

inter
cooperation



Intercooperation's contribution to
**Municipal
Development and
Decentralization**

1 Definitions and Objectives

Good governance is both an important instrument and a prerequisite to *fight poverty and inequity*. *Municipal development* and a coherent *decentralization* process are means to reach good governance at local (local governance) and national level.

Good Governance

The management of public affairs at all levels in a manner that is participatory, transparent, accountable, efficient, effective, inclusive and equitable and promotes the rule of law.

Municipal development and decentralization may contribute to:

- more efficient, effective, transparent and accountable functioning of local authorities and public services;
- greater participation of the civil society in public affairs;
- strengthening local initiatives for further and more appropriate economic and social development;
- involvement of minorities and marginalized groups;
- effective use of public resources and sustainable resource management;
- better management of local diversities taking into account the existing historical, social, natural resources and economic context.

MDP Municipal Development Project in Dobož region – Bosnia and Herzegovina

The project supports municipalities in both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards increasingly citizen-oriented services and municipal management and fosters new cooperation mechanisms and the participation of the civil society in municipal affairs.

Main action lines:

- Assistance in the participative elaboration of a long term vision and local development plans including action plans for implementation;
- Capacity building of the municipal administration towards transparent, user-oriented and efficient management and public services;
- Strengthening of the civil society and establishment of new cooperation mechanisms, so that citizens can bring in their real needs and priorities;
- Technical and financial assistance to municipal investments;
- Cooperation and policy dialogue at the regional and national level.

Project financed by SDC, Swiss Government

2 Intervention Strategies

IC projects supporting municipal development and decentralization strive to cooperate with all stakeholders involved to improve governance (public sector, civil society, private sector). The following different intervention strategies are applied according to the specific context:



PRISMO Decentralization support programme in Rajasthan – India

The programme supports the decentralization process in the state of Rajasthan, which was initiated following the 73rd amendment of the Indian constitution. It shall contribute to an effective and transparent functioning of the new local Panchayat Raj institutions.

Main action lines:

- Capacity building and training modules of the newly elected local authorities (Gram Panchayats);
- Information to citizens on their new rights, mobilisation and strengthening of the local citizens' assemblies (Gram Sabhas);
- Experimental fund for implementation of local level initiated development projects;
- Special actions to strengthen the role of women, marginalized and discriminated groups.

Project financed by SDC, Swiss Government

3 Networks and Partners

IC has established a *sector team 'Municipal and Local Development'*, which advises several Municipal Development and Decentralization projects. Additional to its own capacities, it builds on a number of different networks. Amongst its specific partners, IC counts in *Switzerland* on:

- University of Bern (Prof. W. Kälin, Prof. W. Linder): Decentralization, participation, legal, institutional and political aspects;
- SEREC: Local development plans, municipal management, budgeting, financial decentralization;
- Institute of Federalism, University of Fribourg: Decentralization, legal and institutional aspects, multiculturalism;
- IDHEAP: Municipal administration and management, intergovernmental relations.

In its *international network* IC cooperates with universities, capacity building organisations, NGOs, government departments, associations of municipalities; to name a few:

- PRIA (India) – Capacity building, policy advocacy, civil society mobilisation;
- OSF (Bosnia and Herzegovina) – Local governance, dissemination strategies, policy dialogue;
- FAFIALA (Madagascar) – Municipal development and regional planning;
- AME (Ecuador) and FAM (Bolivia), associations of municipalities: Municipal and regional planning, cooperation among municipalities.

ATICA Agua Tierra Campesina in the Departments of Cochabamba and Chuquisaca – Bolivia

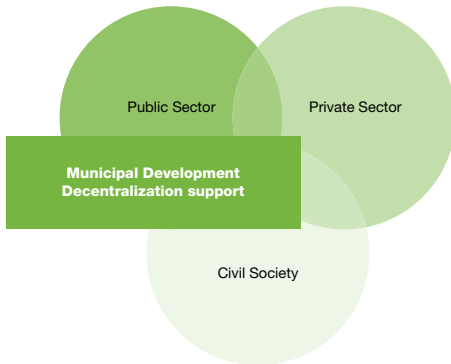
ATICA facilitates the process of identifying and implementing sustainable land management projects. ATICA works with Andean farmers, their organisations and municipal authorities.

Main action lines:

- Facilitation of participative processes at municipal level including farmers' associations, local authorities and the private sector and co-financing of local projects;
- Strengthening of the participation of the civil society – in particular 'municipios rurales' – in the political decision making process at municipal level, in line with the 'Ley de Participación Popular' of 1994;
- Capacity building of local authorities and assistance to the formulation of their natural resource management policies and strategies;
- Assistance to the elaboration of municipal development plans.

Project financed by SDC, Swiss Government

Intercooperation's Main Approaches and Working Principles



Good governance is about trust creation, cooperation and changing of attitudes of all the actors involved. The public sector – which is often the main partner in municipal development and decentralization projects – should orient its work towards citizens' concerns in a transparent and accountable way. Civil society

and the private sector are expected to develop their responsibility for public affairs. This can only be achieved through a long term learning process.

The following approaches and working principles are applied in IC projects:

- Focus on the local level, and on demand driven and bottom up approaches;
- Multi-partnership-approach including the different actors and state levels;
- Promote the participation of poor, women and marginalized groups;
- Facilitate, coordinate and work with local organisations and expertise;
- Networking and exchange of experiences, knowledge sharing and dissemination of good practices;
- Contribute with specific Swiss experience and credibility on decentralized structures, democracy and respect of minorities.

Direct support

- Municipal Development: Improved public services and administration, local development plans, stronger participation
- Decentralization process support: Support for policy and legislative change, sharing of tasks and responsibilities, financial management

Indirect support

- Management of common property resources (forest, water, land)
- Public-private partnerships in specific sectors
- Local economic development and framework conditions
- Public services in specific sectors
- Environmental services

Intercooperation's Services in Municipal Development and Decentralization

- Studies/assessments on municipal service performance;
- Capacity building for local authorities and civil society organisations (municipal management, budgeting, public tendering, participation mechanisms);
- Consulting in the implementation of decentralization processes (legislation, perequation, intergovernmental relations, cooperation mechanisms, information);
- Assistance in the establishment, monitoring and implementation of local development plans;
- Facilitation of different kinds of partnerships (collaborative management of natural resources, economic development);
- Organisation of seminars, workshops, documentation and study tours;
- Management and implementation of programmes, long and short term back-stopping, planning support and evaluations.

Intercooperation (IC) is a Swiss foundation specialized in international and development cooperation. IC's principal working domains are: *natural resource management* (forestry, agriculture, environment), *rural economy* (savings and credit, small enterprise promotion, marketing of agricultural and forest products) and *local governance and civil society* (promotion of self-help groups and professional associations, municipal development, decentralization). IC is a knowledge organisation and an executing agency, supporting partners in more than twenty countries of the south and the east. IC's principal mandator is the SDC, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Additionally, IC works with and for many other government and private, Swiss and international institutions.

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Natural Resource Management
Rural Economy
Local Governance and Civil Society

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