



## HOW TO REINFORCE THE RELATION BETWEEN THE EU AND AFRICAN LRAs: INSTRUMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Dialogue and capacity building of  
local and regional authorities  
in EU partner countries  
in the fields of development  
and local governance

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**How to reinforce the relation between the EU and African LRAs:  
Instruments for development cooperation**

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**Author: Paul Georis**

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# 1. OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The primary and overarching objective of EU development cooperation<sup>1</sup> is the **eradication of poverty** in the context of sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>2</sup>. A reduction of poverty will help meet other challenges, such as HIV/AIDS, conflict, migration and sustainable development.

Through its aid cooperation, the EU is also promoting **democratic values**, which are considered essential to the success of development policies i.e. respect for human rights, democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, good governance, gender equality, solidarity and social justice.

In line with the Paris declaration<sup>3</sup>, the EU is putting more stress on **ownership** of development programmes i.e. partner countries are mainly responsible for their own development. They must therefore define themselves the priorities and measures, which they consider important for their future and ensure that there is coherence and consistency between proposed development measures. EU aid must be based on these national strategies and complement domestic resources. Furthermore, the EU must make sure that its support is well coordinated with the initiatives from other donors so that their efforts complement each other within a single framework agreed with the partner country.

**Partnership** is another key principle of EU aid cooperation: development strategies are not only agreed between the partner country and the EU but all segments of society should be consulted to ensure that needs are well understood, solutions proposed are feasible and supported by all. In this context, the EU has emphasised<sup>4</sup> the importance of **local governments as key actors in development policies** and proposed to strengthen their participation in the design and implementation of European development policy<sup>5</sup>.

In its recent communication the '*Agenda for Change*'<sup>6</sup>, the EU has spelled out a more strategic approach to its development policy to adapt it to the changing balance of global economic power: a number of partner countries are making rapid progress in reaching their development goals while others remain trapped in poverty. It is necessary therefore to recalibrate EU assistance taking better account of the level of development and the context of each partner country. The *Agenda for change* calls for a more **differentiated approach** to partnerships and aid allocation and a **concentration** of resources on key sectors of development: assistance should be allocated on the basis of country needs, capacities, commitments, performance and potential EU impact and resources concentrated on a maximum of three sectors. The *Agenda* also stresses the importance of local governments in development policies<sup>7</sup>.

The mix and level of aid will depend on the country's situation, including its ability to conduct reforms. Priority will be given to countries that are in the greatest need of external support and where aid can have a high impact. Countries with higher level of development will no longer receive bilateral grant aid but will instead be offered new forms of partnerships corresponding to their needs<sup>8</sup>.

**Human rights, democracy, and good governance** are considered to be critical for achieving social and economic development and will be given greater prominence in future EU funding. Economic growth is also considered to be crucial to long-term poverty reduction. However, growth should benefit people with more and better jobs and should not compromise the environment and natural resources. EU aid will therefore be directed to reforms promoting **inclusive and sustainable growth**.

<sup>1</sup> *The European Consensus On Development (2006/C 46/01)*, Joint Statement by the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission.

<sup>2</sup> The eight MDGs are to: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce the mortality rate of children; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development. Each objective includes specific targets to be reached by 2015.

<sup>3</sup> The Paris Declaration was signed in 2005 among major donors in order to increase the effectiveness of international aid. The declaration enounced five core principles that should be at the heart of aid cooperation: ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results and mutual accountability.

<sup>4</sup> COM(2008) 626 final Communication from the Commission *Local authorities: actors for development*. A new version is under preparation. See below section 3.3.

<sup>5</sup> In particular through the thematic programme Non-State Actor and Local Authority, see below.

<sup>6</sup> COM(2011) 637 final Communication from the Commission, Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change.

<sup>7</sup> "The EU should strengthen its links with [...] Local Authorities, through regular dialogue and use of best practices. [...] The EU should consider ways of mobilizing local authorities' expertise, e.g. through networks of excellence or twinning exercises". Agenda for Change, page 6.

<sup>8</sup> Under the new Partnership Instrument, see below section 1.2.2.



This will include a focus on social protection, health and education policies, the promotion of a stronger business environment and deeper regional integration and the development of sustainable agriculture and energy.

As the deadline for MDGs comes closer, there is a growing awareness that the challenges of **poverty eradication and sustainable development** are inter-related and need to be addressed together by all countries. The EU has made proposals for an unified policy framework to mobilise and coordinate development efforts worldwide after 2015<sup>9</sup>. The new global development agenda to be agreed under the auspices of the UN will undoubtedly shape future EU development cooperation.

## 2. FINANCING MECHANISMS OF EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The European Union is the world's largest development aid donor. In 2010, the total amount of assistance<sup>10</sup> amounted to EUR 53.8 billion or 55 % of the total development aid worldwide. In spite of recent economic difficulties, the EU remains committed to increasing its official development assistance to the UN target of 0.7 per cent of its gross national income (GNI) by 2015<sup>11</sup>.

EU aid is delivered by means of **financial instruments** which provide the legal basis for implementing **geographical and thematic programmes**. Financial instruments are endowed with a specific budget covering a period of seven years corresponding to the duration of the EU budget<sup>12</sup>, the so-called **financial perspectives**<sup>13</sup>.

**Geographical programmes** are centred on the needs of specific countries/regions. They are implemented on the basis of multi-annual country or regional strategies, which detail the priorities of development. These strategies (and the programmes to implement them with national and EU funding) are developed by partner countries in cooperation with the EU. Local governments and civil society are invited to contribute to their design and implementation in line with the principle of partnership.

**Thematic programmes** are focusing on specific issues of common interest to the EU and its partners across the world. They are opened to EU member states and EU partner countries worldwide and are implemented on the basis of multi-annual thematic strategies defining objectives and priorities eligible for funding.

Both geographical and thematic programmes are implemented through different modalities that can be complementary: single project, sector programme, budget support, grant schemes, etc. Thematic programmes are often implemented by means of grant schemes to which local governments are eligible.

The following paragraphs provide an overview of EU financial instruments/programmes relevant for Africa.

<sup>9</sup> EC Communication, 2013: "A DECENT LIFE FOR ALL: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future".

<sup>10</sup> EU and its member states.

<sup>11</sup> It stood only at 0.56% in 2010.

<sup>12</sup> The EU budget ( or financial perspectives) for 2014-2020 has been adopted by the European Council but still awaits ratification from the European Parliament.

<sup>13</sup> Within the ongoing financial perspectives 2007-2013, EU development aid is channelled through 7 financial instruments. 9 financial instruments are envisaged for the next financial perspectives 2014-2020. The total amount proposed for these 9 instruments is €96,249.4 million. 6 instruments will be funding geographical programmes and 3 instruments will be funding thematic programmes.

## 2.1 Instruments funding geographical programmes

1. *European Development Fund* (EDF) is the instrument for implementing the Cotonou Agreement<sup>14</sup> covering 79 ACP countries<sup>15</sup>.

– There are opportunities for local governments of 44 African countries to get involved in EDF national/regional programmes either as partner or beneficiaries of projects.

2. *European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument* (ENPI)<sup>16</sup> is promoting enhanced political cooperation and progressive economic integration between the Union and 17 neighbouring countries having signed a partnership agreement with the EU<sup>17</sup>.

– Only four African countries (Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) are eligible under the ENI. Local governments can get involved in national/regional programmes either as partner or beneficiaries of projects.

3. *Development Cooperation Instrument* (DCI) is promoting cooperation with 47 low and middle-income countries of Latin America, Asia, Central Asia, Middle East and South Africa<sup>18</sup>.

– Only one African country (South Africa) is among the countries eligible for bilateral/regional programmes under the DCI.

– Under the new perspectives 2014-2020, the DCI will also include a new Pan-African programme to support the implementation of Joint Africa-Europe Strategy. This programme will complement other financial instruments which are applied in Africa (in particular ENI and EDF) and will support activities of trans-regional and continental nature in Africa and also specific initiatives.

## 2.2 Instruments funding thematic programmes

1. *Instrument for Stability* (IFS) is strengthening security in partner countries to cope with actual or emerging crisis and to prepare for future crises and global and transregional threats.

2. *European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights* (EIDHR) is contributing to the development and consolidation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law worldwide.

3. *Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation* (INSC) is supporting the promotion of a high level of nuclear safety, radiation protection and the application of efficient and effective safeguards of nuclear material in third countries.

4. *Development Cooperation Instrument* (DCI) finances a range of thematic programmes on issues of common interest to the EU and its partners worldwide.

<sup>14</sup> The Cotonou Agreement is the most comprehensive partnership agreement signed in 2000 between the ACP countries and the EU. The fight against poverty remains one of its prominent objectives. However, the emphasis is also put on greater integration of ACP countries into an increasingly globalised economy. The importance of local governments as actors of development is recognised for the first time and their participation in all aspects of cooperation is greatly encouraged.

<sup>15</sup> The EDF is not funded out of the EU budget but is made up of voluntary contributions from member states. Its implementation period runs from 2008 to 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Under the financial perspectives 2014-2020, the instrument will be renamed the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI).

<sup>17</sup> Russia will not be eligible for bilateral programmes under the new ENI.

<sup>18</sup> Within the new financial perspectives 2014-2020, in line with the differentiation principle, 19 countries able to generate significant own resources (China, Brazil, etc.) will be graduated from bilateral assistance. Those countries will still be eligible for regional cooperation & thematic programmes under DCI.



In 2007-2013, these include:

- *Environment and natural resources* is promoting the ecological dimension of development policy, in particular by expanding EU environmental and energy policies to the rest of the world.
- *Non-state actors and local authorities* (NSA-LA) is facilitating non-state actor and local authority participation in poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies.
- *Food security* is supporting the development of national food security policies and monitoring systems in order to ensure that a strategic approach to food security is enshrined in national poverty reduction strategies.
- *Migration and asylum* is providing support for Non-EU Member Countries so that they can better manage migratory flows.
- *Investing in people* is promoting cooperation on health, knowledge and skills, culture, employment and social cohesion, gender equality, youth and children.

In 2014-2020, these 5 programmes will be replaced by 2 new programmes:

- *Global Public Goods<sup>19</sup> and Challenges* will support actions in areas such as the environment and climate change, sustainable energy, human development, food security and sustainable agriculture, and migration and asylum.
- *Civil Society Organisations and Local Authority* (CSO-LA) will finance initiatives in the area of development by or for civil society organisations and local governments originating from partner countries, the Union, candidate countries and potential candidates.

\* All African countries are entitled to take part in thematic programmes. The most relevant programme for local governments is the NSA-LA/CSO-LA. However, there are also opportunities for local governments under other thematic programmes.

\* The EC adopts a strategy for each programme which details its objectives, priorities, implementation modalities and partners involved. When calls for proposals are organised, guidelines for applicants specify the organisations that can apply. In practice, local governments are not always given access to funding opportunities<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Public goods are defined (WHO) as goods and services that are “non-rival” and “non-excludable”. In other words, no one can be excluded from their benefits and their consumption by one person does not diminish consumption by another. They range from street signs to a clean environment and they are provided by non-market mechanisms, such as the state or, sometimes, voluntary organizations.

<sup>20</sup> For example, the programmes European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights, Environment and natural resources and Migration and asylum are not opened to local governments.

## 3. AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

### 3.1 Why local governments matter for development cooperation?

As acknowledged by the EU itself, local governments are important actors for development. They deliver services essential to the well-being of citizens and the reduction of poverty (urbanisation, water and sanitation, assistance to vulnerable groups and poor populations in remote areas, etc.). Their proximity to the people they represent and serve and their understanding of local needs mean that they are well placed to provide responses to poverty and development issues in their communities. This is even truer in the context of decentralisation processes engaged in many countries to bring decision-making and governance closer to the people. On the other hand, local governments' connections to the central government remain crucial to mobilise the resources of the state in favour of local needs. Local governments can therefore improve the relevance of development policies and be instrumental in generating collaborative approaches for attaining common development goals through cooperation projects. They can also fulfil an important communication function by increasing public awareness and rallying additional support for development.

### 3.2 What are the opportunities for African local governments in EU development cooperation?

All geographical programmes encourage the involvement of non-state sectors and local governments in the dialogue with state governments on development strategies and sectoral policies, as well as in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of development projects and programmes.

This is particularly true in the context of the EDF. The Cotonou Agreement invites local governments to take part in development cooperation and makes it mandatory for partner countries and the EU to adopt participatory approaches in programming and implementing programmes. With the help of their associations, local governments can, therefore, influence the objectives of assistance and the design of programmes/projects in order to ensure that the needs of their populations are properly addressed. They can also take part in implementing projects, ensuring that activities are realistic and feasible, and that they take into account local circumstances.

However, local governments cannot participate effectively unless there is a common understanding about the process of development cooperation and adequate capacity for taking part in it. Local Government Associations should take the lead in increasing understanding of development cooperation among local governments, preparing them for an active and fruitful participation and giving more clout and visibility to their contributions. They should also lobby so that local governments are given a wider access to EU thematic programmes. This in return will increase their legitimacy and facilitate cooperation with their members on other activities.

Local governments also have plenty opportunities to take part in development cooperation under the EU thematic programmes. The most relevant programme is of course the Non-State Actors & Local Authorities programme (see sections 4.1) which is specifically targeting the needs of local governments in development. However, there is scope for local governments' involvement in other thematic programmes. Moreover, most thematic programmes are implemented according to the same principles and rules (see section 4.3).





### 3.3 EU policy on Local Authorities in development policy<sup>21</sup>: current situation and prospects

The first EC Communication “*Local authorities: actors for development*” was adopted in 2008. It called for the first time for a holistic approach to local governments as actors of development at global, European and national level. The Communication identified the main challenges related to decentralised cooperation<sup>22</sup>: *how to exploit the potential of local governments to implement development policies and reach MDG goals? How can local governments contribute to a more effective implementation of aid in line with the Paris declaration? How to ensure greater cooperation between local governments from the EU and partner countries?*

Some of the solutions advocated in the communication have been put into effect including instruments such as the *Portal of decentralised cooperation*<sup>23</sup> to map activities and best practice, and enable information exchange in order to match skills and capacities with needs, and the *Assises of Decentralised cooperation* for political dialogue. Thanks to PLATFORMA<sup>24</sup>, local governments and their associations have been maintaining a very fruitful dialogue with the European Commission on development policies and decentralised cooperation. However, a lot can still be done to involve local governments more effectively in development policies.

In May 2013, the EU adopted a new **Communication on Local Authorities**<sup>25</sup>, which emphasises their role in the new (post-2015) **Development Agenda**<sup>26</sup> and seek to unlock their development potential. Local governments will remain essential partners to implement the objectives and reach the targets agreed at global level. Given their proximity and territorial presence, they can make decisive contributions to poverty reduction and sustainable development, acting as catalysts for change and mobilising local populations. For example, by developing social infrastructure for deprived communities, local governments can raise health and education levels; by providing a conducive business environment, they can spur growth and create jobs and by putting in place a sound management of water resources, they can improve the quality of life and preserve the environment.

In preparation of its new Communication, the EU had put forward an **issue paper**<sup>27</sup> outlining its vision and putting eight issues for discussion (see box).

1. **Framing the Local Authorities role in current international debates:** *How can local governments contribute to shaping development policies at EU and global level?*
2. **Good governance for development:** *How to improve the accountability and efficiency of local governments?*
3. **Territorial development:** *How can local governments lead the process of local development in partnership with all relevant stakeholders (public, private and civil society actors and the population at large) making the best use of territorial assets?*
4. **Decentralisation:** *How to create the conditions to make decentralisation work e.g. legal framework, financial resources, skills and competences of staff and mechanisms for political accountability?*
5. **Support to urban and rural Local Authorities:** *How can local governments respond to the challenges of rapid urbanisation while ensuring at the same time that the needs of rural areas are not neglected?*
6. **Associations of Local Authorities:** *How to help local government associations fulfil their mission of, representing, guiding and supporting local governments at country, EU and global levels?*
7. **Enhancing the internal capacities of Local Authorities:** *How to overcome the various internal capacity constraints which hamper the action of local governments such as human and material resources; institutional constraints and limited incentives for good performance?*
8. **Towards a consistent EU engagement with Local Authorities:** *How to optimise the EU action towards local governments at country level?*

<sup>21</sup> In the EU’s vocabulary, the term “local authorities” is defined very widely – it includes all kinds of sub-national governments, from the powerful law-making regions (German Länder, or Spanish regions) to small towns and municipalities.

<sup>22</sup> Decentralised Cooperation describes the publicly and privately funded aid provided by and through local authorities, networks and other local actors.

<sup>23</sup> <http://lra4dev.cor.europa.eu/portal/en/Pages/welcome.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> Established in 2008, PLATFORMA is an international forum gathering the main national, European and international local government associations involved in development cooperation.

<sup>25</sup> COM (2013) 280 final “Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes”.

<sup>26</sup> See section 1.

<sup>27</sup> EC Issue paper “Local Authorities in Development”.

On the basis of this issue paper, the EU, in partnership with PLATFORMA, carried out a five-month consultation among local governments and their associations<sup>28</sup>. At the end of the process, PLATFORMA made a number of recommendations under each of the eight issues with a view to enhancing the EU's partnership with local and regional authorities in the years to come<sup>29</sup>.

The new Communication reaffirms the importance of subsidiarity and promotes transparent and accountable policy-making and service delivery at the local level. It puts the emphasis on local governments as partners in development (rather than beneficiaries) and advocates the territorial approach as the most effective way to tackle development issues. The new EU approach promotes enhanced political, administrative and fiscal autonomy through decentralisation reforms and budget support. It is based on three pillars:

1. **Decentralisation processes:** the EU will support demand-driven and long-term decentralisation reforms in partner countries creating the conditions for local governments to fulfil their mandate effectively.
2. **Sustainable urbanisation:** the EU will support efforts of local governments to address the challenges of rapid urbanisation, in particular through better land access and the adoption of city policies for slum upgrading.
3. **Association of Local Authorities:** the EU will help reinforce the role of associations of local governments in advocacy and lobbying, coordination and knowledge sharing, quality supervision and promotion of participative local development plans. In this context, the EU is also encouraging further partnerships between associations of local governments in EU and partner countries.

In practice<sup>30</sup>, the EU wants to anchor its support to local governments much more into bilateral programmes. To that effect, the EU is envisaging innovative funding modalities such as:

\* *Performance-based grant for local service delivery:* the EU will provide support for delivering quality services to citizens based on the results of annual assessment of local governments institutional performance.

\* *Direct grants for associations of local governments:*

→ in case there is a single national association representing the interests of its members with sufficient legitimacy, the EU may provide a direct grant to that association to strengthen its capacities and develop its activities on the basis of a partnership agreement/memorandum of understanding with the EU. The EUD will be in the driving seat to conclude and monitor direct grants to national associations of local governments.

→ The same applies to regional and global associations. However, direct grant grants will be awarded directly from the EU HQ.

\* *Sector budget support with involvement of LGs:*

→ LGs might benefit from sector budget support agreed within EDF bilateral programmes. However, the EU will not intervene into the decentralisation debate at country level. It will be up to each national authorities to decide whether or not to involve local governments in sector policies. Associations should therefore play an active role in ensuring that budget support can be channelled to the local level through effective mechanisms of devolution or decentralisation.

<sup>28</sup> August-December 2012. An overview of the process and its conclusions is available in the FINAL REPORT on the consultation outcomes on the Issues Paper "Local Authorities in Development".

<sup>29</sup> PLATFORMA response to the EC issue paper on "Local Authorities".

<sup>30</sup> Information given orally by the EU on the Kampala seminar 12-13 May, 2013.



The EU will also continue to use grant schemes in order to promote decentralised cooperation, in particular through the thematic programme CSO-LA. In this context, local governments in EU and partner countries will be encouraged to address together the issues highlighted in the new Communication through concrete projects, partnerships, networking, capacity building and exchange of experience and best practice.

### 3.4 How can local governments benefit from opportunities under geographical programmes?

Local governments should get familiar with the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) and National Indicative Programme (NIP), which their country developed with the EU to access EU funding. They should also be aware of opportunities under regional or multi-country programmes funded by the EU to foster regional integration or tackle issues of common interest (such environment, energy, education, etc) to countries of the same region. The EuropeAid website gives access to all official documents<sup>31</sup>. The CSP presents the current political, social, economic and environmental situation, identifies medium-term development needs and proposes a strategy for the next years. The NIP explains how the country intends to implement the CSP with resources available from the EU. It therefore describes the eligible areas of support together with the breakdown of the country's EU allocation and the delivery mechanisms envisaged e.g. grant, investment facility or general budget support. These documents, therefore, give a good overview of EU funding opportunities in the coming years. In practice, however, CSP rarely include programmes focusing on local governments and the enhancement of their institutional and operational capacities. There were more opportunities under regional and multi-country programmes<sup>32</sup>.

Local governments should establish contact through their associations with the governments in charge of development cooperation in their country<sup>33</sup>. Local governments and their associations should take a pro-active stance and try to get involved in the programming process, in particular to influence the objectives of cooperation and to include specific support at local level.

Local governments can be involved in the implementation of geographical programmes as beneficiaries of a project e.g. rehabilitation of a road as part of a transport project. Their role is then to facilitate the implementation of activities. Local governments can also develop and implement a project themselves in the framework of a call for proposals for which they are eligible. Some NIPs may also specifically include support for local governance, which can lead to concrete projects to build the capacity of local governments through a number of activities e.g. training, technical assistance, grant schemes, etc. Local Government Associations can help their members remain abreast of upcoming opportunities and understand what they need to do in order to access them.



<sup>31</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/country-cooperation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/country-cooperation/index_en.htm) for EDF and DCI and [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/index_en.htm) for ENPI.

<sup>32</sup> For example, local governments were eligible under the calls for proposals organised under the ACP-EU Energy Facility and the ACP-EU Water Facility. Many calls for proposals under the NSA-LA thematic programmes were not opened to local governments.

<sup>33</sup> The National Authorising Officer (NAO) for the partner country and the EU Delegation for the EU.

## 4. EU THEMATIC PROGRAMMES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Local governments face many obstacles to taking on a greater role in development policies. They are often short of the necessary human and financial resources and lack the technical and management expertise required for planning and carrying out effective responses to local development issues. Moreover, their access to sources of information is limited and they miss the contacts at national and international levels to develop partnerships with more experienced organisations or networks which could help them overcome weaknesses and gain knowledge and expertise required on the ground.

In order to remedy this situation and to promote the effective participation of local governments into development policy, the EU launched a specific thematic programme dedicated to local governments and civil society. The first programme, Non-State Actors-Local Authorities (NSA-LA), ran from 2007 to 2013. It will be superseded by the new programme Civil Society Organisation-Local Authorities (CSO-LA) for the period 2014-2020.

### 4.1 Thematic programme Non-State Actors-Local Authorities (2007-2013)

The programme promotes and supports the participation of Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in the design and implementation of development policies. The idea is to reinforce the capacities of NSA-LA through networking, exchange of information and joint cooperation on specific issues agreed among all the participating countries.

The EU strategy for the NSA-LA thematic programme has three objectives for the period 2011-2013, two of which are not open to African countries. However, Objective 1 *“Promoting an inclusive and empowered society in partner countries that will facilitate non-state actors and local authority participation in poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies”* is targeting the needs of local governments worldwide, including in Africa. The strategy is the basis for launching calls for proposals at country, regional or multi-country levels i.e. the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants should be in line with the objectives of the strategy. They usually give plenty of freedom to local governments to design projects addressing their needs directly.

Any good idea is eligible for funding as long as it falls within the priorities defined in the guidelines and is based on a partnership of different organizations and countries enabling networking and exchange of information and capacity building activities, which ultimately reinforce the role of local governments in development. However, Associations of Local Governments should lobby the EU and national authorities for the priorities of the call to be as relevant as possible to the needs of their members.

The NSA-LA programme provided about 35 million euros a year in the period 2007-2013 to support local and regional governments' development activities, which is around 15% of the total. Many local governments complained about the complexity and length of the application process, the limited funding and number of measures specifically targeting local governments and the difficulty to develop and manage multi-country partnerships. These criticisms partly reflect the lack of experience of local governments both in development cooperation and project management. Before the NSA-LA programme, local governments have had few opportunities to apply directly for EU funding in contrast to civil society organisations. As a result, their involvement in the NSA-LA thematic programme remained modest compared to non-state actors. They are also facing regulatory and financial constraints. However, there are examples of worthwhile projects funded under the programme, which are encouraging signs of the growing interest among local governments for building their capacity and taking a pro-active role in development policies.



## 4.2 Thematic programme Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (2014-2020)<sup>34</sup>

The new programme will support civil society organisations and local governments across the world to help them contribute to good governance and development. It will include three components:

### 1. *Enhancing CSOs' and LAs' contribution to development and governance processes*

The component will seek to raise to capacities of CSOs and local governments to work at the country level, given the vital but distinct roles they play respectively in promoting democracy and accountability and in facilitating pro-poor service delivery and inclusive economic growth. A specific objective is concerned with the **strengthening** of local governments' **capacity** to play their legitimate and legally mandated roles. Support will be available for local governments to effectively ensure **provision of public services and goods** and to **promote inclusive and sustainable growth** within their framework of competence. It will also promote a **territorial approach** to development, including multi-actor local development processes with the participation of LAs, CSOs and other local actors.

### 2. *Strengthening CSO and LAs networks in the field of development at regional, EU and global level*

With a view to enhance CSOs' and local governments' contributions to policy development and thinking, the component will strengthen transnational alliances and as well as initiatives for **dialogue, exchange, networking** and dissemination of good practices at **regional, EU and global level**. There will be opportunities for **local government associations** to strengthen their capacities, engage with decision-makers and political leaders in partner countries and the EU itself, learn from other network members and participate in dialogues linked to the EU Policy Forum on Development.

### 3. *Development, Education and Awareness Raising initiatives fostering citizens' awareness and mobilization for development issues.*

The last component seeks to raise **awareness of citizens** on development issues and support their **active engagement** with global efforts to eradicate poverty and promote justice, human rights and a sustainable social-economic development in partner countries. Support will take the form of public awareness campaigns, education and training, capacity building and exchange of experiences and best practices among the population and relevant stakeholders. Local governments can participate, alongside civil society organisations, in designing and implementing such initiatives.

## 4.3 Grant scheme – the preferred delivery mechanism

Many thematic programmes – and some components of geographical programmes – are implemented by means of grant schemes which finance projects developed by applicants in line with the programme's objectives. Grant schemes are implemented in several stages as shown in the figure. The EC launches calls for proposals at regular intervals. The EU Delegation or EC Headquarters is responsible for launching calls for proposals.

The rules for applying, the total budget available for projects and the selection criteria are defined in the Guidelines for Applicants published on the EuropeAid website. Applicants usually have around two months to develop a project and submit an Application Form. During this period, they should attend information and training sessions organised by the EC to get the necessary guidance and advice on how to apply (where available).

<sup>34</sup> The information of this section is based on draft documents from the EC. It is therefore subject to changes.

The evaluation is often conducted in two stages: a first stage to select project ideas (“concept notes”) and a second stage to select fully developed proposals. Only those successful in the first stage are invited to take part in the second stage. Fully developed proposals are scored on the basis of selection criteria by independent assessors appointed by the EC. The EC evaluation committee selects the projects with the highest ranking and awards contracts until exhaustion of available funds.

Grant beneficiaries should implement project activities in line with their proposal and in compliance with the contract and EC rules. During its implementation, the project is monitored and controlled by the EC which makes payments to the beneficiary in line with the contract.

#### 4.4 How local governments can prepare themselves for thematic programmes?

Local governments should familiarize themselves with the thematic programmes and the application procedure. A good starting point is the EuropeAid website, which has a page dedicated to thematic programmes<sup>35</sup>. The page gives access to EC thematic strategies which explain the rationale, the objectives and the priorities of the programme.

As a second step, local governments should define a basic project idea in line with the objectives of the programme they wish to target. It is good to start thinking about a project long before the call for proposals is opened. In order to be well-prepared, a minimum experience in project design and management is required. The principles and tools of project management cycle (PCM) are well explained in the EU PCM Guidelines<sup>36</sup>. Local governments should not miss any PCM training opportunity organised by their associations or any other relevant stakeholder.

Reading Guidelines for Applicants from previous calls is also useful to understand the procedures since most of them are similar from one call to another. Local governments should also familiarise themselves with the standard EC Application Form, which can also be downloaded on the EuropeAid website<sup>37</sup>. It is also useful to register in the EC database PADOR<sup>38</sup> and to check opportunities for future calls for proposals regularly<sup>39</sup>. The EuropeAid website provides information on calls for proposals planned for the upcoming year<sup>40</sup>.

Local governments should contact any organization which can provide guidance, advice and support e.g. associations of local governments, civil society organisations, the EU Delegation, development agencies or project partners (if already identified) or dedicated projects/networks such as PLATFORMA, the ARIAL Programme, etc.

It is important to set up a strong partnership with organizations that are more experienced and can provide the know-how needed to develop capacities. To be successful, project partners must agree on clear objectives, target groups, activities and implementation arrangements for the project.

Once the call is launched, the main reference document is the guidelines for applicants. They will give precise information about the priorities of the call, the organizations eligible to apply, the activities which can be financed out of the grant, the minimum and maximum duration of the project, the minimum and maximum amount you can request from the European Union and all other relevant rules for the call.

<sup>35</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/thematic\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/thematic_en.htm)

<sup>36</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/manuals-tools/t101_en.htm)

<sup>37</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/eprag/annexes.do?group=E>

<sup>38</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/onlineservices/pador/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome>

<sup>40</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/ap/awp/2013\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/ap/awp/2013_en.htm)



A good and successful project is a project, which shows a clear understanding of issues at stake and gives a detailed description of activities foreseen with a realistic implementation plan and clearly assigned responsibilities. The Application Form should demonstrate in a clear, concise and convincing language that the project is relevant to the priorities of the call and to the needs of the identified target groups. Filling in the application form is time-consuming. The template itself has more than 20 pages without annexes. It is therefore important to share the responsibility of drafting the proposal among partners.

## 4.5 Examples of successful development cooperation initiatives with local governments

A few best practices are briefly presented below to illustrate the range of initiatives which local governments can launch to promote development and address the needs of their population. They were funded by the EU or in the framework of decentralised cooperation. However, they are all representative of the support which could also be obtained through EU thematic programmes for local governments. The elements related to the objectives of EU policy towards local governments are presented as strengths in the table below since they would be considered very attractive in the context of NSA-LA/CSO-LA calls for proposals.

<i>A sustained partnership for sustainable local development</i>	
Partners	Rajkot, India – Leicester, United Kingdom
Result	Improvement of the water supply service in the partner municipality through infrastructure work, know-how transfer and community development.
Themes	Provision of services, decentralisation, urban management, sustainable development, democratic ownership.
Strengths	The initiative is not only about infrastructure but it addresses the issue of water supply in all its aspects, which is one the basic public goods local governments provide to their citizens. The initiative relies on citizens' participation to identify problems and seek solutions (principle of participation and democratic ownership). It also contributes to a better management of natural resources and living conditions (poverty reduction and sustainable development).

<i>León is building according to plan</i>	
Partners	León, Nicaragua – Utrecht, Netherlands
Result	Provision of new housing for the migrant population through urban planning, land management and construction works.
Themes	Housing, urban management, rural migration.
Strengths	The initiative deals with the consequences of rapid urbanisation. Urban development best practices are introduced to help the municipality fulfil one of its key tasks – providing conditions for public housing. The success of the scheme is ensured through an active involvement of the local population and public utilities.

<i>Raising finance, raising effectiveness</i>	
Partners	Bembereke, Savalou, Natitingou, Bohicon, Djidja, Tchaourou, Benin – Arlon, Bouillon, Huy, La Roche-en-Ardenne, Tintigny, Virton, Belgium
Result	Raised municipal revenues through capacity building and exchange of experience among partner municipalities.
Themes	Decentralisation, good governance.
Strengths	The initiative strengthens the decentralisation process. The capacity of partner municipalities to generate income is increased, which enable them to fulfil better their new responsibilities.

<i>Working together for territorial development</i>	
Partners	Atsinanana, Madagascar – Basse Normandie, France
Result	Common vision and cooperation mechanisms for developing the region's assets agreed among the main actors
Themes	Territorial development, decentralisation, sustainable development
Strengths	The initiative takes advantage of the new decentralised environment. It brings together the main stakeholders of the region to build their capacities and coordinate their strategies and actions in the field of rural, agricultural and fisheries development.

<i>The P3 programme – building citizen trust through transparent services</i>	
Partners	Local government associations of South Africa, Namibia and Botswana – Swedish association of local authorities and regions
Result	Enhanced capacity of participating local governments and their associations through peer-to-peer exchanges, tool kits and training.
Themes	Internal capacities of local governments, Association of local governments, good governance, local economic development.
Strengths	The focus is on strengthening the internal capacities of partner local governments related to budget, service delivery and local economic development. There is a wide partnership and a strong multiplier effect thanks to the participation of local government associations, whose role as support umbrella organisation is reinforced.



<i>Supporting and strengthening Local Authority Associations at ACP national and regional levels (ARIAL)</i>	
Partners	VNG International (Netherlands), Commonwealth Local Government Forum (United Kingdom), Partenariat Pour Le Développement Municipal (Benin), Municipal Development Partnership for Eastern and Southern Africa (Zimbabwe & Uganda), The University of the West Indies (St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago), Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International Regional Secretariat Trust Board (Fiji)
Result	Local governments from ACP countries are better represented at national, regional and global level thanks to increased capacity of local government associations. In particular, the project contributed to the creation of regional local government associations and helped existing associations obtain funding from the EU thematic programme.
Themes	Association of local governments, internal capacities of local governments
Strengths	Wide partnership of local governments associations committed to improving their services to their members through the adoption of best practices in the field of project management, lobbying and advocacy, information and communication and networking.

More best practices can be drawn from the PLATFORMA's brochure *"Decentralised development cooperation – European perspectives"*<sup>41</sup>. The brochure is a useful source of inspiration, presenting more than 15 case studies of development partnerships between local governments in EU and partner countries worldwide. The website of the ARIAL programme<sup>42</sup> offers a wide range of resources and best practices related to local governments and their associations from ACP countries.

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.platforma-dev.eu/files/upload/36/copy-of-decentralised-development-cooperation--european-perspectives.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.arial-programme.eu/>



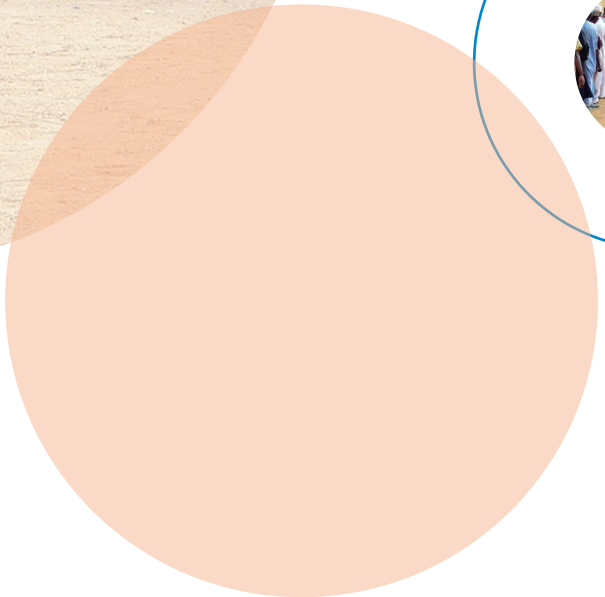


PLATFORMA coordinates the voice of European local and regional authorities in the field of development cooperation.

Launched in 2008, its main objectives are:

- To present a common message to the European institutions, in particular for the definition and implementation of European development policies
- Facilitate networking of information and sharing experiences
- Strengthen the participation of European local and regional authorities in European development programmes
- Strengthen links with civil society







PLATFORMA

The European voice of **Local** and  
**Regional** authorities for development

[www.platforma-dev.eu](http://www.platforma-dev.eu)

Secretariat ensured by CEMR

Square de Meeûs, 1

B-1000 Brussels

Tel: +32 2 265 09 30



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