRG context is unique and that each local program / project manager is best placed to design an approach that responds to their local conditions.

At the same time, there are no doubt many useful experiences and insights that practitioners have gained while designing cooperation programs. It is important to highlight that behind the LRG and their decentralized cooperation are stakeholders that may remain motivated, beyond “project implementation” as they mirror the reality of their peers. What follows is a framework that builds on these insights. It is shared so that DC program managers can consider them when they are tailoring their own made-to-measure plans<sup>2</sup>. As reflected in Figure 4.2. (see below), the overall framework is first segmented into four key components to clearly structure the DC process:

**Figure 4.2. Suggested framework to guide decentralized cooperation projects.**



Source: Moodley, S. (2016: 226)

Due to time constraints, we cannot discuss each of the steps within the phases of the life of a typical DC project of the type outlined in Figure 4.2. As a high-level summary, there are, however, some important points to emphasize when engaging in SDG-linked project design:

When reflecting on the projects and programs managed by Local and Regional Government, it is clear that DC does not happen overnight. It is not a question of chance when we see cities becoming “attractors” of cooperation; they need to show their current situation and count on local expertise and leadership. This requires significant effort, time and commitment by a wide range of stakeholders and also a substantial investment of financial and other resources. Similarly when an agreed project or program comes to an end, expectations and lessons learnt need to be supported. Often, the friendship between stakeholders or also between “cities” continue and can be intensified by other projects at a later stage.

We must start by **agreeing on the form of the DC project**. We can distinguish<sup>2</sup> main kinds of frameworks<sup>3</sup>:

- An approach based on logical models using a set of instruments that are commonly used in planning, monitoring and evaluation. This involves defining an intervention and establishing causal relations “if one thing happens, then another will follow it”.
- Participatory and process-based approaches, born as an alternative to project approaches, in which it is difficult to analyze social factors. An example of these can be seen in the change management frameworks and the pilot Connect (PLATFORMA, VNG<sup>4</sup>) or the peer learning tools promoted by UCLG. These allow interventions to be interpreted as open and highly dynamic systems.

In order to help us get to grips with effective project design, we will share some of the main characteristics of the different approaches and also highlight their limitations and the opportunities they offer for us to advance in the localization of the SDGs.

**Table 4.1. Main approaches to the design and implementation of cooperation projects<sup>5</sup>**

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Key features and strengths</b>	<b>Challenges and limitations</b>	<b>Link with SDG localization</b>
<p><b>Logical Framework Approach (LFA)</b></p> <p>Other approaches related to this model include a Human Rights-Based Approach and a Gender-oriented Approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widely known and used by donors and practitioners.</li> <li>• Helps to understand nature of problems and establish a logical hierarchy.</li> <li>• Simple tool for project planning, monitoring and evaluation.</li> <li>• Promotes clear roles during implementation.</li> <li>• Useful for identifying potential risks that could prevent the achievement of objectives and outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of attention to DC strengths: process, multi-actor, outreach beyond the schedule and commitment from institutions (LRG).</li> <li>• May be too rigid to adapt to changing contexts.</li> <li>• Could be seen as an external imposition that challenges local ownership.</li> <li>• Could result in complicated frameworks of objectives and indicators too unwieldy to put into practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can provide a clear set of parameters easier to link to the SDGs and for LRGs to establish, when applying for SDG-related funding.</li> <li>• Helps define measurable outputs, results and outcomes that are useful for monitoring the implementation of SDG localization.</li> </ul>

**Participatory, Learning and Action for Change Approach**

Approaches are gaining importance and are useful alternative or complementary tool open to peer-to-peer formats.

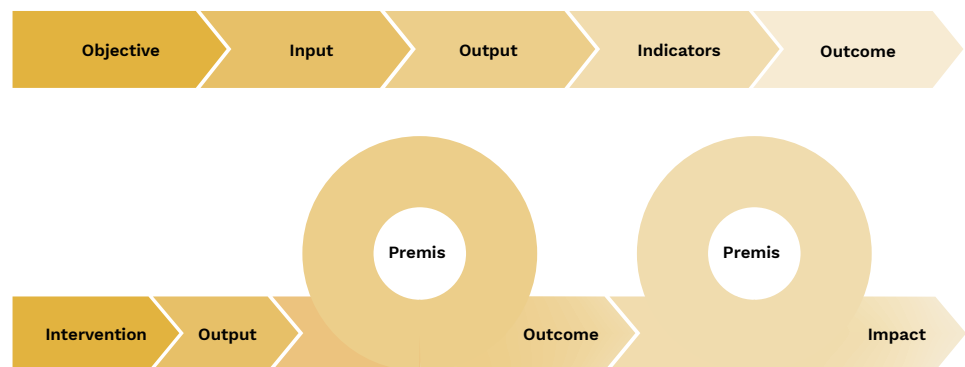
- Introduces participation and exchange between stakeholders as means to increase projects' efficacy and efficiency.
- Seeking to integrate different processes within a complex environment.
- Based on a flexible design that changes as a result of learning from the experience acquired during execution.
- Room for innovative solutions.

- Can involve major investments in time and resources.
- Performance and progress indicators difficult to align to the SDG quantitative indicator system.

- More closely aligned with the spirit and intention of SDGs, particularly relating to inclusive, community-driven initiatives.

It is recommended that the Project Management Team driving the DC project decides the approach to be used based on the local context and their capacities. In this way, an LRG's DC program could become a hybridized mixture of different approaches. The combination would depend on the different goals pursued by the LRG and the links and impacts that it plans to have with local public policies.

**Figure 4.3. Logical Framework vs Learning approach**



In order to maximize the benefits of this investment, we strongly recommend that emphasis is placed on the **gearing up phase** and on ensuring that the pre-conditions for enabling are in place. This is especially relevant if the intention is to ensure that the DC project is aligned with the SDGs. It is therefore useful to have clear Terms of Reference for the project, which should directly address the broader DC Policy (covered earlier). It is here, when framing the objectives, that the linkage with the relevant SDGs must be made clear.

We shall now move ahead to the **“mutual learning” implementation phase**. By this time, the groundwork for the preparation phase of the DC project should be in place and the different partners should be ready for DC implementation. A model has been suggested which outlines the typical stages

that partners may work through as the DC project matures. The details of this model are not covered but participants can click ↪ [here](#), for more details about the mechanics of the learning process.

Finally, after the implementation of the DC project (the mutual learning process) has formally concluded, and the program enters its **after-care stage**, there may be a temptation to re-prioritize the use of group resources, particularly given the competing real-world demands placed on busy LRG staff.

This **post-learning phase** is very important as it is here that learning is consolidated and that the momentum and sustainability of the lessons learned become fully consolidated through the active application of good practices (gradually internalized over the years) and through different project partnerships.

Given the importance of ensuring that DC projects are impactful and help localize the SDGs, it is important to consider how the project will be institutionalized, who will be responsible for this task, and how the gains made during the project will be sustained. This is key not only for maximizing the benefits for local stakeholders, but also for contributing to the continuous building of social solidarity, working with peers and partners from other territories, in the spirit of SDG 17.

## Engendering SDGs in DC

### Learning Outcome

- Using the Logframe Approach as a tool for localizing the SDGs through its incorporation into DC project design.

Given the practical nature of this chapter, and having gained experience in the art of crafting an SDG-linked policy for DC, the next exercise is designed to tackle the challenge of actively integrating the SDGs into the DC project. According to feedback from practitioners, the relationship between SDGs and DC is often limited to a short narrative on how a project relates to the SDGs, or with a quick reference to a checklist. We want to emphasize the need to move beyond the “add-on” notion of linking the SDGs to DC to incorporate them into design in a more fundamental way. We do not have a ready-made recipe for how to do this; we propose relying on the local creativity of the project team and letting them apply their minds to this task.

To this end, the next exercise has been designed to use the Logframe approach as a tool to help structure the design of a DC project that actively integrates the SDGs. We suggest that it would be a good idea to begin the session by determining the group’s collective experience and expertise relating to project design and management involving SDG-linked projects. This will help determine the level at which to pitch the session and will enable the group to understand who has previous experience and therefore who they may want to compare notes with.



#### Exercise 4.3



30 min



Handout 4.3/1, 4.3/2  
+ Worksheet 4.3

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**Note:** In order to get a taste of a specific approach, we suggest doing a short group exercise using the Logframe approach using Handout 4.2. to identify a typical Logical Framework Matrix structure. In this way, it will be possible to explore how this can be used to frame an SDG-linked project based on promoting empowerment and greater social inclusion. After this, highlight the strength of change management reminding the local government added value as leader of projects.

## Exercise instructions

### Engendering SDGs in DC: “Centre of Hope” Case Study / Role Play

1. The trainer will read the Case Study – see Handout 4.3. in a group session to save time.
2. Each group will begin by appointing a Project Leader, who will assume the role of managing the DC project between Cape Town, in South Africa, and Delft, in the Netherlands.
3. The trainer should let the participants know that the goal of the exercise is to work on the logic of the project and to do this as quickly as possible. Their ideas do not have to be fully developed.
4. Group members will be tasked with systematically completing the Logframe work. They will start with the Project Goal and work their way down to define Project Outputs.
5. The groups can make their own assumptions, as they do not have any local knowledge of the case. This is intentional. It is only an exercise to learn how the Logframe tool works.
6. The blank worksheets (worksheet 4.3.) can be used to fill in the Logframe. Alternatively, if the group prefers, a flipchart may also be used.
7. It may be a good idea for the trainer to complete the exercise too and to then have a sample answer to share. This would be particularly useful if the groups have not come across Logframes before.
8. After 20 minutes, the groups should be asked to finish what they are doing.
9. The trainer asks the groups to imagine that: The project has been running for one year now. A global pandemic and a long lockdown have drastically raised the levels of domestic violence. The initial design of the project is not reflecting the current reality and constantly-growing needs. There is no way to get more financial resources from the initial donors.
10. The trainer asks the groups to dedicate 5 minutes to discuss internally how the Logframe that they have created could be adjusted to the new circumstances.
11. As a second part of the exercise, the trainer distributes Handout 4.3/2 and asks the groups to compare the Logframe and the Learning Approach
12. To close the exercise the trainer guides a final debate around the following questions:
  - What are the strengths and limitations of a Logframe?
  - For what kind of projects should the Learning Approach be applied?

## Requirements for online training

1. The trainer creates Zoom Breakout Rooms with four or five participants in each room.
2. Handouts for MURAL are available upon request at [learning@uclg.org](mailto:learning@uclg.org). You can see the preview in Annex 2 – Virtual Handouts.
3. Follow the instructions from the Virtual Handout 4.3/1 and 4.3/2.



 Lecture 4.3

 15 min

 Handout 4.2

## How to mobilize funding for DC initiatives: Sharing useful tips

### Learning Outcomes

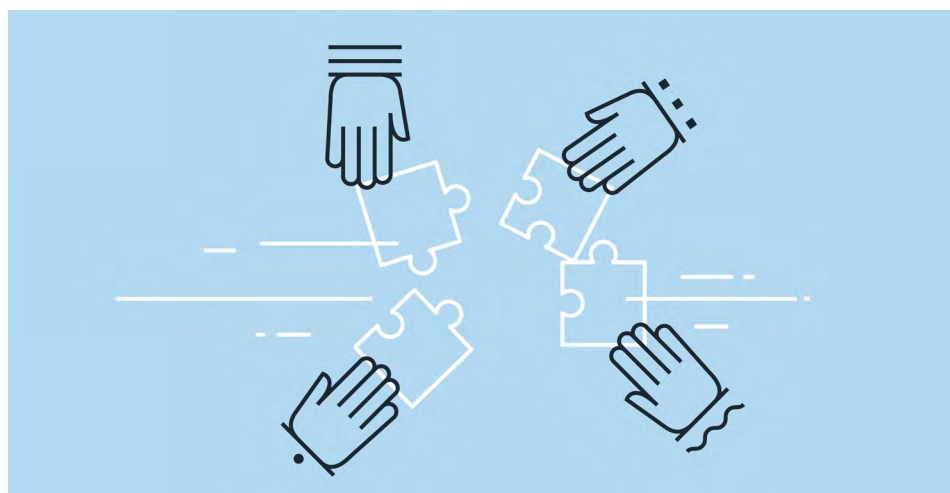
- Embracing a new mindset that encourages new and innovative ways of mobilizing DC funding.
- Cultivating new thinking and looking beyond reliance on international donor funding for DC initiatives.
- Learning about examples of international good practice regarding funding from the global South.
- Participants will embrace a new mindset that encourages innovative ways of mobilizing DC funding and other resources.
- Participants will be encouraged to think beyond reliance on international donor funding for DC initiatives.

### Trainer's insight

As a trainer, it is important to recognize that workshop participants will most likely place great emphasis on the issue of funding DC programs. It will therefore be important to manage expectations in the session and to make sure that they are realistic and achievable.

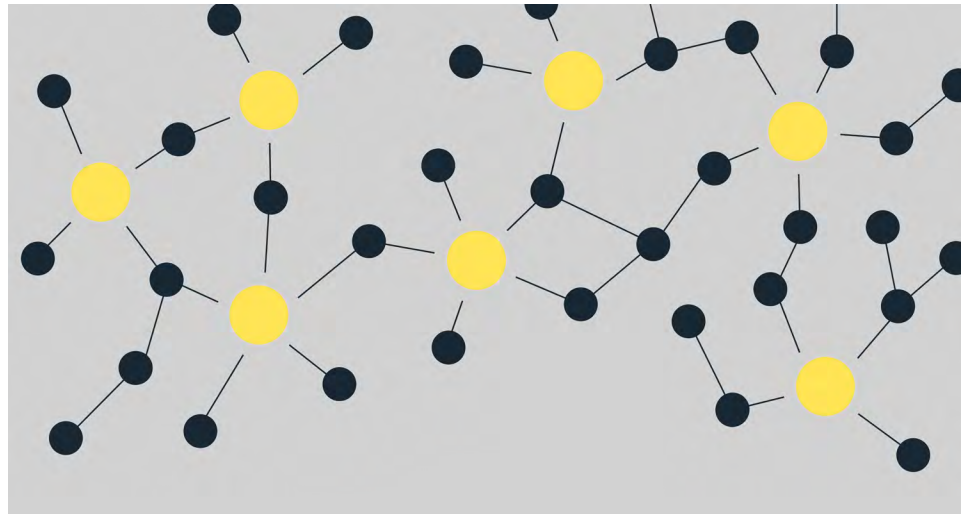
Whilst having access to international funding is aspirational, participants must be encouraged to develop a new mindset that inspires creativity and innovation and encourages LRG staff and their partners to think of new ways to mobilize resources that can help deliver high-impact developmental DC projects. This learning session will be structured in such a way as to help deliver this outcome.

### Rethinking traditional notions of funding DC programs



From the outset, we must emphasize that there are no easy answers to the question: “how do we fund DC initiatives?” We, as trainers of trainers, and as the program managers of the Module, cannot claim to have all the correct answers. Similarly, the trainers who are being trained to empower others must also be open and upfront about this. We highly recommend managing expectations in this session so that the participants will be more realistic about what constitutes achievable outcomes. It is important to create a new framework for thinking about the funding of decentralized cooperation programs.

### Opening considerations on the mobilization of resources for DC



We must accept the reality that the availability of international development funding for decentralized cooperation by global organizations / funders has become increasingly limited since the 2008 global economic crisis. We must also recognize the far-reaching impact of COVID 19 and what this implies for the fiscal resources and possibilities of local and regional governments. The capacity of many LRGs to provide even basic public services has been drastically reduced as a result of the devastating economic effects of the pandemic. This is an important consideration to consider given that DC will, unfortunately but realistically, probably not be a priority item within the budgets of many councils.

Moreover, where international funding is available, there is now much greater competition between LRGs, agencies and their networks for these scarce resources. Although global funding may not be as easily available, there are, however, many LRGs from more developed economies that are still committed to working in partnership. It is often a case of trying to identify such partners and ensure that matches can be made. It is also important to remind institutions of the importance of the solidarity and political motivation of LRGs as actors in international policy where, through partnerships, they can help strengthen democracy and human rights.

It is equally important to emphasize that funding the decentralized cooperation initiatives of LRGs should not be entirely dependent on their ability to secure international grant funding, or exclusively rely on partners in the global North. Actually, LRG have a lot of resources dedicated to development and public services, financial human and administrative. So ideally cooperation is close their mandate to improve rather than to set up. With this attitude, LRG can ensure follow up and longer lasting impact. LRGs should mobilize resources more strategically and think of new ways in which to access funding, looking beyond dependence on multilateral funding agencies. One strategic way to do this is by adopting a multi-stakeholder approach that enables key partners to contribute towards the program. This is what SDG 17 is about! This will be further detailed in Chapter Five, where the stakeholder mapping tool will be introduced. This will require some creativity and the



ability to carefully aggregate smaller amounts of available funding from different sources. In this way, rather than relying on a large single funder, a variety of actors can identify with the purpose and outcome of the cooperation project, related to a specific SDG.

### **How to mobilize funding resources: Some tips to consider**

Against this background of a more strategic, multi-stakeholder approach, we can offer some suggestions that are worth considering:

#### **1. Designing a clear plan for DC to facilitate the achievement of the SDGs**

First and foremost, we should emphasize that mobilizing funding will be easier if there is a clear plan that guides how DC will unfold in the LRG. Policy (introduced in the previous section) is a critical piece in the puzzle and will help considerably here. There must be an accompanying framework to support the overall Policy; this must outline each of the phases and steps to be taken. This will give potential investors and stakeholders confidence that there is not only a commitment to a vision for DC, but also a systematic process by which to carry out the strategic intention. (Note that the following section on “How to design a DC project” will also be useful for guiding the development of such a framework).

#### **2. Contributing own LRG funding towards a DC program to achieve the SDGs.**

As well as the possibility of mobilizing funding from potential international partners or global funding agencies, it is also important to encourage LRGs to commit to contributing their own resources to DC and to achieving the SDGs. Of course, it is accepted that there will be competing priorities at the local and regional levels and that this may not be regarded as an urgent need. However, by demonstrating a clear commitment to the DC program, and showing how it will help to deliver developmental outcomes whilst also increasing the visibility and profile of the LRG, political leadership can be lobbied to commit at least some funding, or in-kind contributions, to municipal corporation. The DC Policy can again play a key role here in securing this commitment. The core budget of the office responsible for DC (e.g., the International Office, Intergovernmental Office, or Mayor's Office) is a useful starting point in such cases, even if only the commitment of in-kind resources to a DC program, as operational support, can be secured.

In addition, where donor funding has been secured for service delivery in under-resourced contexts, a capacity-building approach can be adopted that would allow DC to be built into the project design of sector-specific projects (e.g., the provision of water, sanitation, LED, energy). This is a creative way to use international funding to promote peer learning.

#### **3. Mobilizing philanthropic finance: The engagement of local and global business partners**

The SDGs have become very relevant for the private sector, which is currently adjusting compliance to meet international standards that are oriented towards delivering the SDGs. International good practice has shown how the private sector recognizes the value of a robust partnerships with local, regional and state authorities. If they are able to see the tangible benefits of joining a potential partnership, in which their own LRG has invested, they



may be able to harness their own financial resources and contribute towards the budget. This may be in the form of either cash or kind, but always as part of the new local horizontal-partnership approach discussed earlier. The UN also recommends LRGs to consider increasing their effectiveness in mobilizing philanthropic financing by leveraging digital platforms for crowdsourcing donations, wherever possible.

#### **4. Harnessing resources and expertise from academic and research partners**

Particularly in large and intermediary cities, universities can be key partners as they benefit from international relations and also align with the SDGs through international education standards. There is genuine mutual interest in generating local knowledge on the SDGs. As will be further unpacked in Chapter 5 academics can also be mobilized to commit intellectual resources (including training and capacity building). Through a carefully structured partnership with these institutions, research funds can be creatively utilized to help fund partnerships. Post-graduate students can also be recruited to assist in program design, rather than employing service providers.

#### **5. Matching budget support from potential development partners with local priorities**

With larger local authorities in the developing world that are exploring place-based policies to promote sustainable local and regional development, there may be opportunities to utilize budget support mechanisms that are already in place. Most development partners are developing specific budget support mechanisms related to the SDGs and making this funding as accessible as possible. Using budget support from the EU to support this type of policy would help LRGs to make local and regional development, and the implementation of place-specific strategies, more effective. Given the need for this type of support in the developing world, where socio-spatial inequalities remain a threat to both social cohesion and political stability, it is important to understand how these funding mechanisms work and how to engage with partners in order to access them.

#### **6. Engaging with Local Government Associations and National Ministries**

LGAs may have greater access to international networks that are interested in supporting innovative partnerships. We suggest that the LRG team will need to be dynamic and actively engage with the relevant LGAs to see how best to mobilize their resources. It has been noted that some national governments have set aside funding for DC, but this may not always be common knowledge. It is important to be able to work with LGAs to mobilize these national funds. A good example of this can be seen in Morocco, where the Ministry of the Interior has created a fund to support DC that provides nearly 60% of the required financial support. The condition for accessing this funding is that the country's local collective needs to identify an African local collective with which to work on a specific project.

#### **7. Identifying Local political leaders as spokespersons or champions**

Another simple tip is to ensure that the local mayor, or another relevant political leader or senior politician who has credibility with the LRG, is made the champion of the DC project. They must then be fully appropriately briefed and given knowledge and understanding of the importance of municipal cooperation. Once on board, the ability for such champions to lobby for resources through their (local, regional, national and global) networks cannot be underestimated.

1. Designing a clear plan for DC to facilitate the achievement of the SDGs
2. Contributing own LRG funding towards a DC program to achieve the SDGs.
3. Mobilizing philanthropic finance: The engagement of local and global
4. Harnessing resources and expertise from academic and research partners
5. Matching budget support from potential development partners with local priorities
6. Engaging with Local Government Associations and National Ministries partners
7. Identifying Local political leaders as spokespersons or champions

### International donor funding for DC initiatives: Tips for José



#### Exercise 4.4



20 min



Handout 4.4

**Note:** Strict time management is required in this session. It is important to ensure that a co-trainer is available to work closely with the lead trainer here.

#### Learning Outcome

- A new way of thinking that goes beyond reliance on international donor funding for DC initiatives

Before the trainer shares some ideas on mobilizing funding, it would be useful to start with a discussion session that explores the challenge posed by limited funding. A short vignette could be used to stimulate creative thinking and discussion. Please see Handout 4.4., which contains the vignette – “Tips for Jose.”

#### Exercise instructions

1. The trainer will read the Vignette aloud in the group session (Handout 4.4.)
2. Each Group will then spend 10 minutes discussing the story and answering the question.
3. Every Group must record their responses on the three cards provided, recording one Tip on each card.
4. The co-trainer will collect all the cards, group by group, as they finish the task.
5. The card will then be handed to the trainer, who will place them on a Zopp board or wall at the front of the room and begin arranging them by theme.
6. The remaining 10 minutes will be spent in a group session, reflecting on the cards and, time permitting, with a limited discussion.



Online Training



Handout 4.4



Discussion



15 min

### Requirements for online training

1. The trainer will read the Vignette aloud to all participants (Handout 4.4.).
2. As a second step, the trainer will create Zoom Breakout Rooms with three to four participants in each room.
3. The rest of the steps follow the offline version of the exercise, as explained above.

### Group discussion – Funding an SDG-linked project

#### Learning Outcome

- The trainer should research one example of a sustainably-funded project in its region and expose it to the participants for them to have a real-life, practical example to discuss.
- Participants can speak together, either in small groups or in a whole-class group, to examine and critique a real-life example of the funding of an SDG-linked DC project. The objective will be to reflect on how networks and other intermediaries can help find better and sustainable funding.

#### Summary and conclusion

In this chapter, which focussed on the nuts and bolts of DC, we have emphasized that there is no rule book or recipe for the successful implementation of DC. Acknowledging that each context is unique and requires tailor-made local responses, we have offered broad guidelines and tips for DC practitioners. As a starting point, the case was made for investing time and energy in developing a clear policy framework to guide the DC initiative in order to align with, and assist in achieving, the SDGs. The Framework encompassed the 6 steps and covered the needs for the policy, the rules governing the DC process, the procedures to be put in place to achieve the policy goals, and the evaluation and review mechanisms.

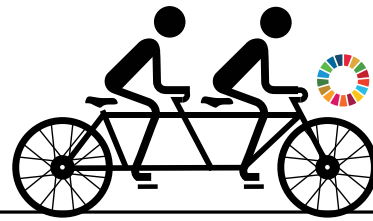
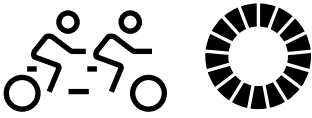
We suggest that having a clear and effective policy in place enables the implementation of an impactful SDG-linked project. Successful action on the ground is only possible through the implementation of a project, and this can take many forms. In this learning session, we outlined a framework that could help guide a DC project, from the steps involved during project preparation, through key actions during the implementation phase, and ending with action to be taken in the post-implementation phase. We have introduced the participants to various approaches to project design and discussed the pros and cons of the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), which is an approach often required by donors. We have also examined the longer-term strategy of the Participatory Learning and Action Approach building relations for supporting change.

We close the chapter by making the point that a policy framework (the front wheel of our bicycle analogy) and the project (the back wheel) can only operate with funding (represented by the pedals of the bicycle, which are what move it forwards along the path marked by the SDGs). Here, we have focussed on developing a new mindset that encourages LRGs and their partners to think of creative new ways to mobilize resources rather than relying on traditional forms of donor funding. Useful tips and lessons learned from experiences from all over the world are shared to help guide practitioners in their projects.



## Chapter References

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## Chapter 5: Who are we working with? SDG 17: Mobilizing multi-stakeholder territorial partnerships for DC

### Learning Outcomes

- To understand the opportunity presented by the SDGs and, in particular, by SDG 17, for co-creation and co-development.
- Recognizing the value of cooperation between territories and their respective actors (local approach).
- Raising awareness of the range of key stakeholders involved in DC and how these actors can be effectively mobilized to localize the Global Agenda.
- Making people aware of the politics of engagement and the need to manage competing local interests.

### Trainer's insights



This action-oriented learning session is aimed at introducing participants to the nuances of managing multiple stakeholders in SDG-linked decentralized cooperation initiatives. It focusses on local-based partnerships which are promoted as an ideal platform with which to galvanize the support of diverse local stakeholders around a common SDG project.

More importantly, this session makes a connection between local partnerships, emphasizing links not only between LRG peers, but also between their respective CSOs, academic stakeholders, private sector partners and inter-governmental organizations. This is done to highlight the potential contribution that DC can make towards promoting global solidarity, within the broader spirit of SDG 17, and mobilizing stakeholders from different territories and levels of government and helping them to localize other SDGs that are relevant to all the parties concerned. Here, we move beyond theory and to practice, by offering simple practical advice to practitioners, as well as opportunities for group discussion and exercises.

Referring to the bicycle analogy, the stakeholders, partnerships and networks represent the main factors that drive change. They are responsible for guiding the DC vehicle and ensuring that it stays on course and reaches the destination of sustainable development. This chapter is therefore important and goes beyond merely raising awareness of who the key stakeholders are. Instead, it compels participants to analyze each stakeholder, their influence and interests in the project (through stakeholder mapping) and their unique contribution towards helping to achieve a successful outcome.

**Some documents that may be useful for trainers and help them to familiarize themselves with this subject:**

- ↳ PLATFORMA Study: *Shaping a new generation of decentralized cooperation - For enhanced effectiveness and accountability*
- ↳ UCLG: *Decalogue for the COVID-19 Aftermath*
- ↳ UCLG: *The Durban Political Declaration*
- ↳ PLATFORMA Study: *Decentralized Cooperation to achieve the 2030 Agenda: Towards a new generation of multi-stakeholder partnerships*
- ↳ OECD Study: *Reshaping decentralized Development Cooperation: The key role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda*



#### Exercise 5.1



15 min

**UCLG “*What local governments need to know*” app**

### The importance of SDG 17 for LRGs

#### Exercise instructions

1. Ask all the participants to use their mobile phones to download the UCLG “*What local governments need to know*” app. Please allow a few minutes for everyone to do this.
2. Once downloaded, ask participants to click on SDG 17.
3. Next, each of the groups should be allocated one of the 6 targets.
4. Each group will be given five minutes to briefly discuss the importance of their target for local and regional governments.
5. A representative from each group will then share their thoughts in the general group.



Lecture 5.1



15 min

**Note:** Instead of providing a full lecture, *the UCLG Sustainable Development Goals App* can be used to familiarize participants with SDG 17 and other local government-related targets. This is one way to ensure that everyone is aware of the App and takes the time to install it on their mobile phones.



## Decentralized cooperation: a playground for SDG 17

### Learning outcome

- Appreciation of SDG 17, internationalization policies, and how DC can facilitate international partnerships.

### Unpacking SDG 17 and its targets

As part of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goal 17 ('Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development'), acknowledges the need to establish global partnerships in order to achieve the sustainable development Agenda.

Traditional one-to-one partnerships are increasingly being replaced by multi-level, multi-stakeholder partnerships that bring together key stakeholders across different levels, borders, and sectors to address key local issues. As we will see in the following lectures, multi-stakeholder partnerships are key for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies, and financial resources to support the achievement of the Agenda.<sup>1</sup>

SDG 17 is about working together to achieve the SDGs and make the 2030 Agenda a reality globally and in the territories. SDG 17 is especially important for LRGs because:<sup>2</sup>

- It is at the local level that coherent policies can be developed to address the multiple challenges of poverty reduction and sustainable development.
- LRGs are in the ideal position to encourage and facilitate partnerships between public bodies, the private sector and civil society.
- Local tax and revenue generation must play its part in financing sustainable development.
- LRGs have been collaborating internationally for over one hundred years and can foster the localization of the SDGs through DC.

SDG 17 considers DC and its partnerships as suitable mechanisms for its achievement. In this session, we suggest a few ways in which the targets identified within SDG 17 can be achieved through typical decentralized cooperation partnerships:



### Cooperation to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (Target 17.14)

Some DC initiatives are focused around learning policy. In such cases, partners pay more attention to facilitating the process of one LRG learning from another, or there being a mutual learning process, than on generating effective policy. For example, in many African countries, there are numerous policies in place, but many of these are highly ineffective and impractical. Not all policies are enabling and those that are not are unlikely to facilitate greater growth, development, innovation, or inclusion. A well-designed DC process can ensure the transfer of skills and expertise through the design of simple, effective, and implementable policies and the delivery of the proposed out-

comes. Some cities and regions are more skillful in the ways in which they engage with their partners. These cities are good candidates to offer insights and lessons to other cities and regions that may want to develop their own, context-specific practices. The municipality of eThekweni, in South Africa provides a good example of this. It shares its stakeholder engagement practices with other cities in Namibia and Malawi as part of an organized, decentralized cooperation program.



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### Mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise and technology to support the achievement of the SDGs (Target 17.16)

Many of the international DC initiatives focus on sharing knowledge and expertise. Whilst these commonly originated as one-way transfers of skills, experience and knowledge, from a partner in the Global North to the Global South (see Chapter 1), contemporary partnerships are characterized by more open and mutual sharing of knowledge. Over the last decade, more lateral (South-South) cooperation has emerged, involving bilateral technical exchanges. An even newer trend is triangular cooperation, involving three partners, with perhaps two from the Global South and one from the Global North. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been working in partnership with UCLG to improve the capacities of local actors through both South-South and triangular cooperation projects. These projects have focused on the creation of employment, the promotion of local economic development, and the integration of the informal sector. This type of triangulation is a good example of localizing Target 17.16.



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### The promotion of multi-stakeholder partnerships (Target 17.17)

The UNDP identifies nine characteristics of good governance, with participation as the very first.<sup>3</sup> There is increasing recognition of the reality that LRGs cannot achieve their outcomes alone; their success requires the effective participation of a range of critical stakeholders. Working in concert with businesses, civil society (NGOs and faith-based organizations, etc) representatives from academia, trade unions and other traditional authorities (where they exist) is no longer considered a good practice, but seen as essential. The SDGs are easy to understand and considered relevant by most stakeholders, and they make it easier to stage and connect projects and their results. The Spanish regions of Catalonia, Andalusia and the Basque country have supported this shift of emphasis, with results not only in partner cities abroad, but also locally. Their strategies for cooperation have included an important degree of local transformation.



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### Interventions to improve data collection capacities (Target 17.18)

Another important focus for decentralized cooperation highlighted in the localization of SDG 17 relates to improving decision-making through more effective data collection. It is now commonly accepted that planning can be greatly improved by collecting valuable baseline data and linking them to territorial references and mapping. In Brazil, for example, the Cadastro is an important tool for guaranteeing the organization of geographical space and



has also been used to provide services to municipal communities, based on the information collected. This Brazilian experience was successfully shared, using Maringá as a point of reference, with the municipalities of Maxixe, Inhambane and Manhiça, in Mozambique. Their survey and pilot methodology, which were applied in three neighborhoods, provide an excellent demonstration of localizing SDG 17 through DC. This project effectively mobilized partnerships between Architects without Borders and the various Brazilian and Mozambican cities, with funding provided by Barcelona City Council - all in the spirit of the SDGs.<sup>4</sup>



Lecture 5.2



20 min

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## Mapping and mobilizing multiple stakeholders for SDG-linked partnerships in the territories

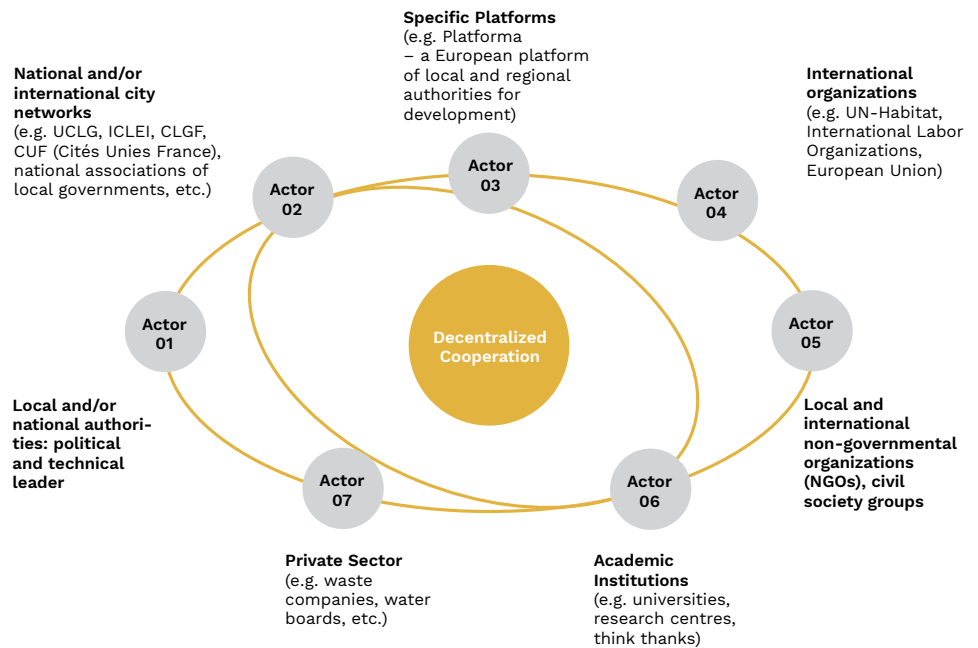
### Learning Outcome

- Participants must be made aware of the range of key stakeholders that participate in a local DC partnership.
- Participants must understand and project the roles of citizen networks and local government associations
- Participants must understand the unique competencies, roles, and responsibilities of different stakeholders so that they can effectively mobilize them in meaningful partnerships.
- Participants must appreciate the value of in-kind contributions from project partners and understand how these can add value to the DC process within a context of scarce financial resources.

In a lecture format, we focus on the range of actors that have been brought together by the local approach of DC and the unifying narrative of SDG 17. We outline the nature of the involvement of these players. We also highlight the importance of recognizing the unique strengths and competencies that these actors bring to partnerships. As noted in the previous chapter, not all stakeholders may be able to provide direct financial resources or to participate in knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms.

We begin by providing an overview of the range of players that are typically involved in DC. In its C2C Cooperation publication, UCLG identifies a set of seven key actors on the international stage, providing relevant examples. This diagram is a good starting point; it shows the diverse set of stakeholders' operatives at different scales.

**Figure 5.1. Typical actors involved in decentralized cooperation.**

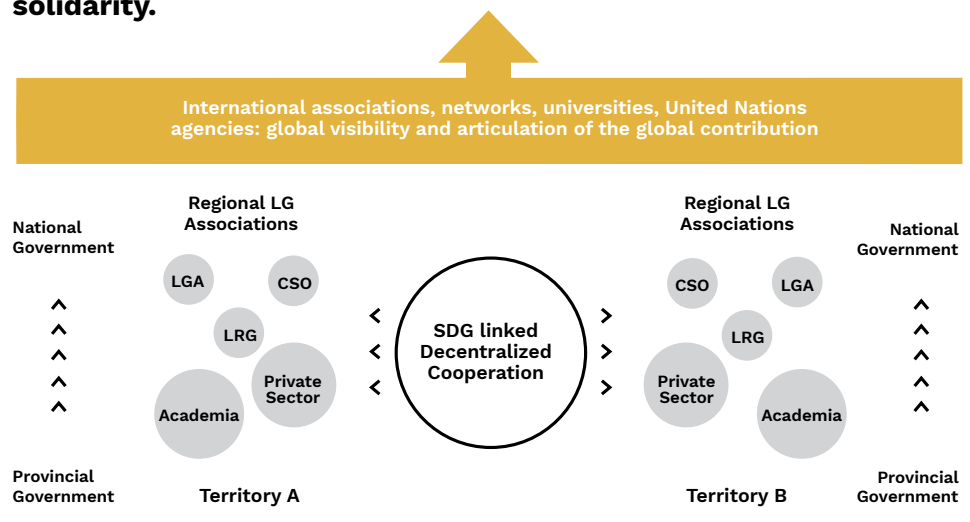


Source: (Adapted from UCLG, 2016).

Of course, not all these actors will always be involved in your own DC projects. It is, however, very useful to carefully identify who the key stakeholders are. As outlined in Chapter 4, this should form part of the preparatory phase of DC.

Figure 5.2. builds on the previous figure by emphasizing how the various partners, from each of the territories, can come together through decentralized cooperation and focus on a particular SDG. Each of the key stakeholders is briefly considered in order to understand their unique competencies and contributions.

**Figure 5.2. The power of partnerships: LRGs at the center of locally-based, decentralized cooperation that contributes to global solidarity.**



This diagram illustrates the power of decentralized cooperation at many levels. Firstly, DC serves as a mechanism for localizing the SDGs. The DC project contributes towards achieving the targets related to the relevant SDG that the cooperation is focused on. What is unique, however, is that this contribution is only made possible by the collaborative efforts of partner LRGs; this demonstrates the value of global solidarity across geographical divides.

Secondly, the diagram depicts the importance of governance. It emphasizes how the LRG becomes the nucleus around which local partners organize, with each sharing their unique strengths and contributing to achieving a common goal in the target territory.

Thirdly, stakeholder relationships between territories are also powerfully visually depicted. This is often not emphasized enough, but it can make a very important contribution. Bilateral relationships between CSOs and academic collaborations between different territories can also be richly rewarding, as outlined below.

Fourthly, the diagram emphasizes the different layers of governance, between the LRGs and LGAs, supported by their respective regional sections. Ultimately these are enabled by the umbrella-body of the UCLG and its “network of networks”, through the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF), all of which receive the support of the global policy framework for DC and the associated learning and cooperation processes.

Finally, the diagram demonstrates how, beyond this complex set of local government relationships, DC also creates a space in which other spheres / levels of government can participate. It is through the regional and national government organizations that the loop back into the intergovernmental organization of the UN (the custodian and champion of the SDGs) can be closed. In many DC projects, international organizations, and especially the United Nations and its agencies, can act as trainers by providing operational support on the ground and linking local activities to international processes, including the SDGs. Other international organizations, such as the European Union, also play an important role in supporting and coordinating different efforts to have an impact on regional development and peer learning activities associated with the localization of global Agendas and the SDGs.

In the next section, we shall briefly examine each of the key stakeholders directly involved in DC to understand their unique competencies and contributions.

## Government or state-related actors

### 1. Local and regional governments (LRGs)

It should be clear by now, that LRGs play a critical role in the DC process, as leaders mandated with the responsibility for ensuring sustainable development at the local level. We contend that they are unequivocally in the best position to lead and coordinate cooperation and maximize its local impact by coordinating the actions of all their local stakeholders. More specifically, LRGs have local competence and should be responsible for:

- Overall **governance of the process** (including intra-administrative, multi-stakeholder and multi-level coordination mechanisms) as well as fostering institutional innovation.



Lecture 5.3



10 min

- **Ensuring a more strategic local approach** that holistically integrates all aspects of development manifested in the territory, based on the needs, aspirations and, most importantly, resources that the different actors bring to the partnership.
- **Localizing global challenges** in terms of the SDGs, based on their own political-legal framework. This will allow coordinated action by a range of stakeholders, while paying attention to how such action aligns with national and regional SDG strategies.
- LRGs must play a more active role in shaping and influencing national policy, which has been much more strongly reinforced as a result of the SDGs.
- **Mobilizing their own (often limited) resources** - human, technical and financial - and those of their (local, regional, national, and international) partners. They must do this to move policies forward by engaging with their partners at different stages of the DC project (this is covered in Chapter 4).
- **Drafting integrated local plans that align with the SDGs** and provide a local Agenda for development that can be readily implemented in partnership with stakeholders. Ensuring the joint implementation of the plan, based on partner competence. This must ultimately promote inclusiveness and ownership of the DC process.
- **Challenging local stakeholders** (and indeed internal municipal departments) to think about how their actions can help achieve targets and goals in partner cities. This would make a small, but effective contribution to building greater global solidarity.

We have already outlined the pivotal role that LRGs can play and how a DC policy can be crafted by LRGs to ensure that it has the maximum impact. However, LRGs cannot work in isolation; they must also work in concert with other actors. Given the numerous challenges facing them, particularly in the developing world, LRGs must primarily rely on the support of their respective national associations. This is briefly considered in the next point.

## 2. The National Associations of LRGs

The following key roles have been identified for national associations in relation to the support that they provide to LRGs to help them lead effective DC local partnerships:

- LRGs rely on their LGAs to represent their interests and act as their advocates. They need them for **lobbying national government**, not only to pass enabling legislation and policy that can facilitate DC and give it a greater impact, but also to get them to allocate the financial resources that they need to support sustainable partnerships at the local level.
- LRGs look to their associations for **support to develop their technical knowledge and capacities**. This implies them providing information and training and organizational or individual development to empower them to make their local partnerships more effective.
- **Exchanges of good practices** amongst LRGs is a critical way to foster a culture of learning and sharing.

- Fostering links and relationships with sectoral ministries is also key to promoting better coordinated national and local development.
- In applying SDG 17, Target 17.6., national associations are best placed to **engage with their counterparts in other countries**. They must initiate, facilitate and/or support ongoing partnerships between their respective LRGs, bringing territories together and contributing to building global solidarity. LGAs can also liaise with regional associations, UCLG sections and other actors when they need support.

### 3. National governments



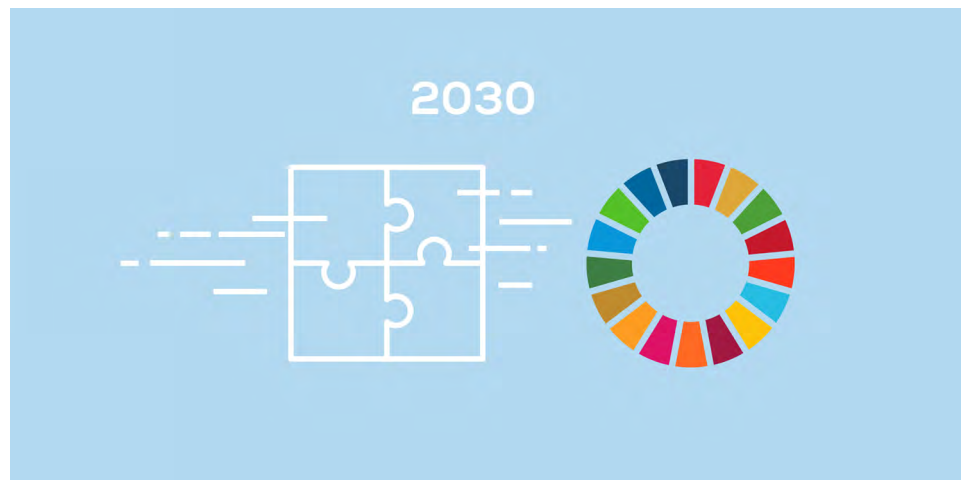
Although often understated, this level of government plays an important enabling role and ensures the successful implementation of DC. Whilst the extent to which government support may differ across contexts, there are three important roles that national governments can play here:<sup>5</sup>

- **Providing data and research support.** Support could take different forms, such as: facilitating the sharing of best practices to improve levels of reporting; increasing outreach and awareness; and providing more direct support, which could include helping LRGs to build up their capacity for collecting and processing statistics.
- **Promoting policies and mechanisms for the exchange of financial and technical resources.** This can be achieved through strategic interventions, such as facilitating knowledge exchanges and pooling expertise. Another form of direct intervention involves conducting structured assessments of the technical expertise that exists within their networks, associations, and institutions. This should be done to identify tools and best practices for LRGs to implement. In terms of leveraging funding, national governments can facilitate access to subnational-level sources. They also offer guarantees and risk-mitigation tools, which can serve as a safeguard mechanism.
- **Strengthening actions involving new actors** (CSO, academia, etc.) and across different levels of government. Action by national-level government could include institutionalizing multi-level dialogue to ensure policy coherence and actively promoting decentralized multi-stakeholder partnerships.

#### 4. UCLG and its regional sections

For UCLG, DC is regarded as the “soul of the municipalist movement” and a fundamental part of the organization’s DNA. Whilst recognizing that the nature and form of DC has evolved with time, and that sources of funding have also influenced the roll-out of DC, UCLG is very clear that DC must remain an intrinsic part of its core values. UCLG acknowledges the challenges inherent to transitioning from designing to actually implementing DC. However, in its eyes, what is currently required is a new resolve to actively pioneer innovation and to search constantly for new ways of learning, cooperating and, most importantly, safeguarding the principles of DC.

UCLG also places importance on DC being driven by partners and peers, given the reality of a much bigger learning ecosystem. Here, the role of UCLG is to help create an enabling environment that ensures the nurturing of long-term relationships between partners and helps to promote and protect solidarity amongst its member cities and regions, whilst constantly maintaining the SDG Agenda as its focus for guiding local action.



Furthermore, in preparation for this Module, a series of short, structured interviews were conducted with the secretary generals / nominees of each of the regional sections of UCLG, in order to understand how they see their role in relation to promoting DC.

Key highlights can be summarized here (i):

- Amongst the regional associations, there was unanimous agreement about the importance of decentralized cooperation and its contribution to universalizing the 2030 Agenda for LRGs. It was particularly interesting to note that, moving beyond UCLG’s general role of lobbying to ensure that cities and regions remain at the center of sustainable development, importance was also given to building a common language, based on solidarity, and enshrining a set of universal core values. This common theme of promoting a transformative new diplomacy and building global partnerships that put citizens at the center of development is important point to emphasize.
- Regional sections emphasized their new role in developing and disseminating a common narrative / framework within which DC can be made a

reality. The regional sections all saw themselves as advocates and catalysts for newer, more equal, empowering, and diverse horizontal partnerships and, in particular, for promoting more South-South and triangular partnerships, which would help to achieve SDG Target 17.6. As advocates for change, they stressed their transformative roles in promoting key issues, such as climate change and gender parity, both within their own associations and globally.

- The regional sections recognized and appreciated the role played by, and value of, non-state actors and the financial and in-kind contributions that they can bring to DC initiatives. Although small, this is a critical instrument to help voice and connect the activities of local government organizations and associations.
- We shall now turn to look at the contribution of these non-state actors. In order to enable solidarity-driven support mechanisms, UCLG has even developed a task force that has built a solidarity fund to respond to crises.

Note that a fuller version of the interviews is currently being prepared as an accompanying document: “SDG localization and Decentralized Cooperation: the Voice of UCLG Regional Associations”.

## **5. International Organizations - Supranational governments**

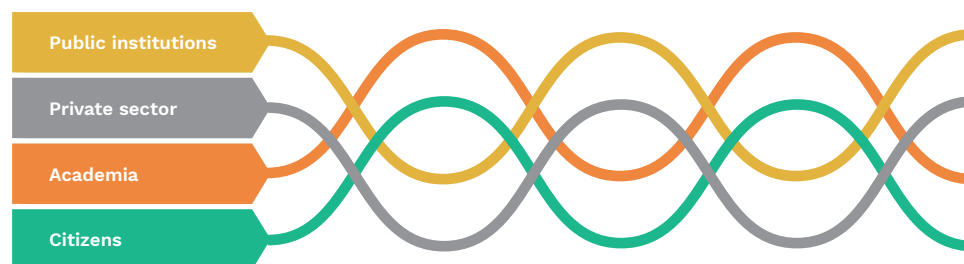
The United Nations plays a critical role in the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the global scale. The formulation of the SDGs was a unique participatory process which involved two years of consultation involving many stakeholders, who were organized into clusters. The voice of local governments was well-channeled through the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF), and local priorities were reflected in the SDGs. Each country is now not only launching, but also following up on, the progress of the SDGs, and is actively supporting key stakeholders in SDG implementation. More and more LRGs are cooperating within this broader framework, as are many DC actors, which are also looking for clearer articulation within a wider, multilateral approach. This is one of the new and most innovative issues that the SDGs have brought to DC.

Regional organizations, such as the European Union, African Union, ASEAN or SEGIB have also played an important role in coordinating and supporting the implementation of global Agendas in their respective territories by mobilizing and funding initiatives to localize the SDGs. For example, the European Commission is supporting decentralized cooperation as a means of implementing the global Agenda for the SDGs, to which they have also subscribed.

### **Non-state actors**

It is also worth noting the valuable experience gained from frameworks like the Quadruple Helix. This is a model that brings together innovation and development through the joint action of government, the private sector, academia, and civil society; it aims to co-create development and to serve as a motor for structural change.

**Figure 5.3. Quadruple Helix Territory to territory**



It is exciting to apply this model in DC and to link up the quadruple-helix of one territory to that of another, thereby putting SDG 17 into practice. In this way, as explained below, by localizing SDG 17 Target 17.6, opportunities will be created to promote greater global solidarity.

**A summary of each of the contributions of LRG partners within a given territory is provided below:**

### **1. The private sector (industry and others)**

The contribution of the private sector to sustainable local development is critical as it is a major driver of productivity, inclusive economic growth, job creation and the promotion of local economic development. In a DC context, the private sector's role has shifted from that of a traditional financial partner to it acting as a fundamental ally that is involved in engaging with communities and other local stakeholders, optimizing new solutions, catalyzing technology transfers and innovation, and developing and providing relevant information and data.

All of these features are enhanced by the SDG narrative, as it provides a common language through which all actors can contribute to sustainable development, build more equal, and development-focused partnerships, and establish a framework for sustainable business ecosystems and supportive local and global policies. This new approach presents an important principle which needs to be considered when designing the DC project. It implies more shared responsibility for businesses in the task of building sustainable development and pushing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as a framework for action in the territories where they are pursued. It also means for example, a move away from businesses merely providing funding as a philanthropic gesture to a far more fundamental application of sustainability criteria in their operations. At the territorial level, this implies key interventions, such as creating decent jobs, linking their economic activity to local development, and fostering the adaptation of new solutions and technologies to the needs of local challenges.

It is important to accept that, due to their profit mandate, the inclusion of businesses in DC is not always without its challenges. Even so, we would argue that striving to secure the right partner can add considerable benefits to DC initiatives; getting it right can bring significant added value to such partnerships. Finally, it is necessary to highlight the link between the social economy and decentralized cooperation, which is still in its infancy, as this forms part of new thinking related to DC. For example, social businesses, cooperative businesses, and mutual companies could be mobilized by LRGS to find sustainable local solutions to local challenges.



## 2. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Historically speaking, NGOs have been viewed as key partners in DC. However, all CSOs play an important role in DC. These include: community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, environmental protection groups, organizations representing women or young people, urban accessibility organizations, students, immigrants, and workers, etc.

The value of fostering strong partnerships between LRGs and local civil society organizations lies in the possibility it offers for creating shared and inclusive local strategies that can promote greater collaboration and joint ownership of the 2030 Agenda and SDG implementation. Through strategic, committed, engagement with their partners, LRGs will be able to unlock the true potential of their territories and mobilize local resources while, at the same time, ensuring accountability to their constituencies.

A DC partnership offers an added opportunity for CSOs from each territory to begin to engage, network and learn from one another, within the spirit of a global civil society partnership, thereby promoting unity and solidarity.

## 3. Academia and knowledge-based institutions



In academic circles, the power of the quadruple helix is slowly becoming entrenched as university and research institutions recognize the value of engaging with strategic partners. For champions of DC, this opens up an exciting opportunity to tap into the knowledge and scientific expertise held by these institutions and to use it to strengthen sustainable development partnerships within the local territory. The ability of universities and research institutions to contribute more meaningfully at the local level has been increased by national-level SDG data being made available in a more disaggregated format. This means that these institutions will now be able to add value to local partnerships by generating data based on the local territory. More importantly, they can also play an independent role in qualitatively assessing processes undertaken as part of DC initiatives. Rather than employing independent research firms or consultants, local universities can work in partnership with LRGs to develop indicators and metrics and then play an active role in the evaluation and reporting processes.

Another less documented, but equally important, feature of DC organized at the local level is that it provides opportunities for academic partnerships between research peers in different cities and regions. By simply creating this enabling environment, LRGs may be able to facilitate academic exchange programs between peer universities and potentially generate innovative new joint research and student and academic exchanges.



### Exercise 5.2



60 min



Handout 5.1

## Role Play – Road to a remote village (Stakeholder Cooperation)

### Exercise instructions

The goal of this exercise is to experience and learn how decentralized cooperation can work in practice.

1. The trainer will divide the participants into groups of five and assign a role from the handout to each participant.
2. The participants have 5-10 minutes to read their role. They can then ask the trainer questions if they have any doubts.
3. Having read their roles, the participants have 20 minutes to discuss the project and come to an agreement.
4. After the discussion, the trainer will ask each group about the outcome of their negotiations and encourage the participants to share their thoughts about the decision-making process and their respective roles. More tips on how to close the exercise can be found in the handout.



### Online Training

### Requirements for online training

1. The trainer creates Zoom Breakout Rooms with five participants in each room.
2. The handouts with the roles and table for the players.
3. The rest of the steps follow the offline version of the exercise, as explained above.



### Lecture 5.3



10 min

## DC's potential to mobilize territorial multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development

### Learning Outcomes

- Participants must appreciate the importance of territorial partnerships and the link between them and DC for the localization of the SDGs.

### The importance of territorial multi-stakeholder partnerships

As seen, SDG 17 offers LRGs (and their agencies, associations and networks) a powerful framework through which to work in collaboration, bring resources together, and empower citizens and organizations through horizontal territorial partnerships created or promoted by DC. On the other hand, we have seen that different actors mentioned above have their own capacities and resources to contribute to a DC linked with sustainable development and that their specific contributions help to maximize the impact of what LRGs alone can do<sup>6</sup>.

DC has evolved from a top-down aid-centered approach to one with exciting new horizontal modalities, in which all partners involved not only have something to teach, but are equally committed to their own learning processes. The milestone Busan Conference ushered in a new era that values the contributions of all stakeholders, with one of the key principles adopted being “inclusive development partnerships”. With this change, greater openness, trust, mutual respect, and learning have been embedded into partnerships, in line with the SDGs, whilst the different, yet complementary, roles played by all the key players have been acknowledged.



According to PLATFORMA’s publication on *Decentralized Cooperation to achieve the 2030 Agenda: Towards a new generation of multi-stakeholder partnerships*, multi-stakeholder partnerships are solid and structured horizontal relationships in which all parties bring together knowledge and resources. They aim for mutual benefit, seeking synergies amongst them and approaching the territory from an integral, multi-dimensional lenses.

**Regarding the localization of SDGs through DC, these kinds of partnerships are important because:**

- They help to reinforce local strategies and provide knowledge, expertise, innovation and management skills which are instrumental to improving public policies and operational capacities. Regardless of their flows (North-South, South-South or triangular), local partnerships actively promote the development of two-way relations between territories.
- They are led by LRGs, sometimes in partnership with international organizations, and intrinsically value the unique contributions made by their respective local and regional stakeholders. They foster their ownership as a natural consequence. They are usually oriented to reinforcing local strategies through initiatives built around the specific legitimacy, responsibilities, knowledge, and interests of LRGs and aimed at delivering effective results.
- They unlock the development potential of territories and their communities, and enhance the capacity of local and regional governments.
- With the involvement of the territorial stakeholders, local and regional governments have more opportunities to reduce the impact of hindrances such as changes in the upper echelons of the local politics or budgetary constraints.

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## Cooperation, from funding to articulation – the case of Praia and Cabo Verde

A three-phase strategy of decentralized cooperation promoting SDG localization based on a local approach

Cabo Verde's capital Praia is a reference amongst local government associations and partners, for upgrading of slums into housing. It has based its networking approach for national and decentralized cooperation on the SDGs. Inspired by this experience, the national government of Cabo Verde considered different local priorities, policies and programs, through a platform that allowed local stakeholders to decide what infrastructure and services were needed, how to protect the local environment, and which resources to allocate - together with UNDP, the National Association of Cabo Verdean Municipalities and financed by the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

From 2017, the national government has been accompanying Cabo Verde's municipalities to develop strategic plans that align municipalities and island priorities to the government programs. It has been doing so by using the SDG localization process as a means of pushing and defining reforms related to decentralization, supported by the Italian and Andalusian solidarity funds (FEDELCO and FAMSI), CNM (Brazil), and the Ibero-American capital cities network (UCCI).

This experience has helped to create 11 local platforms that adopted eight Municipal Strategic Plans for Sustainable Development (or PEMDS, to use the Portuguese acronym) in line with national plans and policies. Likewise, 11 other local platforms are currently being finalized. It has also developed and promoted spaces for dialogue between national and local levels of government in order to connect and encourage coordination between various levels of government. Elected officials shared their visions and plans with the private sector, civil society, and the deconcentrated services of the state.

Source: FAMSI and National Association of Cabo Verdean Municipalities

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**Figure 5.4. Practical tips for LRGs to mobilize multi-stakeholder partnerships**



- **Plan and foresee** what kind of visibility can be shared with and communicated to the different actors.
  - **Take the lead** in identifying the most critical business players: those with the greatest interest and influence and whose area of work is related to sustainable development.
  - **Be clear about what you expect** from businesses, CSO, and universities, etc., recognizing that their goals may be different from yours. Also, remind them that the SDGs have targets to be met and indicators.
  - **Strategically linking DC**, as a research area, to the work of doctoral students involved in development studies, could be a creative way for universities to assist in the evaluation of locally linked-DC programs.
4. **Actively create spaces for dialogue connecting different government levels and enroll in organized fora** to create links with peer LRGs, CSOs or business partners. This is a powerful way to build solidarity and to get citizens more engaged in your own local processes.
  5. **Enlist the support of a university research office** and then apply for SDG-linked DC research grants that can be used for academics to participate in international visits. This can contribute to documentation and to joint academic publications with peers.
  6. At the same time, make sure that you know exactly what your local municipal regulations allow in terms of **partnering with businesses**; these are often prescribed by financial management legislation. The mobilization of additional resources and the coordinating efforts of local national and international partners can be used to guide them towards their priorities through “catalytic” funds.

### Summary and Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, it is useful to reiterate the United Nations’ resolution on “Towards global partnerships”, which seeks to reinforce the nature of multi-stakeholder partnerships and their roles and shared principles. It defines partnerships as “voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits” (A/RES/70/224, para. 2).

As DC practitioners who will be training other professionals, it is important to once again emphasize the role of LRGs in ensuring not only exchanges and mutual support between partners but also, and more fundamentally, in fostering new synergies with territorial stakeholders. Of course, the partners are expected to reciprocate and participate in this exchange, to open new spaces for collaboration, to promote a more efficient use of resources, to foster innovations based on constant mutual learning and to develop more effective mechanisms to promote sustainable development in their respective territories. In closing this chapter, we must again highlight the fact that the focus is on strengthening and consolidating the participation of these stakeholders in sustainable development within their respective territories.

### In summary: Points of Emphasis

#### We have learned that:

- SDG 17 is a powerful unifying mechanism that can be used to assemble a diverse range of actors through the local approach to DC.
- There are numerous players at both the state and non-state levels, and these must be mobilized, through highly focused partnerships, if they are to have a significant impact.
- Critically, LRGs are the glue that hold multi-stakeholder partnerships together; they therefore must provide engaged leadership in order to sustain them.
- It is important to understand the needs and competences of all the local players that will engage in order to determine exactly what they can bring to these partnerships.
- Stakeholder mapping and analysis tools are useful for making sense of these relationships and prioritizing them.
- LRGs must be able to activate their own LGAs, regional sections and networks, as these bodies are important enablers in SDG-linked DC initiatives.
- LGAs can play a unique and important role in creating links between LRGs.
- Beyond the obvious value of DC for LRGs, CSOs and academic partners from each territory, it can also be used to help them collaborate and they can benefit immensely from the resulting peer learning partnerships.
- By creating links between civil society and academic players in different territories, DC helps to promote GLOBAL SOLIDARITY and CITIZENSHIP. Furthermore, it encourages LRGs and their local partners to think beyond their own local areas and about how they can have a more global impact.
- Given the complexities involved, we must also acknowledge the fact that managing diverse stakeholders will not always be easy, but investing the necessary time and energy in the process will be well worth the effort!



**Discussion**



**20 min**

### Closing group discussion

Building a solid grid and a range of different stakeholders within a territory, as part of a DC framework, will not be easy. We propose holding an open discussion about it to close this chapter.

### Guiding questions

- What does networking mean to you?
- What would you consider to be the basic tasks and/or resources for effectively supporting your government organization?
- Which institution(s) could networking activities be delegated to?

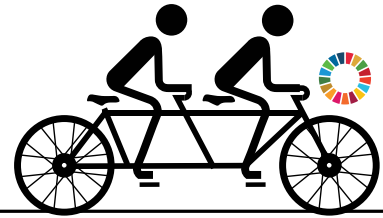
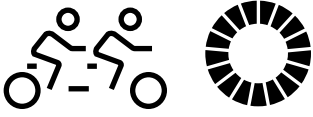
### Some responses that can be included in the discussion

- The values that govern relationships.
- The value of networking and the effort required to carry it out.
- Pragmatic aspects of networking: formal versus non-formal institutions.
- LGAs vs networks.
- Identifying the right champion (competence, values, credibility).
- The value of ongoing open communication.
- Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation and reporting to ensure that the process is on track.
- Entrance and exit strategies.



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- ↳ 1. UNDP (1997) Governance for sustainable human development, UN Policy Document, New York.
- ↳ 2. For further information, please check UCLG publication: Decentralized cooperation to democratise cities: Project to improve the institutional capacities of local authorities in Brazil and Mozambique as actors of decentralized cooperation. [https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/decentralized\\_cooperation\\_to\\_democratize\\_the\\_city\\_1.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/decentralized_cooperation_to_democratize_the_city_1.pdf)
- ↳ 3. Based on insights from the OECD (2019) Report on Decentralized Development Cooperation: unlocking the potential of cities and regions.
- ↳ 4. Fernández de Losada, A. (2017). Shaping a new generation of Decentralized cooperation for enhanced effectiveness and accountability. CPMR & Platforma. <https://PLATFORMA-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/PLATFORMA-CPMR-Study-New-generation-EN.pdf>
- ↳ 5. OECD (2019). Decentralized Development Co-operation: Unlocking the potential of cities and regions. OECD Development Policy Papers No.22. OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/e9703003-en>
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- ↳ 8. CITYLAB and UCLG (2018): Report about collaboration universities and local governments. <https://www.learning.uclg.org/file/report-about-collaboration-universities-and-local-governments-cglu-citylab-project>



## Chapter 6: Who is Decentralized Cooperation aimed at? Communicating, Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluating DC initiatives

### Learning Outcomes

- Developing knowledge and basic tools to design effective mechanisms to communicate, report and inform on DC programs for the effective localization of the SDGs.
- Raising awareness of the importance of results-driven DC systems that enable greater social transparency and strengthen SDG-based DC initiatives at the local level.

### Trainer's insights





It is evidently not possible to cover all the nuances of measuring effective performance in a two-hour training session. The focus in this last chapter/workshop session is merely to reinforce a point that has been made throughout this training Module: DC initiatives present a unique opportunity to effectively localize the SDGs and, at the same time, the SDGs can help improve, update and empower DC. In this closing chapter, we suggest that building an effective, transparent and collective system to firstly communicate, then report, followed by monitoring and evaluation of DC initiatives that is embedded into the DC program, and not merely as after-thought, can facilitate the outcome of achieving more impactful interventions.

In our bicycle analogy, we focus on the importance of the visibility of results. Like the bicycle chain, which links the wheels, and propelled by the action of mobilized and engaged stakeholders, who follow the path established by the SDGs, we will emphasize the end-users here, and acknowledge the rationale and reason for DC, and the need to ensure that the beneficiaries are kept in the loop at all times. It must be noted that the concept of Monitoring and Evaluation has already been introduced in the section on DC project design, in Chapter 4. Here, we build on this practical orientation and also include other features, with the purpose of advancing in a citizen-centred DC.

**Some documents that may be useful for trainers and help familiarize them with this subject include the following:**

- ↳ *[The SDSN Report - Data for Development: A Needs Assessment for SDG Monitoring and Statistical Capacity Development](#)*
- ↳ *[VVSG Reading Guide – Local Indicators for the 2030 Agenda \(Sustainable Development Goals\)](#)*
- ↳ *[Sustainable Development Solutions Network Guide - Getting started with the SDGs in Cities: A guide for stakeholders](#)*
- ↳ *[UCLG's SDGs Learning Module 3: Reporting to national and local reviews](#)*
- ↳ *[UCLG's and UN-Habitat Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews](#)*



Discussion



10 min

## Opening Discussion

### Learning Outcome

- Awareness raised on the importance of communicating, reporting on, monitoring, and evaluating experiences and expertise relating to DC initiatives amongst participants.
- High-level overview and good understanding of the Monitoring and Evaluation approach.

This short opening session briefly introduces the chapter content and carries out a quick assessment of the level of involvement and experience that participants have had **with communicating, reporting on, monitoring and evaluating (CRME) DC**. It may also be useful to include the following opening comments to help set the scene:

From the outset, we need to accept that CMRE can be a daunting and challenging process, especially for under-resourced LRGs, as it sometimes calls for high levels of organizational knowledge and management. We also need

to acknowledge that there are many different models and systems in place around the world and that these vary in complexity and purpose.

What we want to emphasize, as we close Module 4, is that DC presents a unique opportunity for the more experienced partners within the DC project to share insights and experiences on how CRME can be effectively managed in their context. By working together, it is possible to establish a mutually agreed framework. This would not only include LRG peers, but also all other key local actors (as explained in the previous chapter) and could perhaps be led by a local academic/research partner. Whatever framework is adopted, we strongly advocate making it as simple and easy to implement as possible. It is very important that we all have a clear idea of the value of the CRME process and about how it can help us to assess the impact that this process can have on the communities that we serve, particularly in terms of measuring and demonstrating different contributions towards achieving the SDG targets.

### Group Questions

- Through a show of hands, please indicate how many of us have been directly involved in monitoring, evaluating, reviewing, communicating and reporting on DC programs?
- Are there any volunteers who would like to briefly share their experience of this process? How much importance was placed on CRME? Was it in any way aligned with the SDGs?

NB: Please make sure that the time is well-managed here. Allow time for a maximum of three short participant reflections and a short discussion.



#### Lecture 6.1



30 min

### An overview of the Communicating, Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation (CRME) System

#### Learning outcome

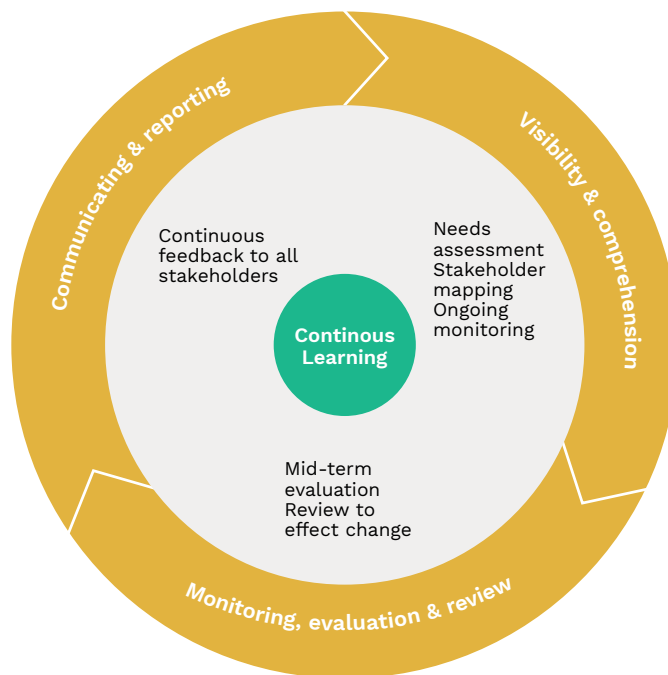
- Participants will appreciate the basic aspects of monitoring and evaluation and see how it ties in with the communicating and reporting process.

#### The Communicating, Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle: A brief introduction

In project management practice, it is generally understood that most projects progress from the typical planning phase, prior to implementation, followed by monitoring and evaluation, with corrections then being made during the review phase, before finally being reported on and communicated (see Figure 6.1.). It has also been increasingly accepted, however, that these apparently discrete and separate phases tend to be much messier in practice. For example, the actual design of monitoring and evaluation begins during planning, with monitoring happening during implementation, while communicating and reporting can be built into the system so that they occur continually, throughout the cycle.

In Chapter four, we suggested that during the planning phase of DC, it is necessary to design a simple and clear Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Once again, we emphasize that prior to beginning a DC program, time and energy should be spent on designing a simple CRME framework; the one that best suits your local context. Applying your mind to determining exactly what will be measured, how it will be measured, who will measure it, what will be communicated, how it will be communicated, and to whom, should CRME make sure that the program will have a meaningful and impactful delivery of its objectives. The literature on Project Management is clear on the fact that whilst the delivery of successful programs and projects may be attributed to achieving project objectives, the establishment of an effective CRME system is crucial for achieving the desired impact. Note that throughout this Module, we have placed great emphasis on achieving impact, rather than on merely delivering DC projects.

**Figure 6.1. The CRME framework.**



Source: (author's own compilation and UCLG Learning team)

This is the theme stressed in this chapter. In addition, given the UCLG tradition and commitment to lifelong learning, we suggest that all stakeholder learning should be central to the CMRE approach. Let us now take a brief look at each component within the CRME process.

**Communicating:** Communication is a key aspect of the cycle. It is critically important to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of what is happening at all times in the DC process. Having a transparent and effective communications plan, which clearly spells out exactly what will be communicated, to whom, and when, helps to ensure that information is made readily available at the correct time. Not only will this prevent misunderstanding, but it will also ensure that stakeholders take ownership of the process, and that no one is left behind.

**Reporting:** Reporting is best understood as the process of providing detailed project-specific information on the status of the DC project. This should be done periodically and at different levels. Whilst in theory, this occurs at the end of the process, in practice, reporting can, and indeed must, be continuous. Here, we pay particular attention to who should do the reporting, what should get reported and, most importantly, who the project information is reported to. It is important to note that in many cases, local stakeholders are not included in this process, resulting in implicit program biases towards international agencies and funders.

**Monitoring:** This is best understood as an on-going activity. It implies collecting and documenting the progress of DC project implementation. Collecting information is a key task, but efforts must be made to ensure that the correct information is collected and at the appropriate level of aggregation. During the monitoring process, it is important that checks are made to ensure that there are no major deviations from the planned scope of the DC project, or from its schedule, budget, or quality. This information is linked to the overall DC Policy Framework and Terms of Reference/Charter governing the DC Project, as covered in Chapter 4. We recognize that DC projects must have a degree of flexibility to allow for some potential deviations, particularly given the challenges faced in certain under-capacitated contexts. However, it is important to find a healthy balance here. Basic information is very important and we suggest that a university partner could play a leading role in this regard. A university could help to design a basic Monitoring and Evaluation framework and lead the charge in data collection; it would also be a key consultant for decision-making relating to the future direction of the DC project.

**Evaluation:** The process of evaluation will obviously take its cue from ongoing monitoring activities, which should be detailed in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Expressed most simply, evaluation is a periodic assessment to determine whether the expected results of the project have been achieved. Most importantly, evaluation seeks to determine the impact of the project and of any other measures that are regarded as important for an LRG and necessary to measure. It is at this stage that decisions are made as to whether to effect major changes that could help steer a DC project back in the right direction, if it veers off the marked course. Most DC projects build a mid-term review into the project design; this is seen as a good practice. Again, we recommend that a university/research partner should lead this component of the project. After the evaluation process, we would also include a review component. The review is often not flagged as a separate step; it is sometimes considered part of the evaluation process. We would suggest that it is counter-productive not to take active measures after evaluation, if they are deemed necessary.

Having outlined this broad overview of the CRME framework, we must now consider its link with the SDGs. We suggest that Monitoring and Evaluation should play a key role in the implementation of DC programs that are rooted in SDGs if they are to have a significant impact. The ultimate focus is on maximizing their impact so that the lives of the vulnerable, marginalized and poor can be improved in ways that really matter.



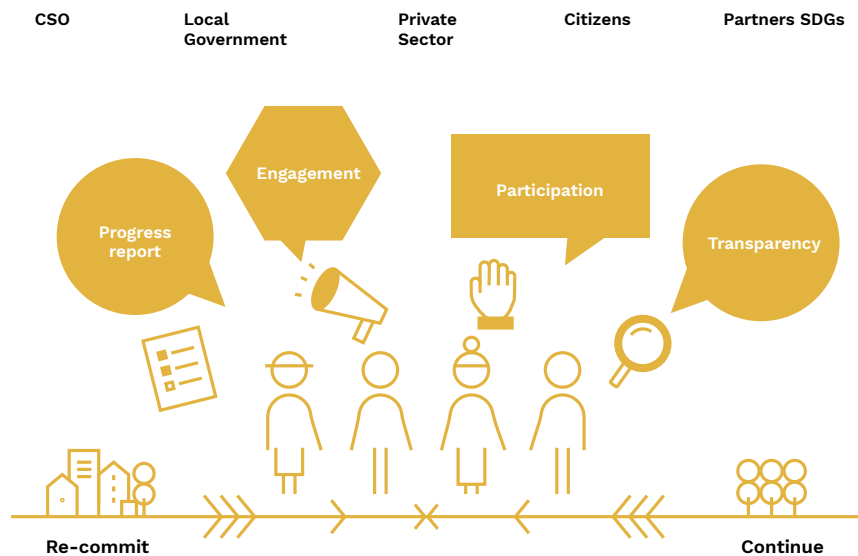
Lecture 6.2



10 min

## Communication

Despite the increasing significance of aspects linked to communication and information, in practice these questions do not tend to be included in the strategic core of decentralized cooperation policies. In most DC scenarios, communication tends to be an external policy element; it is often associated with the dissemination of results or specific activities, only being considered at the end of a process and usually in a rather improvised way.



We suggest that a communication strategy is useful for all LRGs. Forming part of a cooperation project is even more interesting as it is nurtured by many actors and this increases the possibilities of developing new ideas. The communication strategy should start before, and go beyond, the project and should include steps like raising awareness, consultation, and also reporting. A communication strategy should also involve various departments within a given LRG in order to help strengthen its international policy. It is not surprising that one of major challenges facing LRGs arises when they must explain to the public, or to their own institutions, the specific benefits of the municipality's international action and decentralized cooperation. This can lead to cases of misunderstandings, criticism and questioning. In order to pre-empt such common problems, LRGs are recommended to have a clear communication strategy, which must be developed and implemented during the initial stage of the DC initiative.

A sound communication strategy is a positive contribution to the legitimacy and ownership of local DC actions and to the 2030 Agenda. This is true both externally (before local citizenry and other local stakeholders) and internally (before other local government departments, which are often unaware of the importance of decentralized cooperation).

**Table 6.1 Communication: a key element for a sustainable DC with a powerful impact<sup>1</sup>**

1. <b>Transversal and strategic</b>	Be transversal and strategic, meaning that is present throughout the cycle of DC policy making (identification, planning, execution, evaluation and assessment) and interrelates with a complex maze of other factors.
2. <b>Planned</b>	Be planned with a clear definition of its goals, outputs, messages, audience, activities and actions, in the short, medium and long terms, and of the mechanisms to be used for its review and assessment. When planned, a communication strategy can strengthen SDG-linked DC monitoring and assessment mechanisms, improving their analyses of the impact of policies and their ability to identify new demands and needs.
3. <b>Institutionalized</b>	Be institutionalized and be equipped with the necessary technical, economic and human resources.
4. <b>Transparent</b>	Be transparent and consider citizens' rights to transparency, access to information and participation in public matters.
5. <b>Inclusive</b>	Be inclusive and provide tailor-made approaches for specific groups (young people, CSOs, lobbies, etc). Not all audiences are permeable to the same messages, they do not all require the same type of information, and they do not all have access to the same tools or channels. It is easiest to design efficient communication strategies with a sound segmentation of the target audience.
6. <b>Flexible</b>	Be flexible so that it can adapt to a changing environment, without losing sight of its goals.
7. <b>Proactive</b>	Be proactive and anticipate potential problems and avoiding contradictions, overlaps and incoherent messages.
8. <b>Understood and owned</b>	Be understood and owned by all the municipal departments. If what the SDG-linked DC or International Relations office does is not understood or shared "internally", it is very difficult to make it understood "externally".
9. <b>Up-to-date and responsive</b>	Be up-to-date and responsive and consider different scenarios for multi-directional communication, in which everyone is both a transmitter and a receiver (i.e. social media). It must also be prepared for challenges, potential risks associated with immediacy, universal dissemination, and the possibility of incorporating real-time responses.



**Lecture 6.3**



**10 min**

**The importance of effective reporting**

**Learning Outcomes**

- Give awareness of the importance of effective reporting and the role of communication, transparency and accountability in the reporting process.

- Understanding what is being reported on, when, and to whom.

### **Key considerations for reporting on SDG-linked DC programs**

In program management, it is interesting to note that whilst much emphasis is generally placed on Monitoring and Evaluation, the importance of ensuring effective reporting on programs is not always very high on the Agenda. We must acknowledge, however, that in our field, this trend has been changing. One of the key forces behind this important change has been the opportunity offered by global SDG-reporting mechanisms. This has inspired a new wave of reporting by administrations, which have responded by establishing reporting working groups and Committees that monitor and report on the progress made.

It will be important to report on your LRG's DC initiative as part of the global process of reporting on progress made in terms of achieving the SDGs.

We acknowledge that there are many possible ways to report on your SDG-linked DC program and that your team must consider many different factors. To do this, we recommend organizing a short workshop and applying your minds to the following questions:

- Why exactly are we reporting? Is it in response to a donor requirement or is it based on a genuine need to share information with all the stakeholders, explaining what worked well and what could be improved?
- Who is the audience that is being reported to? If there are many different audiences should you prepare separate reports?
- What points of emphasis will the report contain? How will it differ according to the audience?
- How will the data and findings be reported? What form will this take? Will simple spreadsheets be used, or will software and dashboards be developed for reporting? Are there any opportunities for using more creative communication, such as multimedia or video presentations?
- When will reporting take place? Will it be built into the SDG-linked DC program for continuous reporting, or will it happen at key milestones, or only at the end of the program?
- What capacities and resources are available to ensure that the reporting is effective? If there is no LRG capacity, how can you enlist these resources from local businesses or academic partners?

The intention is NOT only to provide answers for your own program, as that will only depend on your local context, circumstances and available capacity. We recognize that the level of engagement and frequency of reporting entirely depends on the involvement and interest of key stakeholders. For example, administrators and implementers may require more detailed reporting as it is crucial for them to be constantly informed of the direction that the program is taking. At face value, one might regard this type of activity as a type of communication update, but its role also extends to providing vital information, feedback and learning methodologies that are to be shared at all stages of the process.

Whatever form your reporting process takes, we do, however, suggest adopting a simple, but inclusive, process that ensures that no-one is left behind. It is critical that program managers avoid the temptation to focus their reporting only on their principals and donors. We need to be continually reminded who we are meant to serve and that we have a duty to ensure that feedback is given to them. Many LRGs have embraced this task in quite innovative ways, with some employing the narrative technique as a way of sharing their learning journey. This form of sharing your SDG story is a simple, but very powerful, way to communicate with stakeholders and to share and openly reflect on the program.

We all accept that whilst governments may work in partnerships with their stakeholders, they ultimately bear the responsibility for bringing sustainable development closer to the people. Monitoring, evaluation and, ultimately, reporting are therefore often a pre-condition for programs receiving support from many international development partners and/or donor agencies. The frameworks established for monitoring, evaluating and reporting are therefore seen as a mechanism with which to hold DC program implementers and LRG managers LRGs accountable for effective project performance and utilization of resources. Remedial measures and actions can also be instituted when program outcomes are not achieved in order to ensure that accountability is taken seriously. This, we suggest, must also be integrated into the LRG system of individual performance measurements and consequence management when and where target outcomes are not achieved.

Part of the reporting process involves making Monitoring and Evaluation findings accessible to citizens and to all relevant stakeholders. This can be done using a range of media tools, including: websites, newsletters, press releases and even social media. These means can be used to convey information about progress with the program and are useful ways of reaching large audiences. The type of information conveyed will, of course, be determined by the scope of the project. By making these lessons public, reporting not only increases the credibility of the institution, but may also have the potential to increase trust and confidence among the general population.<sup>2</sup>



### Practical tips for reporting

1. Reporting to councils and citizens is most important, but national and international partners would also probably be interested.
2. Remember that everybody is a citizen. It is therefore important to use simple language and facts and figures that relate to the local territory.
3. Academic institutions can help systematize and standardize information; proactive city hall departments can coordinate with other offices and local stakeholders; global LRG networks can offer guidance and coordinate with various partners.
4. Reporting formats can be diverse; participation by any means is essential; and a diverse range of actors should be welcomed to help tell the story.
5. Local reporting should be inspired by global reporting and there are many opportunities and formats that can be used to inspire people (SDG festivals, development days, etc.)
6. Challenges and shortcomings that are encountered during the evaluation process of the DC programme should not be avoided, but dealt with and learned from.





Lecture 6.4



10 min

## Monitoring and Evaluation: how to ensure that SDG-linked DC programs have a greater impact

### Learning Outcome

- Participants appreciate that the impact of localized SDGs can be maximized through effective monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Participants will be equipped with basic knowledge and introduced to some tools with which they can design mechanisms that are effective for measuring the performance of their SDG-linked DC programs.

Having a robust monitoring and evaluation system is not only useful for ensuring that program goals are achieved in a way that their resource utilization is optimized and their impacts on communities are maximized. We suggest that **Monitoring and Evaluation can play a fundamental role in embedding the SDG TARGETS within the Monitoring and Evaluation framework** that is developed for the DC program. This point cannot be overstated; it is a creative and practical way of ensuring the mainstreaming of the SDGs within the DC program. If this is done in all international DC programs, it can be a powerful tool for promoting greater solidarity and transparency and for truly localizing the SDGs. Moreover, if the Monitoring and Evaluation framework can ensure that all stakeholders are involved, as we have suggested, this would be another practical way of ensuring that, even in Monitoring and Evaluation, we will “leave no one behind”.

First, some guidance on the overall Monitoring and Evaluation framework: we would advise participants to take note of the following useful points highlighted by DC practitioners out in the field:

### Table 6.2. Some Monitoring and Evaluation “Do's and “Don'ts, by DC practitioners.

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**Monitoring and Evaluation can be as complicated as you want to make it.** We do not recommend a complex Monitoring and Evaluation system with numerous multi-level indicators. Instead, you should go for a simple system that works for you and your territorial partners. This may require some negotiation with international funders or donors (if they are involved). It is important to allow some flexibility in adopting an evaluation process that is not onerous but ultimately achieves the goal of measuring impact. Note that LOGFRAMES are often prescribed. They are not explained in detail here, but were briefly introduced in Chapter 4.

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**Less experienced LRGs should trust more experienced partners to take the lead in guiding them through the Monitoring and Evaluation process.** This will also (as far as possible) include training all the other partners. Note that, ultimately, all DC partners must be fully involved. Any measurements taken (that must take the SDGs in consideration) will go beyond a single territory; it is important to assess the impact of the program as a whole.

At the same time, however, we suggest that you do align your DC program evaluation with your LRG's overall performance management system (which should also be aligned with the SDGs) so that it is not treated as a separate process.

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**Whilst we do recommend the use of university partners to lead the monitoring process, you should consider using sector-based baseline data (if available) from your own LRG departments.** This is more empowering and may even help to build research alliances between stakeholders.

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**We also note that Program Evaluations can be seen as stressful and, at times, even disempowering.** In the spirit of the new SDGs-linked DC, we recommend an alternate, positive attitude, based on embedding monitoring and evaluation within the DNA of the program, so that all partners can embrace the notion of maximizing its impact while collectively achieving the SDGs.

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Source: (Author's own compilation)

### **Towards a simple empowering Monitoring and Evaluation framework for DC**

As noted earlier, when deciding on a suitable approach for designing Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms, one has to be mindful of the context in which the system would operate. The Monitoring and Evaluation literature is clear that most useful frameworks map out and finalize the content at the project conceptualization stage in order to ensure that the correct information is collected from the very beginning of the program. Including this in the preparatory phase of the DC project creates a space in which to identify relevant SDG targets and to design and align them at a much earlier stage in the program.

Many practitioners are deeply embedded in their projects and struggle to operate in a terrain that is marked by empirical solutions. It is very important that projects share lessons and are innovative and open for evaluation purposes. Monitoring and evaluation are not necessarily just a bureaucratic exercise; it is good to build a group and reflect on what was achieved, how, and in how much time, and to share key lessons. In this way, other projects can benefit and donors can also get closer to the reality of the project and adapt tools like project frameworks.

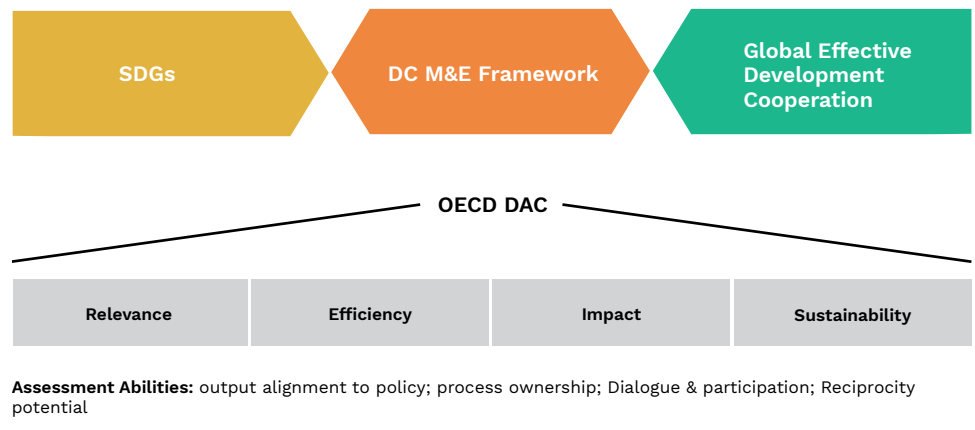
We suggest that when crafting your own Monitoring and Evaluation framework, it may be useful to start with the OECD approach and to use it to guide your overall design. We find great value in this framework as it encapsulates a results-orientated Monitoring and Evaluation philosophy that is focused on maximizing impact. It also advocates Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks that are operational at many different levels: local, regional and national, and that can be aligned and fed into each other. In this way, not only can they be utilized as tools to monitor and assess SDG-linked DC project results and impacts at all levels, but they can also be useful for assessing how DC contributes to shifts in national policies that promote the Sustainable Development Goals.

As outlined in Figure 6.2. (below), this framework aligns the SDGs and their indicators with those of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. This is useful in that it draws on the four principles of rele-

vance, efficiency, impact and sustainability, which are critical for guiding SDG-linked DC interventions. This framework is also powerful in that it embeds the ability to assess:



- Alignment of DC activity outputs with decentralized and macro-level policies in peer countries;
- Process ownership by authorities in peer countries;
- Dialogue and participation by peers at all stages of the DC project; and
- The potential for reciprocity among DC peers<sup>3</sup>.

**Figure 6.2. DDC MONITORING and EVALUATION Framework.**

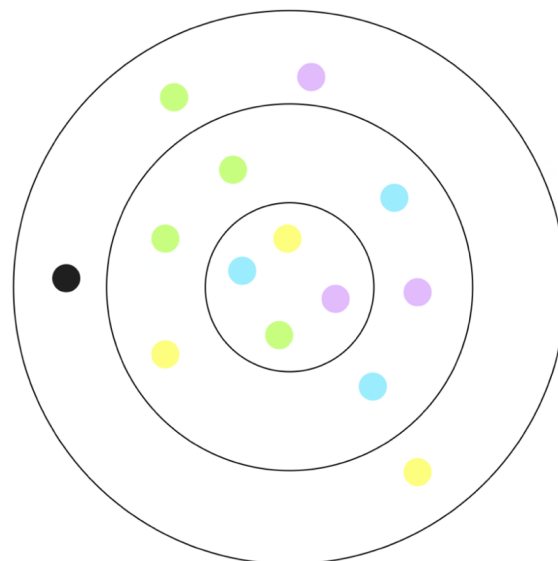


Source: (based on OECD, 2018: 85-86)

### Head of the Settlement

 **Exercise 6.1**  
 **30 min**

1. The trainer prepares for each group a flipchart page with three circles and colorful post-its distributed in the following way:



2. The trainer divides participants into groups of five and explains the story and the goal of the game.

*You are all members of a poverty-stricken informal settlement in South East Asia. The “Head of the Settlement” has just been notified that “aid parcels” (represented by post-its of different colors) have been generously made available through the efforts of twin city in Germany. Among them there is a priceless vaccine that needs to be moved to the refrigerator as fast as possible.*

3. The trainer informs the participants that each of the players will be assigned one resource represented by a color and will receive a card with a specific rule that they will have to follow during the game (Handout 6.1).

**Here are the rules on cards (Handout 6.1) to be individually distributed to the players:**

- **Black** - You are the Head of the Settlement, responsible for leading the group and getting the vaccines (the black post-it) to the refrigerator.
- **Green** – You are the only one who can move the green post-its. You only listen to the Yellow.
- **Yellow** - You are the only one who can move the yellow post-its. You play blindfolded.
- **Blue** - You are the only one who can move the blue post-its. You can move your dots ONLY to the inner circle (refrigerator).
- **Purple** - You are the only one who can move the purple post-its. You only listen to what Green says.

4. The trainer uses a board previously prepared on a flipchart and explains the rules of the game.

**The post-its represent different resources:**

- **Black** – vaccines
- **Blue** – medicine
- **Yellow** – tools
- **Green** – food
- **Purple** – hygiene products

**The goal of the game is to move the vaccine (the black post-it) to the refrigerator in less than 10 minutes!**

**The players need to remember that:**

- Each community member can move ONLY the post-its of the color assigned to them, but they can interact and communicate with each other
- No physical contact is permitted
- “The Head of the Settlement” is responsible for getting the vaccine to the refrigerator and leads the group

### Rules about how the post-its can move:

- You cannot move the black dot into a circle that already has four or more dots
  - There is no limit to how many colorful post-its can be in one circle
  - No post-it can be taken out of the board
  - Post-its can move one circle at a time
5. Before the game starts, the trainer blindfolds the player who has assigned yellow color.
  6. After the game is finished the trainer guides the final discussion around the following questions:
    - Did you figure out the communication rules of each of your fellow players?
    - Was the leadership effective? Why?
    - Did the team support the leader?
    - Reflect on the role that leadership, hierarchies, and city processes have on the success of DC projects.



### Online Training

### Requirements for online training

1. The trainer explains the story and the goal of the game.

*You are all members of a poverty-stricken informal settlement in South East Asia. The “Head of the Settlement” has just been notified that “aid parcels” (represented by dots of different colors) have been generously made available through the efforts of a twin city in Germany. Among them there is an essential vaccine that needs to be moved to the refrigerator as fast as possible.*

2. The trainer informs participants that each of the players will be assigned one resource represented by a color and will receive a specific rule that they will have to follow during the game. The rules should be sent to the players through individual chat messages.

### Here are the texts of the individual messages to the players:

- **Black** - You are the Head of the Settlement, responsible for leading the group and getting the vaccines (the black dot) to the refrigerator.
- **Green** – You can only take orders from the Yellow. You are the only one who can move the green dots.
- **Yellow** - You are the only one who can move the yellow dots. You can only react to messages sent over chat, and must wait to be asked to move the yellow dots.
- **Blue** - You are the only one who can move the blue dots. You can move your dots ONLY to the inner circle (refrigerator), and upon request from your fellow participants.
- **Purple** - You only take do what Green says you must do. You are the only one who can move the purple dots.

3. The trainer shows the MURAL board and explains the rules of the game.

The dots represent different resources:

- **Black** – vaccines
- **Blue** – medicine
- **Yellow** - tools
- **Green** - food
- **Purple** – hygiene products

**The goal of the game is to move the vaccine (the black dot) to the refrigerator in less than 10 minutes!**

**The players need to remember that:**

- Each community member can move **ONLY** the dots of the color assigned to them, but they can interact and communicate with one another.
- Community members may communicate in different ways.
- If there are any problems communicating through Zoom, players can use Mural chat.
- “The head of the Settlement” is responsible for getting the vaccine to the refrigerator and leads the group.

**Rules about how the dots can move:**

- You cannot move the black dot into a circle that already has four or more dots.
  - There is no limit to how many colorful dots may be in any one circle.
  - No dot can be deleted.
  - Dots can only move one circle at a time.
4. The trainer creates Zoom Breakout Rooms for five participants per room and uses a separate MURAL board to play, for each group.
  5. The virtual handout for Mural is available upon request at [learning@uclg.org](mailto:learning@uclg.org). You can see the preview in Annex 2 – Virtual Handouts.
  6. After the game is finished, the trainer guides the final discussion around the following questions:
    - Did you manage to figure out the rules of each of your fellow players?
    - Was the leadership effective? Why?
    - Did the team support the leader?
    - Reflect on the role that leadership, hierarchies, and city processes have on the success of DC projects.



**Discussion 6.2**



**20 min**



**Handout 6.1**

### Group Discussion: Rajkot-Leicester Twinning Case Study

In order to help internalize the learning associated with the importance of monitoring, evaluation and reporting, we suggest a short, but interesting, group exercise.

The trainer will read out the Rajkot-Leicester Twinning Case study (see Handout 6.1.). One half of the class will listen to the Report, imagining that they are members of the Rajkot community being given a short report at a local feedback session. The other half of the class will imagine that they are members of the Commonwealth Local Government Fund listening to the report being presented in London.

Reflecting on all that was learned during the lecture about results-based CRME and the principles of DC, the trainer will engage all the participants as they give their feedback on the report, acting as community members and as funders. Here, attention is paid not only to the content of the DC approach, but also to the fact that responses may differ according to the audience receiving the reports.

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### Summary and Discussion



**Discussion**



**15 min**

To close this chapter, it will be useful to quickly summarize the main points covered;

- The CRME process: to re-emphasize how each of the aspects ties in with and reinforces the others.
- The critical role of communication
- The use of Monitoring and Evaluation as a tool for producing SDG programs with an impact.
- Setting up an Monitoring and Evaluation framework:
  - a. Again, highlight the flexibility obtained from developing your own, unique, CRME framework and building on the principles of relevance, efficiency, impact and sustainability
- The importance of Reporting
  - b. Again, stressing the need for transparency and accountability to end-users.

Please be sure to allow some time for questions to clarify doubts and reflect back on the session.



### Chapter References

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- ↳ 2. UCLG and UN Habitat Publication (2020) Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews: A Comparative Analysis of Existing VLRs. (Volume 1) by Ciambra, A., p25, 28and 34.

- ↳ 3. OECD (2018) Reshaping decentralized Development Co-operation: The Key Role of Cities and Regions for the 2030 Agenda, pg 85-86.
- ↳ 4. Govender, N. Presentation: Monitoring Organisational Performance for Efficient Service Delivery. EThekweni Municipality.
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- ↳ 6. UCLG (2019) SDGs Learning Module 3: Reporting to national and local reviews. Accessed at [https://issuu.com/uclgcglu/docs/Module\\_3\\_fin](https://issuu.com/uclgcglu/docs/Module_3_fin)
- ↳ 7. UCLG – Friedmann, B. (2016) City to City: A Guide to the UCLG Learning Universe
- ↳ 8. VVSG Spreadsheet. Achieving Global Goals at Local Level: Monitoring the SDGs using indicators



# Closing Session

## Outcomes

- Participants consolidate their individual learning journeys over the course of the Module through high-level summaries and points of emphasis.
- Feedback on the training Module is obtained through evaluation forms.
- Learning networks and relationships are cemented to promote ongoing sharing and learning.

## Trainer's insights

We have now come to the end of the Module! We realize that the learning curve may be steep for many participants who have not been fully involved in DC before. We also recognize that the content has been intense and the sessions have been highly compressed to fit into a short space of time. By the end of this Module, we are certain that most participants will be tired and anxious to finish. However, this last session is an important one. It provides an opportunity to reinforce what has been learnt over the last two or three days. If possible, summaries can be delivered by participants and training skills will be acknowledged

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## High-level summary



15 min

### 1. Summary and questions to clarify doubts

We recommend making a short summary of each chapter, outlining the main headings and points of emphasis. This should be done in about five minutes. There is no need to go into much detail. This is merely meant to serve as a summary and as a reminder of what has been covered.

### 2. Consolidate the learning process through personal reflection

Spend the next five minutes asking each participant to write their three most important TAKEAWAYS from the Module. This should be done on the cards provided. The trainer can collect these cards, as they are completed, and arrange them on the board and then take a picture for documentation purposes.

### 3. Create space for some critical evaluation of the Module

In addition to circulating confidential Module assessment and evaluation forms, we suggest allowing some time for a group session and providing an opportunity for some general reflections on the two-day course.



**Exercise**



**10 min**

## **Final Exercise – Passing/transmitting energy**

**The session will close with the following final exercise:**

### **Exercise instructions**

1. Standing in the circle, the trainer thanks the participants for their participation. At this point, the trainer may ask for any final feedback from the group before the session closes.
2. Once the participants have spoken, the trainer will ask the group to hold hands. The trainer then briefly summarizes what has been learnt, emphasizing the role that they will play all around the world as agents of change helping to localize the SDGs in DC programs. The trainer will emphasize such issues as co-operation, communication and connectedness (at the local and global scales) as part of the drive to help achieve the goals. The participants will be reminded of the importance of being the pulse of the global heartbeat and the trainer will explain that s/he will 'pass the pulse' around the circle.
3. The trainer will do this by gently squeezing the hand of the person to their left who, in turn, must squeeze the hand of the person to their left, until the pulse has been passed round the circle. This activity is to be done in silence.
4. The trainer will then ask everyone to release their hands, allow a few seconds of stillness, and then say 'Goodbye and thank you'.



**Coordinated by:**  
UCLG Learning

**Main authors:**  
Sogen Moodley  
Noluthando Mkhize

**Gaming and Design:**  
Smile Mundo  
Dala

# Handouts

## Solidarity

**forbidden words:**

unity, empathy, support

## Horizontal relationships

**forbidden words:**

hierarchy, cooperation, vertical

## Participation

**forbidden words:**

dialogue, community, proximity

## Multi-stakeholder

**forbidden words:**

actors, collaboration, many

## Geographic Alliance

**forbidden words:**

partnership, decentralized, collaboration

**Cards:**

Principles underpinning  
decentralized cooperation

**Trainer:**

Please print on  
the board and cut out

# Personalize your DC bike

## Saddle

/ quality of the relationship with partners and stakeholders



**Racing saddle**  
– you have tried to build partnerships, but this has proved difficult; this situation requires you to take the leading role

**Cruiser saddle**  
– there is a long history of collaboration; you can work together with trust and in comfort; your partnerships will cushion the bumps in the road

## Pedals

/ represent the capacity to mobilize finances

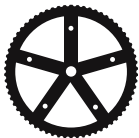


**Clipless pedals**  
– there is existing potential for financial mobilisation, it is not necessary to make much effort to go fast

**Flat pedals**  
– mobilizing finances is a big challenge; moving the bicycle forward will require a lot of strength

## Gears

/ represent knowledge and technical know-how

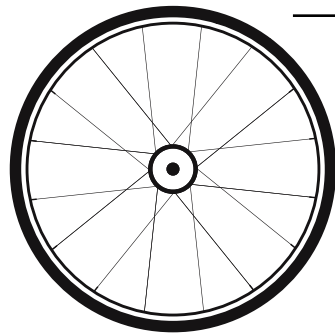


**Multi-range gearing**  
– this is more complex, but you are able to effortlessly adjust to different circumstances. Having access to the necessary knowledge and technical know-how reduces the risk of accidents.

**Single-speed gears**  
– these are simple and easy to repair; they are very reliable, but they do not offer you many possibilities to adjust to changing conditions. Using single-speed gears implies working without any knowledge or technical know-how; the smallest of errors could cause an accident.

## Tyres

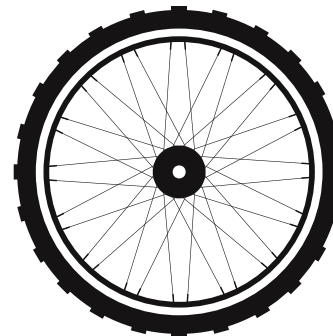
/ represents whether decentralized cooperation is based on policies or projects



**Road bicycle tyres**  
– decentralized cooperation is well planned, predictable and based on policies. It helps to plan the best route and go fast with road tyres

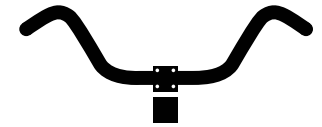
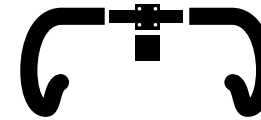
## Mountain bicycle tyres

**Mountain bicycle tyres**  
– decentralized cooperation is based on projects, so the road might be unpredictable. You need to be ready for all the different types of surfaces that you could encounter.



## Handlebars

/ represent political will



**Drop handlebars**  
– there is clear political will to pursue the 2030 Agenda; goals have been set and the team can work towards them effectively

**Cruiser handlebars**  
– there is no clear political will to pursue 2030 Agenda; you will need strong, wide handlebars to negotiate all the bumps in the road

## The bell

/ represents your communication strategy



**Classical bell**  
– you prefer to look for your own path without making too much noise; you only communicate with others when it is absolutely necessary

**Horn**  
– you feel that communication must be constant and strong; you think that everyone in the community needs to know where you are going and why

## Brakes

/ represent local policies and mechanisms



**Disc brakes**  
– disc brakes are equivalent to good policies and working mechanisms; they are high quality and precise; with them, you will always be able to react in time

**Caliper brakes**  
– caliper brakes are less developed and simpler than other options; they can work well if you have enough time to react

## Decentralized Cooperation: Cut out summary concepts

**Trainer:** Please print on the board and cut out for placement on the board.

Partnerships	Development-focused	Local-authority & non-local authority	Strengthening institutional capacity
Strengthening operational capacity	Reciprocity	Horizontal relationship	Mutually-beneficial
Improvement in policies	Address community challenges	Multi-stakeholders	Multi-level governance
Collaborative process	Joint decision-making with non-state actors	Mutual learning	Possibilities for Solidarity

## DC projects: your own experience

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NAME OF PARTICIPATING CITIES/REGIONS	TYPE OF COOPERATION	MODALITY	INTERVENTIONS /TOOLS	FLOWS	RELEVANCE TO SDG
--------------------------------------	---------------------	----------	----------------------	-------	------------------

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1.

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2.

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3.



# How to structure your SDG-Linked DC policy using the 6 P's Policy Framework

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## 1. Preamble: we, the actors

This may be a useful place to contextualize the policy in terms of the international global Agenda. It will help to establish links and promote easier understanding for all stakeholders.

## Ideas for inclusion in your policy

The link between SDG and decentralized cooperation can be made quite strongly here:

The principle of reciprocity perfectly captures the global nature of the 2030 Agenda.

DC provides an excellent opportunity for your LRG to support its partners in addressing and effectively implementing the SDGs.

Employing the territorial partnership modality (which includes all the relevant territorial stakeholders) can help to address the highly interconnected nature of the SDGs and to promote policy coherence, not only vertically, with other tiers of government, but also horizontally.

We can perhaps also very briefly touch on how working in a partnership and solidarity with peers in partner countries can provide good practice, build capacity, allow exchanges of knowledge and even strengthen institutions – thereby securing the buy-in for the adoption of the policy and for DC in general.

---

## 2. Purpose: Achieving SDG x

What do you intend to achieve from the existence and implementation of this policy?

It would be useful to have a clear statement about the target outcome to be achieved by implementing the policy.

There should be clear and definitive goals and objectives.

If there is a legal requirement for pursuing this policy, you could also state that here.

## Ideas for inclusion in your policy

Reference can be made to how DC can help your LRG to construct more egalitarian, long-term partnerships with other LRGs and how this would benefit each of the partners.

Outcomes could relate to how DC could help to tackle common problems facing partners' respective territories and societies. This could be achieved through structured, reciprocal exchanges of knowledge and expertise. Including an element focusing on strengthening the democratic governance of your LRG may also be useful.

Goals and objectives must be tailor-made to suit your own LRG's vision.

Please check with your legal department / advisor as to what the legal implications of this policy would be, as this could have implications for international development and/or relations.

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## 3. Problem statement - narrative and indicators of the SDGs

This is the section that expands on the 'problem' which has required a written Policy on DC.

This section may also briefly describe how you have gone about conducting your research, consulting sources and writing your DC policy.

## Ideas for inclusion in your policy

It may be useful to begin by contextualizing the problem in a statement and recognizing DC as a local or regional public policy related to cooperation for international development.

This section must contain an honest and critical reflection of the state of play in terms of international relations. It should explain why it is important to establish a new, progressive policy framework that responds to the SDGs.

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3. If research has been done into DC, it is important to mention it here. If the predominant mode of partnerships undertaken by your LRG has, for historical reasons, been top-down and aid-centred in nature, then this is an opportunity to transform the paradigm by approaching the challenges with the focus covered earlier in this chapter.
4. Consultation with other departments in the municipality, with other government departments and with parastatal organizations, NGOs and CBOs. This is often essential; furthermore, when writing policy, a list of people/groups consulted should also be included. Exciting new spaces can be created by lobbying for more South-South or triangular territorial partnerships and through making a policy shift, where possible.
- 

#### **4. Policy - our internal possibilities to achieve SDG cooperation**

#### **Ideas for inclusion in your policy**

The guidelines that determine how DC will work in your LRG are clearly outlined here. This section explains the core of the policy as it outlines all the main elements of the DC process and how it should unfold.

- The ability of your LRG to follow the program guidelines for the definition, design, monitoring and evaluation of partnership activities.
- A statement on your LRG's commitment to ensuring the inclusion and active participation of marginalized groups, including women and the disabled, etc.
- The requirement for staff that are willing, able and allowed to undertake sustainable technical exchanges.
- The readiness of political leadership not only to be involved, but to actively lead the initiative.
- Reference to national security and stability in relation to partner countries.
- Operational mechanisms that determine how your LRG will work, including LGAs which will be expected to play a key role in the process.
- It may also be useful to indicate the priority sectors that the partnership will focus on, based on the LRG's strengths and weaknesses.
- This section should also include information about the alignment of your DC initiative with the SDG principles and Busan principles; this can be summarized in the policy.
- After framing the guiding principles, your policy can outline the modalities that your LRG would prefer to incorporate. It should perhaps focus on horizontal modalities in order to improve the quality and efficiency of its results.
- You could use the policy strategically to establish parameters for the introduction of a new generation of decentralized cooperation partnerships. In this way, the benefits of this approach (which is structured around multi-dimensionality and integration) can embed policy coherence.

Include information about the key role players and institutional arrangements. This should include the department responsible for DC and details about who has discretionary powers over it.

A statement could be made explaining how DC incorporates the territorial approach. This could outline how it can provide a broad and inclusive approach in which a range of modalities and practices best suited to your particular LRG can be accommodated. Local/regional cooperation has the power to harness a range of key players who are be involved in DC (see Chapter 4). At a practical level, it will be important to include a complete list of the details of the different stakeholders and of how they will be included in the partnership.

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It is important to give a clear indication of what the budgetary implications of the policy are.	A policy framework based on DC must include a consideration of the financing of DC initiatives, particularly where funding must be sourced. Details should include your own LRG's financial commitment to the program.
The time frames governing the initiatives can also be outlined in this section.	It will be important to indicate what commitments the local council will have to make and over what time period. This must be done to ensure that there will be no ambiguity regarding the length of the DC partnership.
The plans regarding how to communicate the policy once it has been adopted should also be indicated.	It may be useful to issue a statement at the end of the process to explain how the communication process inherent to the policy will unfold.

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## 5. Procedures

### Ideas for inclusion in your policy

The rules for this section are as important as the guidelines provided in the previous section, as they express the purpose of the policy.

In this section of your LRG DC policy, you must translate the broad policy guidelines into procedures that will make the policy operational.

Procedures could be outlined for a range of aspects including:

How the program will be designed.

How marginalized target groups will be empowered by the program.

How the partnership will be formalized (with peers, LGAs, etc).

How territorial stakeholders will be engaged.

How political leaders will be involved and what their roles and responsibilities will be.

These describe how the rules must be implemented.

---

## 6. Policy evaluation and review

### Ideas for inclusion in your policy

Every policy must be evaluated and reviewed in order to make sure that it is relevant and effective. In this final section, you must briefly outline your policy evaluation and review process.

The nature of DC is constantly changing and so is the socio-political climate within which LRGs operate. It is therefore useful to build an aspect of evaluation and review into policy that can be updated after the actual DC partnerships have been evaluated. A clear statement on why this is important and regarding how evaluation can be used to drive action, guarantee the proper use of allocated resources, improve results, and capitalize on lessons learnt during the process can, and should, also be included.

It is important to be clear about what is being measured: activities, outputs, results and/or outcomes.

Note that many DC initiatives have recently been criticized for not achieving the outcomes that they were supposed to deliver. Outcome measures that focus on impact are not always easy to measure; refer back to chapter 6. It is, however, necessary to include measurements of outcomes to ensure accountability and to assess the returns on the investments made by LRGs in DC initiatives.

There is normally a statement about how often the effectiveness of policy will be evaluated.

These assessments are often staggered, with certain outputs being evaluated on an annual basis, but with outcomes only being assessed after 3 years.

Who will carry out the evaluation? How will you respond to the findings? Will the DC policy be amended? Will more research be done?

Finally, there is a need for some information about who will conduct the evaluation (note that including local stakeholders in this process is crucial). A clear explanation of what will be done to implement the findings must also be included. Explanations about how these findings will be communicated to all the partners, so that they are also able to respond, are also required. These are necessary in order to ensure that the DC intervention is always robust and effective and it must also form part of this section of the policy.

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# Example of a Logical Framework Matrix structure

<b>Description of the activity</b>	<b>Related Indicators for each activity</b>	<b>Link to SDG (Please list SDG number)</b>	<b>Contribution to SDG Target (Please list related Targets)</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
<p><b>Goal or Impact</b></p> <p>Clearly explain the long-term development impact that the DC activity contributes towards.</p>	<p>How achievement will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)</p>			<p>Sources of information about the Goal indicator(s) – including who will collect it and how often</p>	
<p><b>Purpose or Outcome</b></p> <p>Clearly explain the medium-term result(s) that the DC activity aims to achieve – in terms of benefits to target groups. Do we know exactly who the target groups are?</p>	<p>How achieving the purpose will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)</p>			<p>Sources of information about the Purpose indicator(s) – including who will collect it and how often</p>	<p>Assumptions concerning the Purpose to Goal linkage</p>
<p><b>Component Objectives or Intermediate Results</b></p> <p>This level in the objectives or results hierarchy can be used to provide a clear link between outputs and outcomes (particularly for larger multi-component activities)</p>	<p>How achieving the Component Objectives will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)</p>			<p>Sources of information about the Component Objectives indicator(s) - including who will collect it and how often</p>	<p>Assumptions concerning the Component Objective to Output linkage</p>
<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <p>The tangible products or services that the activity will deliver</p>	<p>How achieving the Outputs will be measured – including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)</p>			<p>Sources of information about the Output indicator(s) - including who will collect it and how often</p>	<p>Assumptions concerning the Output to Component Objective linkage</p>

Work Program (not usually included in the matrix itself)

Source: Australian Government – AUSAID (2005), AusGuideline. The Logical Framework Approach. Commonwealth of Australia.

# A Centre of Hope

Meet Tasneem, a young and passionate social worker who has been working tirelessly with the community of Mitchells Plain in Cape Town, South Africa, for the last 10 years. Recently, Tasneem has been feeling very despondent. Despite the gains that her beloved country has made post-democracy, she feels that each day she is fighting a losing battle. Her office has been receiving 150 new cases of gender-based violence and substance abuse every month! Last year, her city was shaken by the violent killing of a university student that drew international attention to the issue of femicide. She is very fatigued by the constant trauma associated with debriefing women and children and the hours spent with victims of gang-related crime on the Cape Flats. It seems like all that her department was doing was treating the symptoms and not the underlying causes of the problem, which included youth unemployment and boredom, entrenched drug-lords and, sadly, a fundamental disrespect for women that has been reinforced by a patriarchal society.

However, a glimmer of hope shone through the windows of her small office the morning that she received a call from the City Council's International Office. The Dutch and South African governments had just given the green light to the "Co-create my city" program between the cities of Cape Town and Delft, as part of a program to tackle social issues and co-create economically, environmentally and socially resilient cities. What was even more exciting was that, whilst the Dutch government was committing some funds to the development of a Centre of Hope for Mitchell's Plain, the partnership arrangement between the cities of Cape Town and Delft also included contacts between their respective local universities: UCT and TU DELFT. Academics and doctoral students committed to a three-year program of renewal for Mitchells Plain! Tasneem always felt that what was needed was not just funding, but the commitment of key stakeholders, who would have to sit down and devise creative solutions to the underlying problems. She hoped that the assistance of international partners would help mobilize the energy of local stakeholders and persuade them to work together on this new, Centre of Hope, project.

Tasneem was excited to attend a stakeholder workshop meeting with all the key players, from her local area, plus Dutch academics and students. She was very impressed to hear that the Centre of Hope was being designed by TU Delft as a green building with the latest "off the grid technology" and housing not only spaces for short-term trauma counselling, but also spaces for training local women to give them basic skills that will enable them to become entrepreneurs. The plans also included designing spaces where young people could meet, learn, and have fun. It seemed that sustainability was deeply embedded in the thinking behind this program and, for the first time in some time, she felt hopeful...

## Handout 4.3

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**Description  
of the Activity**

**Related Indicators  
for each activity**

**Link to Sustainable  
Development Goals  
(Please list the sdg  
number)**

**Contribution  
to the SDG Target  
(Please list related  
targets)**

---

**Goal  
or Impact**

---

**Purpose  
or Outcome**

---

**Component  
Objectives  
or Intermediate  
Results**

---

**Outputs**

---

# International donor funding for DC initiatives: Tips for José

José Oliveira was normally very sceptical about international workshop training. He generally felt that it was a waste of time and money. For him, these resources could be better spent if they were used to help the poorest of the poor in his city: São Luís, in Maranhão, north-eastern Brazil.

However, this training was somehow different. It was intense, but very well-structured and over the last day and a half he had learned so much about how municipalities and regions, all over the world, were working together to bring meaningful change into the lives of the people that they served.

As an official in the Urban Planning Unit, he had heard of the term “decentralized cooperation” from his colleagues from São Paulo. Now, however, for the first time, he knew exactly what it meant, how it had developed over the years, its benefits, and how it was helping to connect the international with the local level. He was also excited as he had learned how to put together a simple, but really effective, policy for his municipality and its local stakeholders. Now, they could come together and be clear about how they could form partnerships, and who with, and how this could help them to solve their local daily challenges.

HOWEVER, Jose had heard that it was impossible to run international cooperation projects without any donor funding. He had heard on the grapevine that international funding was not as easily available as it had been years before. This was really sad, he thought, as he knew, deep in his heart, that many poor countries, like his own, had suffered decades of underdevelopment and really needed resources to lift them out of their cycles of urban poverty and deprivation.

Worse still, unlike São Paulo, his was only a small, little-known, city without an international profile, and with many competing priorities. Furthermore, COVID 19 had taken its toll on the local economy in many ways, and that kept him awake at night. He was not sure if it was even worth thinking about decentralized cooperation projects if there was no grant funding available. Where would he access funds from? How would he start the process? If there was no grant funding, should he just abandon the idea? After all, they say “go big or go home”! So, should he just give up right now?

Question:

What advice would you give to the rather despondent José? After some discussion in your group, please record your groups’ TOP THREE TIPS for Jose on the three cards provided.

# Local Government: Asia

---

## Who you are

You are a local government representative from Asia and the host of the upcoming meeting. You decided to contact the International Organization and initiate this partnership because part of your region: Zygza, is in desperate need of transport improvements.

You are initiating a decentralized cooperation project. The goal is to convince potential partners to join you and come up with the best way to improve transportation in Zygza. You have asked the International Organization to inform you who would be willing to take part in your project. Now it is time for you to **host** and **moderate** a discussion with all of them. **The potential partners attending the meeting are the following:**

- Local Government from Europe
- Local Government from Latin America
- CSO
- International Organization

---

## The challenge

The situation in Zygza is serious and it is adversely affecting the lives of its citizens on a daily basis. Even so, you hope that your partners can provide you with the funds and knowledge needed to find the best solution to this challenge. New infrastructure is desperately needed in Zygza as its citizens have very limited opportunities to work and study. **Here is some basic information about the current situation:**

- it takes approximately 3-4 hours to get to the nearest city.
- residents enjoy a peaceful lifestyle, free from pollution, but this does not compensate for high rates of unemployment and poverty, which are leading Zygza's inhabitants to emigrate to the capital

---

## The solution

Building a new road is a clear solution! You have already shared your plans with the Ministry of Infrastructure - they got very excited when you explained how spectacular you expect the road to be. This might be the nation's new flagship project! You are pretty sure that this international partnership will significantly change the region: in future, Zygza will be known for its innovative infrastructure. You are determined to build the road so that Zygza can finally live up to its potential and really shine!

You have dedicated a lot of time to planning how to build the road. However, there is still a lot to be done. **Here you have some information about your current situation:**

- you need a total budget of 72 000 zygzas
- you only have 30 000 zygzas – you hope that your partners can help you to raise necessary funds



- you are convinced that this would bring about a revolutionary change, which is needed in the region. The road could save citizens a lot of time. It would then take only **45 minutes** to get to the capital!
- construction will take **12 months**

Another option would be to invest in river transport, but at the moment you are not convinced that this would be such a good idea. The biggest inconvenience with this solution is the time that it would take to get anywhere: who can afford to spend **3 hours** on a boat? The cost would also be very high: **78 000 zygzas**. When it comes to how much the citizens would pay for using these two transport options, the estimated prices of land and water transport would be, more or less, the same.

---

**Your goals**

- **Convince all the partners to join the partnership**
- **Secure the necessary funding and knowledge**
- **Find the best solution for Zygza**

In a few minutes, you will talk to your potential partners. **Your role is to host the meeting.** You will start by introducing yourself and asking your partners to introduce themselves. You will then make sure that the discussion runs smoothly. The goal of the meeting is to decide whether all the partners want to create the partnership and then, if so, to find the best solution for Zygza's infrastructure problem.

On a separate sheet you will find a **table**. You should use this to make notes and to analyse the implications of different options and potential decisions.

# Local Government: Europe

---

## Who you are

You are a local government representative from Europe. You are considering joining the partnership which will focus on improving the transport infrastructure in a remote Asian region called Zygza. You always look for this type of collaboration. This is a great opportunity to exchange good practices and to find new opportunities for local companies from your region. What you have to offer is the expertise, funds and work of one of your local companies.

---

## The challenge

New infrastructure is desperately needed in Zygza as its citizens currently have very few and limited opportunities to work and study and it takes them approximately 3-4 hours to get to the nearest city.

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## The solution

Building the road that connects Zygza to the capital is the best solution and also the cheapest and the fastest. It is also the most attractive option for you: you could get your local construction companies into a new, international market. That would skyrocket their growth! For this reason:

- You can invest **20 000 zygzas**, if a company from your region is responsible for building the road. The construction companies assure you that the process would not take longer than 24 months
- The road will shorten the commute time to **45 min**
- Road infrastructure is where your region is making an effort to gain an international name. This project is a great opportunity to do this.

You know that water transport is becoming an important thing in Asia and that perhaps this option will also be considered in Zygza. One of the small start-ups from your region recently came to you with their new, ecological electric motors. This start-up has prepared a simulation for Zygza and using their innovative motor could shorten the commute time by river to **60 min**.

If water transport is considered as an option, the business aspect will be much less beneficial for your region, but you are also interested in supporting sustainability and you could therefore invest up to **15 000 zygzas**. You could also invest an additional **4 000 zygzas if ALL the boats are to be built by a company from your region**.

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## Your goals

- **Secure new business opportunities for your local companies**
- **Decide whether it is in your interests to enter this partnership**

In a few minutes you will talk to your potential partners. First, introduce yourself and get to know everyone. The goal of the meeting is to decide whether all the partners want to set up the partnership and, if so, to find the best solution for Zygza's infrastructure problem.

On a separate sheet of paper, you will find a **table**. You should use it to make notes and to analyse potential decisions.

# Local Government: Latin America

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## Who you are

Who you are: you are a local government representative from Latin America. The reason you are considering joining the partnership is because you always look for this type of collaboration; it offers a great opportunity to exchange best practices and to provide new opportunities to local companies in your region. Also, every opportunity to gain experience in decentralized cooperation is a big bonus for you.

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## The challenge

The goal of this partnership is to find the best solution to improve transportation in Zygza, a remote region in Asia. New infrastructure is desperately needed in Zygza, as its citizens currently have very limited opportunities for work and study and it takes them approximately 3-4 hours to get to the nearest city.

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## The solution

- Building a road in Zygza could seem like the first, and most logical, option but you are **100% sure** that Zygza's government has underestimated the cost of this project. A few years ago, you made the same decision in your region, but the process was slow and extremely challenging, and at the end of the day, it turned out to be much more expensive than had been predicted. You are that sure the work cannot be done for less than **90 000 zygzas**. You might share your experience with the group but it is a delicate issue. You have to build up a good relationship and feel that your partners are trustworthy before talking to them about your mistakes. If they decide to build the road on a smaller budget, you are sure that they will fail.
- You do, however, have something that could significantly improve **Zygza's transportation**. One of your local start-ups has developed a highly innovative app for carsharing that reduces traffic by up to 30%. It is in Zygza's best interests to introduce the app in their region; they could then save as much as **10 000 zygzas** on the project and this would offer a great solution for traffic jams. These are a real problem in this area, as most cars are only used by individual commuters.
- You know that water transport is an interesting alternative in Asia. If the project develops in this direction, the same innovative app will help to coordinate passengers and ports. It will also permit the use of private boats as a part of the solution. This could mean a saving of **7 000 zygzas** on the project
- You could also invest **3 000 zygzas** if the company from your region could produce electric motors for the boats.

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**Your goals**

- **Decide whether you are interested in joining the partnership**
- **Secure a new business deal for your local companies**

In a few minutes you will talk to your potential partners. First, introduce yourself and get to know each other. The goal of the meeting is to decide whether all the partners want to create the partnership and, if so, to find the best solution for Zygza's infrastructure problem.

On a separate sheet of paper, you will find a **table**. You should use this to make notes and to analyse potential decisions.

# CSO

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**Who you are**

Who you are: You are a representative of a CSO which works in the Zygza region. You know the region and its citizens like no one else. For this reason, it is extremely difficult for you to watch the people of Zygza getting more and more desperate because of the growing poverty and unemployment. You are relieved that they might get a chance to connect with the outside world thanks to the new road.

There is no doubt that you could be very helpful in this project; you are the only person in the group who truly knows the needs of the community and has an idea of what their daily life is like. On the other hand, you have never worked with international local government organizations before and you have no idea what to expect.

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**The challenge**

The goal of this partnership is to find the best solution and to improve transportation in Zygza. New infrastructure is desperately needed as its citizens currently have only very limited opportunities to work and study and it takes them approximately 3-4 hours to get to the nearest city.

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**Your participation rules**

Governments need to show interest in the citizens' perspective if you are to share your knowledge with them. **You can tell them what you know about Zygza, but ONLY if you hear one of the following key expressions: "participatory process", "citizens' needs", "community well-being", or "citizens' opinion".**

If not, you will remain silent and not respond to any of the questions. You can only briefly present who you are. After that, all the other information can only be shared after one of the key words or expressions is mentioned.

**Knowledge you can share after hearing the keywords:**

- The truth is that the citizens use the river to commute on a daily basis. Not everyone has their own boat, but they do not mind sharing.
- You are 100% sure that the budget of **78 000 zygzas** will cover the cost of the water transport.
- There is a local cooperative that builds good, high-quality boats.
- You are convinced that they should be providers of the boats. Local production would also save **5 000 zygzas** in the cost of the project.

The only issue with this kind of transport is how time-consuming it is. At present, it takes more than 3h to travel to the nearest city and this is not an efficient way to travel. However, if it took more or less an hour to get to the city by boat, river transport would tick all the boxes. A solution should be found to improve river transport; if not, river transport will not meet Zygza's citizens' needs.

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**Your goals**

- make sure the final project ensures a transport time of less than **70 min.**
- make sure that the local boat cooperative is involved in the project.

In a few minutes, you will talk to your potential partners. First, introduce yourself and then get to know each other. The goal of the meeting is to decide whether all the partners want to create the partnership and, if so, to find the best solution for Zygza's infrastructure problem.

On a separate sheet, you will find a **table**. You should use this to make notes and to analyse potential decisions.

# International Organization

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## Who you are

You are a representative of an International Organization and your department specifically focuses on local and regional government issues. You were happy to see that the **Asian Local Government** reached out to you for support when searching for collaboration. As a result, you have invited both **European and Latin American Local Government Organizations** to participate. Furthermore, you have suggested that the local **CSO** should also take part in the meetings; you value its participation and think that it holds the key to obtaining great results. **Your role is to support the host of the meeting: the Asian Government, and to help to moderate the meeting.**

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## The challenge

The goal of this partnership is to find the best solution to improve transportation in Zygza, a remote region of Asia. New infrastructure is desperately needed in Zygza as its currently citizens have very limited opportunities to work and study and it takes them approximately 3-4 hours to get to the nearest city. Work with your partners and find a way to improve Zygza's situation.

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## The solution

What you care about is making this partnership a good experience for everyone involved. You would like the process to be as open and creative as possible with the main focus being on achieving the SDGs.

You and your partners hope that you will be able to find the best possible solution for Zygza's crisis. The top priority should be to find a solution based on sustainable development. As a group, you think that you should be open to alternative and creative solutions if they have a chance of working in the long run and offering a more sustainable future.

- You are ready to offer **12 000 zygzas** to support any solution presented by the different partners
- You also have an additional **10 000 zygzas available, from the SDG Fund**, but you can only give it away if you can see that the partners have a clear intention to use their project to meet an SDG goal. When deciding how much money you can spend, follow the guidelines listed below:
  1. You can award 2 000 zygzas for pursuing 1 SDG
  2. If local companies are involved in the development of the project, it will meet an SDG target (SDG 8), so you can award an additional 2 000 zygzas, and if sustainable energy solutions are involved (SDG 13 and SDG 12), you can allocate up to 4 000 zygzas.
  3. Take into account how convincing the participants are when explaining the links between their project and the SDGs

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**Your goals**

- make sure the partnership is successfully established
- make sure the partners find the optimal solution to Zygza's problem
- most importantly, make sure the chosen solution is in line with the SDGs

In a few minutes, you will talk to your potential partners. **Your main role will be to help moderate the meeting.** First, ask the partners to introduce themselves and get to know each other; then, make sure that the discussion runs smoothly. The goal of the meeting is to decide whether all the potential partners want to create a partnership and, if so, to then find the best solution for Zygza's infrastructure problem.

Below, you will find a **table**. As you will help the host, your role also involves filling it in with the chosen solution and **making sure that you have enough money** to carry out the project.



# Table for the players

## COSTS

**Solution:** ..... **Zygzas**

Cost:

Possible savings:

**Total budget required:**

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SDGs tackled:

## RESOURCES

<b>Partners</b>	<b>Confirmed participation</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Money invested / Zygzas</b>
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Asian Government	Yes / No		
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European Government	Yes / No		
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Latin America	Yes / No		
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CSO	Yes / No		
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International Organization	Yes / No		
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**Total budget available**  
(sum of investments made by all the partners)

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# Instructions for facilitators

## Preparation for the game

1. Print out the roles and give them out to all the participants. Each of them should also get a table in which to fill in the final results (if you play the game online, make sure to give the participants access to an editable version of the table so that they can share it on screen).
2. The entire game should take between 45 and 60 minutes. If you have less time available, you can finish after 30 minutes. It is unlikely that the participants will be able to reach an agreement so quickly, but the activity can still serve as a great base for discussion.

## Your role as game master

1. As an introduction to the game, explain the context and the story of Zygza.

*You are potential partners of a decentralized cooperation partnership and you are just about to start your first meeting. There are 5 participants at the meeting:*

- *Local Government from Asia - initiator and host*
- *Local Government from Europe*
- *Local Government from Latin America*
- *International Organisation*
- *Local Civil Society Organisation (CSO)*

*Zygza, a remote region of Asia, is in desperate need of improved transportation. Lack of a fast connection with the capital (the nearest big city) is adversely affecting the lives of Zygza's citizens on a daily basis. You hope that within the partnership you can find a solution and a way to raise the funds needed and to source knowledge required to complete the challenge.*

2. Tell the players to take a moment to read their instructions and prepare for the meeting
3. After 5 to 10 min, tell the players that they can officially start the meeting and that LG from Asia is the host and will speak first.
4. Establish a time limit. It should take 30 min to have a full discussion round, and in total 45-60 min to reach a full agreement and ensure the necessary funds.
5. During the game, your role will only be to observe the participants; you should not comment or try to suggest any possible solutions.

## Wrap-up

1. When the participants have agreed on a solution (or the time you planned for the activity is over), it is time to talk about the experience.
2. If you have enough time, you can show the tables with possible solutions and discuss each of them with the players.

3. You should moderate the conversation and motivate the participants to share their thoughts about their role in the game. To open the discussion, you can ask the participants:
  - which aspects of the game reflect the decentralized cooperation reality and in what ways the game does not mirror their real-life experience.
  - which elements of their role were challenging and how and why these elements are similar to their experience.

### Additional information

It is possible that the players could get a bit creative. As long as they stay within the general framework of the game, this is not a problem. It is fine if they add new solutions, like: "Within the project, we will focus on gender equality, and in this way, we will meet SDG 5 goals". However, the players have to keep to the available budget and cannot change the costs.

If you see that the players are struggling with their calculations of the available budget and the cost of the solutions that they are considering, you can suggest doing this in 2 parallel tables. Use one of the tables for road transport and the other for river transportation.

The real cost of the road solution is 90 000 zygzas, as the Latin American Local Government has mentioned. If the players reach an agreement based on the road, you must discuss it with the participants after the game ends. Help them to reflect on their actions and on how, possibly because of a lack of trust and being unable to learn from the mistakes of others, they negotiated a solution that is not feasible.

### Solution A - Road transport

#### COSTS

Solution: Road Transport	Zygzas	Comments
Cost:	75 000	Players may perceive the real cost as 75 000, but this is not realistic. Even if they decide to build the road, this is not a feasible solution. The real cost is 90 000
Possible savings:	10 000	Savings come from: 10 000 thanks to introducing the app from Latin America
<b>Total budget required:</b>	<b>= 65 000</b>	Real cost: 80 000

SDGs tackled: E.g., SDG 8, SDG 11

## RESOURCES

Partners	Confirmed participation	Other resources	Money invested / Zygzas
Asian Government	Yes / No	/	30 000
European Government	Yes / No	/	20 000
Latin America	Yes / No	/	3 000
CSO	Yes / No	/	0
International Organization	Yes / No	+ 10 000 possible from SDG funding	12 000
<b>Total budget available</b> (sum of investments made by all the partners)			<b>= 75 000</b>

As you can see from the table above, road transport is not a feasible solution. If the partners decide to do this, and they decide to raise the budget, it means that they did not take into account the real risk of a higher cost.

### Solution B - Road transport

#### COSTS

#### Solution: River Transport Zygzas Comments

Cost:	78 000	78 000 is a real cost; there are no hidden risks
Possible savings:	7 000 + 5 000	Savings come from: 7 000 thanks to introducing the app from Latin America and 5 000 if a local company builds the boats
<b>Total budget required:</b>	<b>= 66 000</b>	<b>Important:</b> There is a conflict of interests between the European Local Government and the CSO. If an EU company builds the boats, there is an additional 4 000 cost, but if a local cooperative does this, there is 5 000 saving. For this reason, the other possible cost is 71 000.

SDGs tackled: E.g., SDG 9, SDG 10

## RESOURCES

Partners	Confirmed participation	Other resources	Money invested / Zygzas
Asian Government	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes / No	/	30 000
European Government	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes / No	+ 4 000 if ALL the boats are built by an EU company	15 000
Latin America	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes / No	+ 3 000 if a company from your region produces electric motors	0
CSO	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes / No	/	0
International Organization	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes / No	+ 10 000 possible from SDG funding	12 000
<b>Total budget available</b> (sum of investments made by all the partners)	<b>Important:</b> There is a conflict of interests between the European Local Government and the CSO. If an EU company builds the boats, there is an additional investment of 4 000, but if a local cooperative does this, there is a saving of 5 000. For this reason, another possible budget is 71 000		= 75 000

As you can see in the table above, there is sufficient money in the budget for this solution. It will also be more sustainable than the road solution (more money from SDG funding should therefore be allocated here).

# Case Study

## **Sustained partnership for sustainable local development: The twinning of Rajkot and Leicester**

Rajkot is one of the largest cities in Gujarat state, in the north-west of India. Today, it has a population of over 1.4 million and it is estimated to be one of the world's 25 fastest growing cities. Since 1996, it has had an active twinning link with the UK city of Leicester, over 30,000 of whose citizens have their family origins in Rajkot, or the wider Gujarat area. In 2004, the two city governments decided to take their partnership a step further by working together on a number of practical day-to-day issues involving the delivery of services. To do this, they have obtained funding support for two projects from the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme.

Water, both for drinking and for sanitation, was identified by Rajkot Municipal Corporation as a major priority because under the municipal supply service, most households only had access to water for a maximum of around 30 minutes a day, with this dropping to 20 minutes every other day. The first project, from 2004–2008, was therefore related to the provision of a regular supply of clean water. Initially, Rajkot originally wanted to explore providing this service using purely private sector solutions to the problem.

Based on the experience of Leicester, the partnership explored an approach to the problem based more on community involvement and development. Two “wards” (areas) of Rajkot were selected for a pilot project and consultation forums were set up at which citizens could discuss their problems relating to water supplies and ideas for how to meet their needs. New water services were introduced and then a further round of consultations was held. According to the Rajkot Commissioner's technical assistant, Ms Alpana Mitra, “Since the project, officers from Rajkot local government have gone to the public to listen to their problems directly... We were successful in convincing the people that some of their problems can be solved within the community itself. This has been assisted by a decentralization of services during the project period, with an increase in civic facilities and easier access to local residents.”

The project has helped to bring about a fundamental shift in the approach of the Indian local authority, which has seen the practical benefits of adopting a more participatory approach to delivering services on a targeted and sustainable basis. The emphasis is on cooperation based on community involvement and continued development that will go on beyond this first project. Using the methodology, Rajkot has developed a solid waste management system that includes community participation. This has a strong recycling component, commercial end-products, and –quite uniquely in South Asia – it is profitable. The two cities have also worked together on solar power projects. Rajkot won national government support for its Solar project in 2010. The two cities are now working together on another issue that had been identified by Rajkot as a priority and which fits in with Leicester's interest in community development and the “social economy”.

### **Handout 6.1**