



Terms of reference

Content of an online publication: Mapping of decentralised cooperation projects between local and regional governments from Europe and from partner countries.

V4 06/09/2022

1. Context

1.1. General background

PLATFORMA is the pan-European coalition of local and regional governments (LRG), their associations at the national, European and global levels – all together representing more than 100,000 local and regional governments – active in city-to-city and region-to-region development cooperation. They are all key players of international cooperation for sustainable development.

PLATFORMA is led by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the broadest organisation of local and regional governments in Europe. Its members are over 50 national associations of municipalities and regions from 40 European countries. Together these associations represent some 150,000 local and regional authorities.

PLATFORMA was created in November 2008, with the support of the European Commission, to guarantee presence and advocacy of the local and regional governments towards the EU institutions on issues related to decentralised cooperation, to defend the key role of local and regional governments in development cooperation and to raise awareness on development cooperation actions led by EU cities and regions. The PLATFORMA network counts more than 29 partner organisations.

EU's local and regional governments, in their role as global development actors, have the potential and ambition to engage in the formulation and implementation of the European model of development, and to contribute to the achievement of the European Union's strategic priorities, including in education and health, democracy and good governance, peace, fight against climate change, digitalisation, and inclusive and sustainable growth.

Europe's municipalities and regions and their associations equally have the competence of, and a wealth of experiences in the management of the many responsibilities of subnational governments: governance, public service delivery, planning, sustainable urban development, management of natural resources, local economic development, education, to name but a few.

The PLATFORMA coalition associates main decentralised cooperation networks and actors across the EU. Adding value as a network provides key actors with a platform of discussion to identify common challenges and agree on common positions, a mechanism for improved coordination by thematic areas (thematic coordination), better coordination of actions on the ground (geographic coordination), avoiding overlaps and identify synergies as well as build on each other's results and achievements and learn from each other's successes (peer learning).

1.2. Tender context – specific background

In 2013, the EU Communication on [*Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes*](#) recognised the key role of local and regional governments to achieve sustainable development and equitable outcomes. It creates the conditions for inclusive, responsive and effective development processes. *“Being closer to citizens than other public institutions, Local Authorities hold responsibility in mobilising local societies' opinions while acting as*



catalysts for change": LRGs are public authorities that have to be supported by the EU to improve governance and increase the impact of its policy.

Today, we speak more regularly about **city-to-city** and **region-to-region cooperation**, switching the scope of decentralised cooperation from development aid to capacity-building and governance reforms. In its last release, the [European Commission](#) focuses more on "*fostering capacity-building in partner countries, principally through 'twinning' or 'pairing', where cities in Europe or in other regions share expert advice*".

The new EU financial instrument (NDICI – Global Europe) makes a double commitment towards LRGs: a mandatory consultation in the policy dialogue, and an indicative amount of €500 million to support LRGs. The implementation of these funds will go through geographic programmes, i.e., at country or continent level, and will be allocated mostly through EU Delegations. One big challenge is currently to ensure funding for decentralised cooperation at the EU level.

Decentralised cooperation is a powerful tool. **LRGs and their national associations** play a major role as a catalyser: they coordinate, raise concerns, advise, articulate, and manage the participation of local stakeholders, including academia, civil society organisations, private sector, and other relevant actors, as called for by SDG 17 *Partnerships for the goals* of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Peer-to-peer cooperation projects bringing together cities and regions from the EU and from partner countries help reinforcing partnerships by exchanging and sharing expertise on various topics relating to their competence: local democracy, local autonomy, decentralisation, as well as public administration, public finance management, regional development and public service delivery, but also on adaptation to climate change, resources management, urban planning, sustainable and green mobility, digital transformation, civic space, fight against corruption, local economic development, agriculture and rural development, business environment, regional development, gender equality, education, migration, for instance.

The pandemic, and the Russian war in Ukraine, have showed that towns and regions worldwide are at the forefront in tackling crises. Sharing experience is always essential and cooperation among local and regional governments has been crucial in times of crisis and war, for immediate response but also for longer term recovery & reconstruction.

2. Objectives

2.1. General objective of the deliverable

The general objective of the deliverable (materials for an online publication) is to showcase the added value of decentralised cooperation projects.

The final objective of the deliverable is to highlight geographic coverage of decentralised cooperation, as well as its extended scope of action, and various topics and themes on which municipalities and regions from the EU and from partner countries work together. This deliverable will serve as a point of reference for good practice in decentralised cooperation.

2.2. Objectives of the assignment

PLATFORMA is looking for an external expert (hereafter *Service provider*) to draft the content of the deliverable based on the assignment outlined in these Terms of reference.

The expert shall:

1. Draft a brief paper (of maximum 10 pages of content, plus 2 pages of cover) on decentralised cooperation as a partnership modality between the municipalities and regions; and map the key stakeholders;
2. Collect data on existing decentralised cooperation projects (bilateral and triangular) between the EU and partner countries (Africa, Latin America, Asia, EU Neighbourhood countries); in line with the 2030 Agenda and the EU's priorities for 2019–2024 (Green Deal, digital transition, governance, security and peace, economy that works for people, migration), including the NDICI-Global Europe objectives and targets (human development, gender equality, climate);
3. In coordination with the communication officer of PLATFORMA, propose a final product including some visuals (pictures/infographics) of what decentralised cooperation looks like, mentioning the different forms it can take (exchange of expertise, administration relations, capacity-building, political agreements, etc.) and the topics it addresses mostly.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research

Outline and Timeline. The Service provider will propose a comprehensive Outline of the future deliverable, along with a suggested Timeline of preparation with main milestones, to be approved by PLATFORMA.

Desk research. The Service provider will gather additional information and data through desk research, focusing on different elements presented in the objectives of the assignment; also based on sources provided by PLATFORMA. The methodology should be complementary and in coherence with the [Decentralised Cooperation Handbook](#) and other previous work of PLATFORMA on mapping decentralised cooperation projects. It should also include illustrations, infographics, and other visual and illustrative content.

Interviews. If necessary, the Service provider will conduct interviews to complement the desk research. The service provider will submit a proposal for questions and data collection among PLATFORMA partners and other stakeholders.

First draft. Based on the Desk research, the Service provider will submit for review a first draft of the text of the publication, along with proposals for illustrative content and a title.

Final draft. Based on the approved First draft, the Service provider will provide a Final draft of the publication including proposals for illustrative content (illustrations, photographs, tables, graphs, infographics, quotes, etc.)

3.2. Coordination

To facilitate coordination, all meetings will be organised virtually (telephone, Skype, Zoom, etc.). If the Service provider is based in Brussels, one or several meeting(s) can take place in person.

1st coordination meeting. The Service provider will contact the Client in order to discuss and approve (i) the Outline and Timeline, (ii) a proposal for Desk research, and, if necessary, (iii) a proposal for online Interviews.

2nd coordination meeting. The Client will organise a meeting with a communication agency to discuss and agree on the final form and format of the Deliverable.

3rd coordination meeting. The Service provider will contact the Client in order to (i) present and discuss the proceedings of the Desk research and the Interviews, as well as to (ii) discuss and approve a revised Outline of the publication based on the gathered information and data.

4th coordination meeting. The Service provider will contact the Client in order to discuss, fine-tune and approve the First draft of the publication.

4. Expected deliverables

1. **Title and outline.** The Outline of the future publication will include: (i) principal sections and sub-sections of the publication along with a short description of the objective and content of each section, (ii) an estimated count of pages/words per section or sub-section. A title for the publication shall be proposed.
2. **Timeline of preparation.** The Timeline will include final delivery dates by the Service provider of each deliverable listed in this section (4.1–4.6).
3. **Desk research.** The proposal for Desk research should include (i) a short methodological description of the Desk research, including its objective; and (ii) identification of specific types or examples of information, documents, and data to be gathered. The Service provider will provide the Client with a list of documents or sources used for the publication.
4. **Interviews.** The proposal for online Interviews should include (i) a short methodological description of the Interviews, including their objective; (ii) identification of PLATFORMA partners to be interviewed (iii) and draft interview questions. Based on the desk research and as a complement of it, the Client will propose suitable interview candidates. The Service provider will provide PLATFORMA with all input collected through the Interviews.
5. **First draft.** The First draft of the publication shall be based on the information and data gathered through the Desk research and the interviews. In addition to plain text, it should be enriched with proposals for illustrative content, such as text frames (boxes), quotes, tables, graphs, infographics, etc. The communication agency working with PLATFORMA shall review and write some feedbacks in view of the final draft.
6. **Final draft.** The Final draft of the publication is the principal deliverable of the assignment. It will be considered delivered upon final approval by the Client.

5. Service provider profile

The Service provider should ideally:

- Have 5+ years of experience carrying out research studies and/or practical expertise in the field of development cooperation and international activities of local and/or regional governments;
- Have thorough knowledge and understanding of:
 - Role of local and regional governments in development;
 - Decentralised development cooperation;
 - Development studies and theories, besides practical experience in the field;
 - Global and EU development context and challenges, including the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, the New urban agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement.
- Experience in mapping would be considered as an asset;
- Experience in visual communication would be considered as an asset.

6. Service provider – technical specifications

Language. All deliverables shall be provided in British English. The Service provider shall be responsible for appropriate spellchecking, correct language and grammar. Documents with apparent mistakes in spelling, grammar, or style shall be rejected.

Style. The publication shall be drafted in a modern, fresh and light reading style, avoiding complicated or very technical terms, if possible, including text frames (boxes), quotes, tables, as well as ideas for illustrations, photographs, graphs, infographics and other illustrative content elements, adapted for an

online format. All used acronyms shall be explained in footnotes or in a separate section. The text shall adhere to the reference style published in *Interinstitutional style guide*¹ of the EU.

Format. All deliverables shall be delivered electronically, by electronic mail or as downloadable documents (links). All files shall be delivered in Word format and pictures in high resolution in JPG or PNG formats.

Intellectual property and data protection. The Service provider shall ensure the compliance of all deliverables, or their constituent parts, with applicable intellectual property legislation and personal data protection legislation. All original contribution by the Service provider, as well as the final publication, shall be released under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License².

Volume. The final product will include texts and illustrative contents covering around 300 cases. PLATFORMA may ask to shorten, amend, or modify the Final draft in order to meet the required text volume for layout of the publication, in one or in several languages.

7. Administrative information

Meetings. It is suggested that all interviews and coordination meetings be organised virtually through the Internet. Physical meetings with the Service provider, if any, shall be held at the offices of PLATFORMA (Square de Meeûs 1, 1000 Brussels) or any other agreed location.

Deadlines. The Final draft shall be delivered by the Service provider no later than **31 January 2023**.

Budget. The maximum amount for the offer shall be **€ 10 000**, VAT excluded.

8. Service provider selection process

Bids. Interested bidders are invited to submit the following documentation:

1. A **cover letter** including
 - a. an explanation of the bidder's approach to the assignment,
 - b. a first proposal for the Outline of the publication and for the Timeline for research and coordination,
 - c. a final price proposal including all fees, expenses, charges, taxes, or any other costs.
2. A **curriculum vitae** demonstrating the bidder's background and experience relevant for the assignment.
3. A **list of publications** authored or co-authored by the bidder(s).
4. **Proofs of good execution** of previous assignments, or certificates of satisfaction (if available).
5. A **proof of tax registration** and applicable VAT regime.

Deadlines. Service providers shall submit their bids no later than **30 September 2022 at 23:59 CEST**. The selection process will take place the week of 3–7 October 2022. A selection committee will select one service provider.

¹ [Interinstitutional style guide](#). European Union (2011 and subsequent updates)

² [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#)



The tender procedure is open on equal terms to all tenderers effectively established in an EU Member State or a country, territory or region mentioned as eligible in Annex A2a to the [Practical guide 2021.0](#) (Rules on participation in procurement procedures and grants).

The contract will be signed between the service provider and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions ([CEMR](#)), which is legally representing PLATFORMA, by the end of October 2022.

Contact person. Service providers can send their doubts and questions on the process in writing to Boris Tonhauser (boris.tonhauser@ccre-cemr.org) no later than by **20 September 2022**. Questions and answers will be published on 23 September 2022.

The bids related to the tender, shall be sent to application.platforma@ccre-cemr.org.

Communication. An automated or manual confirmation shall be sent to bidders upon the receipt of the bid submission. After the selection process, all bidders shall be notified about the outcome of the selection process.

