Shaping a new generation of decentralised cooperation
For enhanced effectiveness and accountability

By Agustí Fernández de Losada Passols

www.cpmr.org | secretariat@crpm.org

www.platforma-dev.eu | platforma@ccre-cemr.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decentralised cooperation has been broadly recognised by the international community as an effective modality of international development cooperation, focusing on reinforcing local and regional governments (LRGs) capacities. At the same time, there is general consensus that local and regional governments will play a key role in the implementation of the **new global agendas on sustainable development**. Therefore, decentralised cooperation is currently facing the challenge of becoming an effective tool to enable the crucial role of LRGs towards the sustainable development of their territories and communities. For this reason, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda provide a vital roadmap for decentralised cooperation.

Over the decades decentralised cooperation modalities have significantly evolved. Vertical forms of cooperation, where the added value was set on the transfer of aid and knowledge from the rich North to the poor South, have given way to the current horizontal partnerships. In these **horizontal partnerships** knowledge and experience flow in different directions (North to South, South to South and South to North) and the territory is the node of exchanges among the core players of development led by their local and regional governments (LRGs).

Each decentralised cooperation modality relates to the principles of **development cooperation efficiency**, set in Busan, in a different manner. Over the decades, vertical forms have contributed to some of the issues that have hampered development — fragmentation; lack of dialogue, coordination and complementarity; low impact; assistentialism; clientelism, etc. Beyond those vertical forms, the currently predominant modalities — territorial partnerships, agencies and networks — have proved to be more efficient and to enable greater and more sustained impact in terms of development.

Indeed, **territorial partnerships** 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. Equally, building bridges between territories provides an adequate framework to mobilise and engage local stakeholders. Ownership becomes a natural consequence as initiatives respond to the interests, aspirations and necessities of those stakeholders.

In parallel, **ad hoc agencies**, dealing with development policies at the regional or local levels, manage important results-oriented budgets and programmes and their level of specialisation and professionalisation is remarkable. The same occurs with **local and regional government networks** that usually operate through highly professionalised and results-oriented secretariats; providing their members with platforms for training, mutual learning, exchange of experiences and transfer of knowledge, as well as advocacy initiatives.

Overall, the **territorial approach** to sustainable development provides an excellent framework to articulate this new generation of decentralised cooperation partnerships; unlock the development potential of territories and their communities; and enhance the capacity of local and regional governments. In order to make the most of the own resources of a given territory, the territorial approach is best enabled through a multi-sectoral and integrated approach to challenges, as well as through cooperation amongst the different territorial stakeholders. Additionally, the territorial approach cannot really be implemented without the coordination amongst and contributions from all levels of government operating in a given territory – from the level of government that is closer to the citizenship (the local government) to the intermediary level (regional, provincial, state government), the national government and international organisations. It is however essential that this multi-level approach be based on intergovernmental cooperation, instead of on hierarchical subordination.

The currently predominant forms of decentralised cooperation are helping to overcome the limitations of the top-down, aid-centred North-South cooperation schemes. Whether through **South-South, triangular or territorial (also called integral by some) cooperation**, the aim of these new forms is to place all partners at the same level, thus reducing asymmetries and boosting efforts for an enhanced effectiveness of public policies. Nevertheless, these asymmetries might still persist as the resources, conditions and enabling environment of participating LRGs might differ significantly. The risk of these factors turning the partnership into an aid-centred vertical relation, thus creating supremacy of the most developed partner over the least developed one, must not be underestimated.

It is important to note that one of the main added values of the new modalities of decentralised cooperation is the **involvement of territorial stakeholders**.Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the private sector, the academia and knowledge-based institutions and philanthropies, each have their own capacities and resources to contribute to sustainable development. Their specific contributions help maximise the impact of what LRGs alone can do, and in many instances their participation is essential for implementing actions that could not be implemented otherwise.

The **strengthening of LRG's capacities** has become a priority for decentralised cooperation partnerships, with knowledge flowing not only from the North to the South (as was assumed in the past) but also in the horizontal direction and from the South to the North. To this aim, different practices are developed such as technical cooperation, mutual learning, benchmarking and the establishment of platforms for the exchange of experiences and the transfer of know-how (practices which are also operational in North-North relations).

Monitoring and evaluating require important efforts in terms of data collection and analysis. The involvement of territorial stakeholders (mainly the academia and CSO) in this purpose can be an asset in many instances and certainly becomes compulsory (through the set-up of boards or committees, for instance) in order to ensure ownership, learning, sustainability and capitalisation of results. **Accountability** to citizens and territorial stakeholders, as well as mutual accountability amongst partners, should be seen as an inherent asset of efficient decentralised cooperation.

In conclusion, new modalities of decentralised cooperation are being consolidated and enable joint efforts towards sustainable development in which LRGs, as recognised actors of development cooperation and territorial development, work together with their territorial stakeholders. On the basis of intergovernmental cooperation, it is now up to LRGs to determine which modalities of decentralised cooperation contribute best to their aims, which role their territorial stakeholders play, which actions are developed and how they succeed in monitoring, evaluating and being held accountable. National governments and multilateral organisations have a significant role to play in setting enabling institutional, policy and financial framework to help unleash this potential.

1 INTRODUCTION

Context

This Research Study has been developed in the framework of the activities that the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) develops as a partner of PLATFORMA; more specifically as a partner in the Strategic Partnership Agreement between PLATFORMA and the European Commission (EU Thematic Programme "Civil Society Organizations and Local Authorities" – Priority 2 "Strengthening Associations of Local Authorities at Regional, EU and Global Levels"). Within this partnership, the CPMR brings in the perspective of 160 Regions from 25 States from the European Union and beyond. Following an open call for experts, Mr Agustí Fernández de Losada Passols was appointed to elaborate this Research Study. The overall coordination has resided in the CPMR Secretariat staff that supports the CPMR External Cooperation Work Group, as well as in the region appointed to lead this Working Group, the Basque Country (Spain).

Goal

The ultimate goal of this Research Study is to enhance understanding in multilateral organisations and governments at all levels on how to adapt decentralised cooperation models by regional and local governments to meet strengthened standards of effectiveness and accountability; while fostering policy coherence, as well as innovative approaches and partnerships and coordination of territorial actors.

Structure

The study is structured on the basis of two sets of challenges currently facing decentralised cooperation. The first set (sections 2 to 5) refers to the need to clarify the conceptual approach of decentralised cooperation and its contribution to the new global agendas on sustainable development. The second set of challenges (sections 6 to 10) focuses on the innovative features of decentralised cooperation regarding flows, partnerships and actions, as well as in terms of transparency, monitoring, social control and accountability.

The Research Study is conceived with a think-tank paper approach, drawing upon the practices and lessons learnt directly by the CPMR regions and PLATFORMA partners in the context of their decentralised cooperation projects with third country peers; as well as by local and regional governments (LRGs) associations and networks worldwide. The Study also features key recommendations aiming to inspire and serve as an input to policy positions or similar documents, in support of CPMR and PLATFORMA activities. The methodology used for the elaboration of this Study has combined desk research and a questionnaire distributed to PLATFORMA partners, CPRM member regions and other key associations of local and regional governments. This participative approach is aimed at facilitating the identification of the issues addressed by the Research Study and real case studies that other local and regional governments might wish to replicate and learn from. The Study findings were introduced during the Assises of Decentralised Cooperation, held in Brussels, Belgium, on 10-11 July 2017.

Acknowledgment

2 CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO DECENTRALISED COOPERATION

The concept of "decentralised cooperation" is an evolving one, and a wholly accepted definition has yet to be agreed among academia, experts and operators[1]. By the end of the last century, the concept was mainly referred to as the practice of development cooperation managed by actors different from central governments, such as local and regional governments (LRGs), their agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), universities, etc. However, in recent years, the concept appears to mainly be linked to the notion of international development cooperation led by LRGs.

Different types of development cooperation are included in the concept of decentralised cooperation when they are led by LRGs. In most countries worldwide, decentralised cooperation is mainly linked to direct cooperation. In Europe, however, the scenario is broader and includes other types, such as indirect cooperation through NGOs, education and awareness-raising initiatives or delegated cooperation, among others. The following table summarises the main types of decentralised cooperation as well as their modalities, flows and type of intervention:

TYPE OF COOPERATION	MODALITY	FLOWS	TYPE OF INTERVENTION
Direct cooperation	Vertical	North-South South-South	Transfer of aid Transfer of know-how Exchange of experiences
	Partnership Agency Network	North-South South-South Triangular	Transfer of know-how Exchange of experiences Peer-to-peer learning Technical cooperation Funding
Indirect cooperation	Through NGOs	North-South	Transfer of aid Transfer of know-how Exchange of experiences
Education and awareness-raising initiativesa	Own initiatives Through NGOs	North South	Campaigns Advocacy Education projects etc.
Delegated cooperation	Bilateral agreement between developed LRGs and/or agencies	North-South	Exchange of experiences Peer-to-peer learning Technical cooperation
Budget support	Bilateral agreement between developed LRG and developing LRGs	North-South	Transfer of aid Transfer of know-how
Scholarships		North-South	Education Learning

> **Source:** own compilation

[1] European Commission. A. Fernández de Losada, M. Barceló, K. Rewovska (2013). Study on capitalisation of European Decentralised Cooperation Experiences.

the private sector, among others, to address the primary concerns, interests and necessities of their territories and societies.

In this context, different modalities of direct decentralised cooperation can be identified. The most frequently used by LRGs are as follows:

- **Vertical modality:** it involves bilateral or multilateral relations amongst LRGs whose added value is the transfer of aid from the "rich North" to the "poor South". This modality is commonly accepted as inefficient but still highly widespread amongst LRGs.

- **Territorial partnership modality:** it refers to the creation of solid and structured bi- and multilateral horizontal relationships between individual LRGs and their territories. Its added value lies in the capacity to foster the exchange of experiences, the transfer of know-how, mutual learning and the development of shared innovative pilot initiatives. This type of partnership provides an innovative framework to involve the most relevant territorial stakeholders, thus building bridges with and amongst civil society organisations, the private sector and knowledge-based organisations in fields of territorial specialisation. It is common in Southern Europe, mainly in France, Italy and Spain, and in some emerging economies like Brazil, Colombia or Mexico.

- **Agency modality:** it refers to the use of highly professionalised ad hoc structures set up by LRGs or their associations. This modality has been developed by some European regions —mainly in Spain and in Belgium— as well as by some LG associations in Canada and in Northern Europe, especially in The Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries. The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) is also starting to use this modality by developing programmes to cooperate with LRGs associations in neighbouring countries.

- **Network modality:** it emerged as a way to channel decentralised development cooperation, bringing together LRGs, their associations and multilateral actors. LRGs in Europe have been pioneering and boosting this form of cooperation for some decades. Nowadays it is globally used and many successful experiences can be highlighted worldwide.

As pointed out above, decentralised cooperation also includes other forms of intervention. Many LRGs, especially in Europe, have undertaken **development education and awareness-raising initiatives** to engage citizens in the global challenge of promoting sustainable development, peace and human rights; as well as to foster better understanding of the causes of underdevelopment, poverty and conflicts.

These initiatives are implemented both by LRGs themselves and, most frequently, through their local NGOs specialised in development cooperation. In many countries - for instance in Spain, France or Italy - support to NGOs is provided through calls for proposals. These calls for proposals establish priority criteria linked to the local context according to which different initiatives are co-financed. In some cases, these criteria include the promotion of better un-

Direct cooperation, understood as the partnership between LRGs, is the most extended type of decentralised cooperation. It has been broadly recognised by the international community as an effective modality of development cooperation. In the beginning, direct decentralised cooperation was conceived as a primary and vertical form where the added value was set on the transfer of aid and knowledge from the rich North to the poor South. Since then, it has evolved in a great manner. Today it is based on partnerships where knowledge and experience flow in different directions (North to South, South to South and South to North) and the territory is the node of exchanges among the core players of development led by their LRGs.

These new forms of horizontal partnerships, built around the territories and their stakeholders, are currently facing the great challenge of becoming an effective tool for sustainable development. **There is general consensus that LRGs will have to play a key role in the implementation process of the new global agendas on sustainable development.** They are in charge of relevant competences strongly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda adopted at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urbanisation (Habitat III), the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Besides this, LRGs will be called upon to engage and encourage their civil society organisations, knowledge-based institutions and

derstanding of the political, socio-economic and environmental contexts in which the partners of the LRGs operate.

The collaboration between LRGs and their local NGOs goes beyond development education and awareness-raising initiatives. Indeed, many LRGs provide support to local NGOs through calls for proposals for the implementation of development projects in the "global South". This practice, known as **indirect cooperation** and conceived on a similar basis to the support provided by national development agencies to the NGOs, is usually articulated around geographical and thematic priorities under co-financing schemes.

A broad spectrum of types of intervention

Indirect cooperation is a highly widespread practice among developed LRGs - in Spain, the majority of mid- and large sized municipalities and regions have developed financial instruments to support their NGOs. However, if not soundly aligned with the direct decentralised cooperation strategies, indirect cooperation shows important contradications in terms of effectiveness and can contribute to the fragmentation and isolation of initiatives. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that, through their collaboration with NGOs, LRGs intend to both contribute to human development and reinforce associative fabric in the field of solidarity.

In parallel to this, some LRGs, especially big cities and strong regions in federal countries, are deploying other types of instruments that have been traditionally reserved for national official agencies. This is the case, for instance, of the so-called delegated cooperation (the case of Catalonia and Flanders in Mozambique is relevant); of budget support or scholarship programmes for residential

visits of students from partner countries (programmes by German federal States represent 11% of the German bilateral cooperation); or of direct agreements with United Nations Agencies.

Additionally, in some countries LRGs have started to design and implement development cooperation master plans. This proves that development cooperation is increasingly recognised as a public policy.

As illustrated in the table page 9, the different types of decentralised cooperation offer a broad spectrum of types of intervention: transfer of aid, technical cooperation, transfer of technology, peer-to-peer learning, exchange of experiences and good practices or the implementation of pilot actions, among others.

Equally, as it will be developed in chapter VI, direct cooperation provides an optimal framework for emerging flows of cooperation that goes beyond the classical North-South relations. Indeed, despite its limitations, South-South and triangular decentralised cooperation provide innovative experiences with remarkable impacts worldwide.

For the purposes of this Study, the concept of decentralised cooperation is approached as a local or regional public policy on international development cooperation. Throughout the Study the focus is placed on direct partnerships built on a bilateral or multilateral basis, rather than on indirect cooperation modalities or on development education and awareness-raising initiatives

NEW FLOWS OF DECENTRALISED COOPERATION
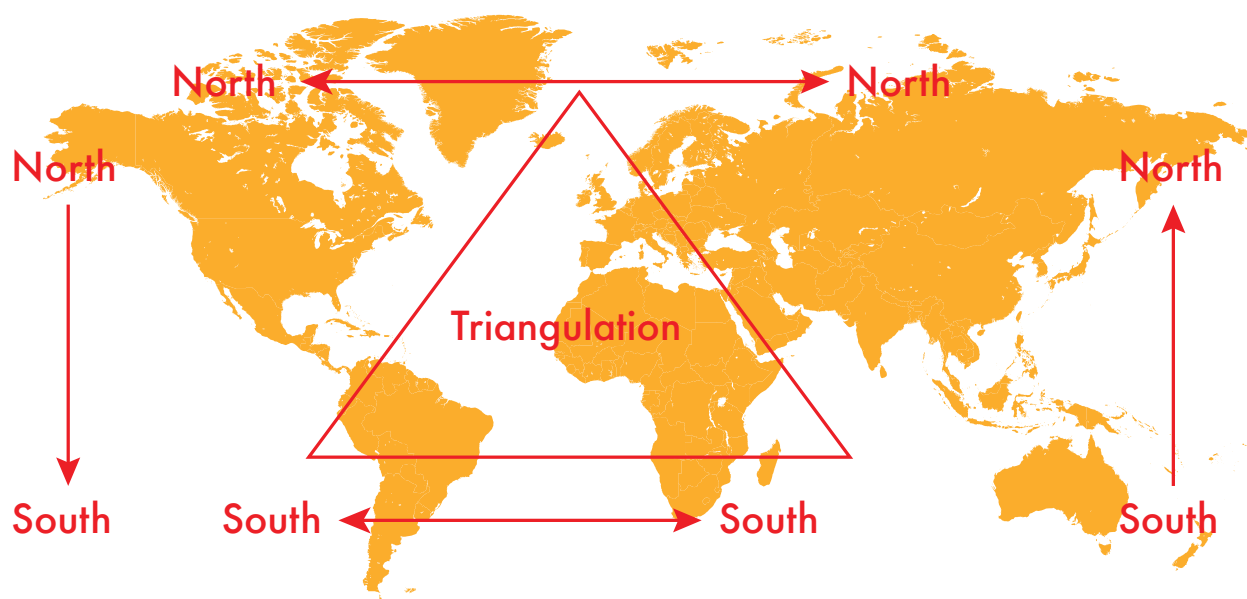
3 LOCALISING THE 2030 AGENDA: THE KEY ROLE OF EFFECTIVE DECENTRALISED COOPERATION

In September 2015, local and regional governments from all over the world welcomed the adoption of an unprecedented set of universal goals for human development to be implemented and achieved within the horizon of 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represented an important evolution from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as this time local and regional governments (LRGs) were able to participate in the construction of this new set of 17 goals and 169 targets from the very early stages of their elaboration.

As UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon stated in 2013, "local authorities have significantly increased their engagement in global processes. The inputs of local leaders and municipal planners have never been more critical to guiding Member States toward embracing policies that achieve green, sustainable and inclusive cities[2]". Indeed, **local and regional governments started to complement the action of national governments in the implementation of the MDGs only after 2005**, when a guideline document on the localisation of the MDGs was introduced by the UN Development Group (UNDG).

CPMR POLICY POSITION ON THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF THE SDGs - NOVEMBER 2015[3]

As the first-ever global agreement setting a universal, comprehensive agenda for sustainable human development, the 2030 Agenda mobilises national, regional and local authorities, and all other stakeholders of civil society towards their achievement. This new global framework for sustainable human development will have an impact on European and domestic policies and budgets, and the subsequent partnerships for implementation, indicators and monitoring & review mechanisms in many areas of seminal importance for territorial development - urban development, economic growth and jobs, resilient infrastructure, water and sanitation, energy, governance, access to justice and the rule of law, women's empowerment and gender equality, climate action, environmental sustainability, sustainable consumption and production etc.

With the SDGs, the localisation of this global 2030 Agenda is commonly agreed as a sine qua non condition for achieving real transformation in local communities. Several initiatives from international organisations and platforms are being developed to ensure that localisation is put into practice all over the world.

What does localising the SDGs exactly mean?

Today localisation is about putting territories and their citizens' priorities, needs and resources at the core of sustainable development. Localising the 2030 Agenda[4] means, therefore, raising awareness amongst the population, including the citizenship and also civil society organisations, the academia, the private sector and other stakeholders. But first and foremost, localising the SDGs means raising awareness amongst the local and regional levels of government, which will subsequently have to take the Agenda into account in their daily work and involve their population in the process. In this task, the role of LRG associations is very important. This inevitably entails giving local and regional governments a leading role in the process, as well as commensurate resources, most essentially because all 17 SDGs have targets that are directly related to LRG responsibilities. A study by Misselwitz et al shows that up to 65% of the SDGs are at risk if local urban stakeholders are not involved. According to the authors, 21% of the 169 targets can only be implemented with local actors, 24% should be implemented with them and a further 20% should have a much clearer orientation towards them, but the [current] SDG wording does not suggest this[5].

Local and regional governments will not only implement the national approach to the 2030 Agenda at the local level. These spheres of government are also in charge of enabling multi-level and multi-stakeholder approaches to the planning, implemention, monitoring and evaluation of their public policies, as well as to the mobilisation of their territorial stakeholders and expertise towards integrated, inclusive, coherent and sustainable territorial development.

Localisation requires a major role of LRGs in the elaboration of national strategies and plans for the implementation of the SDGs. The engagement of local and regional governments in the process at national level will be vital for the definition of strategies that are relevant and meaningful to the needs and assets of the different territories within a country, and therefore to local communities. Enabling the strong and committed participation of local and regional governments in the planning stage will result in fostered ownership and willingness to include them in the subsequent stages of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national plans and actions.

Several countries, such as Colombia, Brazil, Sweden or Norway, have already invited LRG associations to actively take part in the definition of their national SDG strategies and in the monitoring and reporting processes. They have done so by inviting them to participate in ad hoc multi-level and multi-stakeholder commissions, or to submit reports on the role of sub-national governments in the implementation of the SDGs.

[2] Message to the Meeting of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. 28 May 2013 Message to the Meeting of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. 28 May 2013

[3] Decentralised cooperation and the regional dimension in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. CPMR. November 2015 http://www.crpm.org/pub/docs/448_en-cpmr-position-2030agendasd.pdf

[4] For more information, see the Roadmap for localising the SDGs: implementation and monitoring at subnational levels. https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/roadmap_for_localising_the_sdgs_0.pdf

[5] Misselwitz, P. et al. The Urban Dimension of the SDGs: Implications for the New Urban Agenda. In: Sustainable Development Goals and Habitat III: Opportunities for a successful New Urban Agenda. Cities Alliance Discussion Paper No. 3. November 2015 http://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/citiesalliance.org/files/Opportunities%20for%20the%20New%20Urban%20Agenda.pdf

Elected and appointed officials at local and regional government levels also have to get ready   to develop their own policies, plans, programmes and projects, aligned with the SDGs in multi-level and multi-stakeholder approaches. This involves a wide range of different actions: conducting needs assessment; working hand-in-hand with other actors of the territory or actors with similar needs and perspectives; aligning existing plans and budgets with the SDGs; mobilising resources, and building capacities through a variety of means, including development cooperation and peer-to-peer learning.

The 2030 Agenda is an opportunity to reinforce the transversal and multi-sectoral dimension of territorial development agendas through the coherent integration of different policies with territorial impact, such as economic development, social cohesion, education, health, climate change action, culture etc.

Finally, one of the lessons learnt from the MDGs is that sub-national data are crucial to ascertain the achievement of the goals throughout a country. To this effect, the development of indicators that are specific to each territory has become a requirement to ensure that "no one and no place is left behind". This entails sound data collection at the sub-national levels, the use of such data at the national level, the engagement of local and regional governments in the monitoring and evaluation at all levels and, ultimately, the assurance that national SDG progress reports also reveal local achievements and challenges.

Decentralised cooperation as a key resource for achieving the SDGs with localised approaches

While the MDGs relied on Official Development Assistance (ODA) as the main channel of international support, with the adoption in 2002 of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development being proof of it, the SDGs place special emphasis on the many other available means of implementation to achieve the goals. Decentralised cooperation is firmly acknowledged as one of them. Certainly, decentralised cooperation provides enormous added value to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to the achievement of other global agendas linked to sustainable development that have been recently adopted such, as the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction or the Paris Agreement for climate action.

The added value of decentralised cooperation for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and related agendas resides in the fact that its aim is not the simple transfer of financial resources. On the contrary, decentralised cooperation helps reinforce the local capacities through: 1) generating spaces for the exchange of experience and the transfer of knowledge, 2) fostering alliances for learning, and 3) creating strong links between the territories and their stakeholders, whose role is now equally recognised as fundamental to territorial development.

The universal nature of the 2030 Agenda makes it applicable to all the countries and territories in the world, regardless of income and poverty levels. It is this universal nature what allows decentralised cooperation to come into play and, what is more, to be an essential tool for the achievement of the SDGs.

Brazil, Colombia and Sweden: three countries that have invited their LRG associations to take part in the definition of the national SDG strategies

Brazil

In October 2016, the Government of Brazil created the National Committee on the SDGs by means of Decree 8892, which includes representatives from federal ministries, LRGs and civil society.

Colombia

In 2015, the Government of Colombia created the High-level Interinstitutional Commission for the Preparation and Effective Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs. Local and regional governments, as well as ministries, civil society organisations, academia and the private sector, are invited to participate in the Technical Committees and Work Groups of the Commission.

Sweden

SKL, the Swedish Association of Municipalities, is a member of the Swedish Government's reference group that has been created to discuss the development of the Voluntary National Report on SDGs implementation.

To some extent, the SDGs are not groundbreaking in the sense that they only try to respond to already existing problems and needs in an integrated manner. Some of these problems have persisted throughout the years, such as gender inequality (SDG 5), while some others are relatively new, for example the need to develop computer literacy skills amongst the elderly (SDG 4)... This means that **successful decentralised cooperation experiences achieved over the past decades in all these fields can now inspire new ways of collaboration amongst local and regional governments around the localisation of the SDGs.**

Indeed, local and regional governments usually face problems that other peer governments from around the world have previously addressed or are equally grappling with: the provision of good quality water (SDG 8), the extension of the bus line to enable slum children to attend school (SDGs 10, 11), capacity-building activities for local civil servants in the field of good governance (SDG 16) etc. It is clear that local and regional governments benefit from partnerships and platforms that foster the exchange of knowledge and experiences and the provision of technical assistance. The universality of the Agenda and the sharing of similar challenges provides decentralised cooperation with a sense of horizontality, mutual interest and bi-directionality, thus breaking away from a traditional vertical, aid-centred approach.

To sum up, the 2030 Agenda has become the roadmap for decentralised cooperation nowadays. This means that all decentralised cooperation strategies and mechanisms set up at both national and local levels are expected to be based on the 2030 Agenda.

4 THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP AND LRGs. LOCALISING THE DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS PRINCIPLES

Building on the principles agreed in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation that resulted from the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Busan, South Korea, in 2011, provided the new common principles which form the foundations of the system of effective development co-operation.

In Busan, the new concept of effective development cooperation was introduced. Following that, the aid-oriented approach upon which the classic North-South relations were based was partially overcome. New partnerships were forged amongst key development actors – and these are not only states. The movement adopted a much more inclusive approach to international cooperation that recognises the contributions of all actors involved in development. **International cooperation no longer refers solely to national governments and multilateral organisations**. On the contrary, it is open to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the private sector, philanthropy, social economy actors, academia and knowledge-based organisations, as well as to local and regional governments.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Global Partnership has refocused its actions on the achievement of the SDGs, and effective development cooperation is included among the basic tools for achieving them.

The Global Partnership works on the four principles that underpin effective development cooperation, namely:

1. Ownership of development priorities by developing countries. Partnerships for development can only succeed if they are led by developing countries and consist of implementing approaches that are tailored to country-specific situations and needs.

2. Focus on results. Investments and efforts must have a lasting impact on eradicating poverty and reducing inequality, on sustainable development, and on enhancing the capacities of developing countries, in alignment with the priorities and policies set out by developing countries themselves.

3. Inclusive development partnerships. Openness, trust, and mutual respect and learning lie at the core of effective partnerships in support of development goals, recognising the different and complementary roles of all actors.

4. Transparency and accountability to each other. Mutual accountability and accountability to the intended beneficiaries, as well as to the respective citizens, organisations, constituents and shareholders, is determinant on delivering results. Transparent practices form the basis for enhanced accountability.

According to the Busan Partnership Agreement, these shared principles will guide the international community to:

- Deepen, extend and operationalise the democratic ownership of development policies and processes.

- Strengthen the efforts to achieve concrete and sustainable results. This involves better managing for results, monitoring, evaluating and communicating progress; as well as scaling up international support, strengthening national capacities and leveraging diverse resources and initiatives in support of development results.

- Broaden support for South-South and triangular co-operation, helping to tailor these horizontal partnerships to a greater diversity of country contexts and needs.

- Support developing countries in their efforts to facilitate, leverage and strengthen the impact of diverse forms of development finance and activities, ensuring that these diverse forms of co-operation have a catalytic effect on development.

Local and regional governments joined the Global Partnership after Busan. Today, these spheres of government are part of the Global Partnership Steering Committee – in acknowledgement of their clear contribution to sustainable development and to the definition of new and more efficient approaches to development cooperation.

The second High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation held in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2016 recognised "the importance of local governments in strengthening the relationship between citizens and government, the business sector and other stakeholders, and ensuring the localisation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda[6]".

The participants in the second High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation - gathered in Nairobi, Kenya in November 2016 - underlining the crucial role of LRGs in the achievement of the SDGs, commit to:

"a. strengthen the capacity of local governments to enable them to fully assume their roles in service delivery, enhancing participation and accountability at the local level;

b. include local governments in consultations regarding development strategies to localise the SDGs; support capacity-building for delivery of basic services and infrastructure; strengthen local expenditure management and revenue mobilisation; enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and local governments' participation in national and local planning, within the context of national sustainable development strategies; and

c. support the implementation of the SDGs and effective development principles at the local level, promoting a stronger collaboration between all levels of governance, to ensure that national development plans are better aligned with local development plans and initiatives, and local communities."

As has been analysed in the first chapter of this Study, there are several decentralised cooperation modalities and each of them approaches the concept of development effectiveness in a more or less intense manner.

The following table shows to what extent the different modalities have the potential to be aligned with the principles of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

[6] Nairobi Outcome Document. 1 December 2016. Nairobi, Kenya. Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation http://effectivecooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/OutcomeDocumentEnglish.pdf

	VERTICAL DC	TERRITORIAL PARTNERSHIP	AGENCY	NETWORK
Ownership	🟥	🟩	🟩	🟨
Focus on results	🟥	🟨	🟩	🟩
Inclusive partnerchips	🟥	🟩	🟨	⬜
Transparency and accountability	🟥	🟩	🟨	🟨

Red: *low potential of alignment*
Yellow: *medium potential of alignment*
Green: *high potential of alignment*

> **Source:** *own compilation*

Aid-oriented or vertical relations have been shown to clearly be far from the effectiveness principles. Ownership is hard to achieve as in most occasions it is the developed partner who determines what the developing partner will receive in terms of funding, knowledge, models or experiences. In general, aid-oriented initiatives provide highly circumstantial and not sustainable results, thus very partially contributing to development, and are less inclusive than other modalities in terms of engagement of territorial stakeholders.

Example of a vertical model

A European town is twinned with a town in Africa. In the course of a meeting in Europe, at which the host town presents its advances in town planning, the European mayor offers to send two experts to the African town to assist them in drawing up a town planning project. As a result of the agreement, two prestigious European town planning experts with certain knowledge of the situation in Africa travel to the 'beneficiary' town and start to work on the plan. Two years later, after four one-week missions, interviews with municipal authorities and some leading members of the town's civil society, the European mayor presents his African counterpart with the town planning proposal drawn up by the two experts. The African mayor thanks him and, after a few days, organises an event to present the plan, which immediately arouses the opposition of the majority of the residents.

> **Source:** *Yearbook of Decentralised Cooperation 2010. Review of the foundations of local public decentralised cooperation. A. Fernández de Losada*

Territorial partnerships, on the other hand, are much closer to contributing to the principles set in Busan. Whether they are based on North-South relations or on South-South or triangular schemes, their added value is not the transfer of aid but the development of two-way relations between territories. These relations are led by the local and regional governments and count on the involvement of their territorial stakeholders: citizens, civil society organisations, private sector, philanthropy, academia etc.

Territorial partnerships are usually oriented to reinforcing local strategies. They provide knowledge, expertise, innovation and management skills in order to improve public policies and operational capacities. To the same extent, these partnerships are by definition inclusive as they provide an adequate framework for the development of bridges amongst the stakeholders of the territories involved, the strengthening of their capacities and the sharing of opportunities. In this context, ownership becomes a natural consequence as initiatives lead to the engagement and commitment of citizens and stakeholders as they respond to their own interests, aspirations and necessities.

Foro Madrid Solidario

The Foro Madrid Solidario was born in 2016 as a multi-stakeholder open, flexible, dynamic and structured platform for consultation and dialogue launched by the Madrid City Council. It aims to legitimise the participative nature of the design, implementation and evaluation of the local development cooperation policies, and involves the different Council departments, as well as representatives of other public authorities, networks of local governments, NGOs, universities and research centres, social organisations, the private sector and professional associations, and experts from different fields and specialisations.

The Forum is structured in three operative levels. The plenary sessions focus on the adoption of resolutions and opinions of the working groups. The interactive online platform gives all members the opportunity to participate in the discussions, consultations and proposals made by the Madrid City Council. Additionally, it includes a public space where the Council addresses specific consultations to the citizenship, who can participate freely in them. Finally, the three working groups each focus on a specific area of work: grants, awareness-raising and education, and integral cooperation.

> **Source:** *Foro Madrid Solidario https://goo.gl/umA2SR*

In most instances, initiatives are built around LRGs competences, responsibilities and interests. This means that LRGs operate in areas where they can deliver effective results as their knowledge, expertise and legitimacy are high and recognised. Furthermore, the inclusion of territorial stakeholders and the proximity with citizens should make this type of partnership more accountable and transparent.

Amsterdam – São Paulo Memorandum of understanding

The city of Amsterdam has definitively abandoned the modality of twinning for its international cooperation activities. It now engages in horizontal forms of city-to-city cooperation in different continents. Their aim is to exchange experiences and create an enabling environment for the active involvement of a wide range of private and public agencies on both sides to address common concerns linked to developing the territory. In February 2014, Amsterdam and São Paulo signed a four-year memorandum of understanding to cooperate on eight areas of mutual interest closely connected to sustainable urban (and territorial) development.

> **Source:** *Brazilië || São Paulo. Gemeente Amsterdam*
> *https://www.amsterdam.nl/bestuur-organisatie/volg-beleid/internationale/virtuele-map/brazilie/*

However, the impact of territorial partnerships depends on the capacities of the LRGs involved. Too often, these LRGs operate through poorly professionalised structures, or through structures that have not developed capacities regarding international action.

In this context, the differences between LRGs in developed countries or in certain emerging regions and those in less developed ones are considerable. Big cities and regions in Europe and Canada, as well as in some countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa, operate through highly professionalised teams. Additionally, these teams count on adequate budgets and technical and material resources.

The agency modality is highly professionalised and results-oriented. As pointed out in the first chapter, some regions in Spain, as well as some local government associations in Northern Europe, have established ad hoc agencies to deal with development policies. They manage important budgets and programmes and, especially in the case of LG associations, the level of specialisation is remarkable.

VNG International

The International Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities counts on a highly professional team of 50 employees and a number of associated experts in a wide range of fields (decentralisation, municipal management, municipal services, decentralised cooperation, governance, LG associations and peace building and reconstruction) and territories (with daughter companies in the Czech Republic, South Africa and Tunisia, as well as seven project offices in Africa, three in the Near East and one in Myanmar).

> **Source:** *http://www.vng-international.nl/*

SKL International

The international wing of the Swedish association for municipalities, county councils and regions (SALAR), supports local and regional authorities and their associations, all over the world in fields such as decentralisation processes, local and regional development, municipal management and service delivery, and also EU integration. SKL International uses know-how from their extensive pool of experts from both SALAR and the Swedish LRGs, as well as from their international and local experts in some occasions. They have offices in Stockholm, Kiev, Tunis, Ankara, Amman and Nairobi. The institution's international action is also reflected through its membership and activity in the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

> **Source:** *http://sklinternational.se/*

Basque Agency for Development Cooperation

The Basque Agency for Development Cooperation is a public body of the regional government to promote human development and help in the struggle against poverty. Its Strategic Master Plan defines the geographic, mainstream and sectorial priorities for its actions, as well as a line of work on Education for Development. The Agency is served by a highly professional team of more than 20 staff, as well as additional staff from the External Action Secretariat General of the Government, regional government services, provincial councils and municipalities directly direcly engaged in development cooperation, international work and new alliances. Policy coherence, multi-level and decentralised cooperation, triangular cooperation, territorial specialisation, the engagement of territorial actors and the collaboration with other LRGs, European and global platforms and multilateral organisations are key priorities for the Basque Country. The Basque budgetary and fiscal competences are key to the region's work in development cooperation. The example of the taxes collected for development cooperation porposes through the "Water Canon" is a highlight.

> **Source:** *www.euskadi.eus*

To some extent, local government associations' agencies operate in a similar manner to certain big NGOs: they are highly specialised in local governance issues and work through project-approach schemes. Their initiatives are usually funded by national or multilateral donors and their intervention schemes are built around the reinforcement of the operative capacities of their international partners - usually LRGs or local government associations - through capacity-building or peer-to-peer initiatives. They do not seek to build territorial bridges in which territorial stakeholders can operate, but to strengthen the capacities of their partners to implement more effective public policies.

Depending on the purpose of the project in which they are involved, local government associations might encounter more or less difficulties in their attempt to involve territorial stakeholders and to engage citizens directly. Capacity-building or mutual learning initiatives are not usually defined to engage citizens and territorial stakeholders, especially those of the agency's country of origin.

As local government associations' agencies are highly professional operators, and deeply engaged with the efficiency principles agreed upon by the international community, in the definition and implementation of most of their initiatives they not only take into account their partners' priorities and political strategies, but also tailor the initiatives to suit their partners' specific situations and needs. In view of this, local government associations' agencies are frequently involved in advocacy initiatives focused on enabling the political environment in which their partners operate.

LGA's agencies are making great efforts to conduct their interventions and present their results in a transparent manner. However, as intermediate bodies, they are accountable to their members, and not citizens.

Regional governments' agencies tend to follow similar schemes to those set by national governments, particularly by those national governments that are part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). They have strong teams and budgets and operate through direct partnerships or indirect cooperation strategies — that is, through NGOs.

The following table shows to what extent some regions have similar budgetary capacities than some EU member states:

REGION	M€	COUNTRY	M€
Basque Country (Spain)	55	Lithuania	49
Andalusia (Spain)	42.6	Croatia	35
Catalonia (Spain)	30.2	Latvia	24
Flanders (Belgium)	55.5	Slovenia	68

> **Source:** *own compilation*

Most regional agencies seek to engage their territorial stakeholders in their decentralised cooperation partnerships. Some regions have created multi-stakeholder platforms that allow the participation of stakeholders, mainly CSOs, the private sector and universities, in the definition, implementation and evaluation of their strategies and initiatives.

Regional agencies are also making a great effort to orientate their political strategies to attaining better results in terms of sustainable development, enhancing their capacities and aligning with the priorities and policies laid down by their partners. In most cases they work in the framework of their specific competences, responsibilities and capacities and their level of specialisation can be very high. Here, it is important to underline their commitment to enhancing policy coherence between development policies at both internal and international level.

Policy Coherence for Development in the Basque Country

The Basque Country recently adopted a strategy for "Policy Coherence for Development in the Basque Country." Policy coherence for development is an increasingly relevant matter at global level and refers to the need to address development problems not only through aid policies but also through the rest of policies and through the actions of all stakeholders, thus demanding more coherence amongst all these. The Basque Government has laid down measures and strands of work allowing for more efficacy and efficiency of the policies led or carried out by the regional government and offering homogeneous criteria for the achievement of human development in all regions where it works.

> **Source:** *Coherencia pública.*
> *Agencia Vasca de Cooperación para el Desarrollo*
> *https://goo.gl/zmiub6*

However, some regional agencies tend to establish partnerships, or to fund projects, of national governments in developing countries. This type of partnership might present some limitations in terms of sustainability and ownership.

It is also relevant to note that regional agencies use innovative modalities of intervention such as delegated cooperation or budget support, which are not yet frequent in the field of decentralised cooperation.

Delegated cooperation between Catalonia and Flanders

The region of Catalonia has started to participate in delegated cooperation schemes. Delegated cooperation refers to the action by means of which a Government delegates the realisation of the development cooperation activities to institutions specialised in international cooperation and strongly linked to municipalities. Catalonia is developing the "Accelerating women's and girls' rights" project in Mozambique, based on an agreement with the Government of Flanders and the NGO ActionAid. The Government of Flanders has contributed with 400.000€ funding (80% of the total project), while the Catalan Government has contributed with 100.000€. The Catalan agency will coordinate the project, while monitoring and evaluation will be a shared task between both Governments. The project aims to contribute to a more secure environment, free of violence and sexual assaults for women and girls in Marracuene, Manhiça and Maputo.

Similarly, the Catalan Development Cooperation Agency has also established as a priority the access to EU emergency and humanitarian action funds and participation in the EU delegated cooperation. Although these collaboration formulae are primarily conceived for States, some regional Governments, particularly in Germany, have already received funding for their projects.

> **Source:** *El Govern estableix un marc de cooperació amb el Govern de Flandes i ActionAid per la defensa dels drets de les dones a Moçambic*
> *http://premsa.gencat.cat/pres_fsvp/AppJava/ notapremsavw/297130/ca/govern-estableix-marc-cooperacio- flandes-actionaid-defensa-drets-dones-mocambic.do*

Chapters 9 and 10 of this Study will show how regions are making great efforts to improve their practices and to make their political strategies and initiatives more transparent and accountable.

Finally, LRG networks approach the effectiveness principles in a similar manner to local government associations' agencies. They usually operate through highly professional secretariats. They provide their members with platforms for training, mutual learning, exchange of experiences and transfer of knowledge. In some cases, they also launch advocacy initiatives aimed at developing the necessary enabling environments for LRGs to operate in adequate conditions. Their task is specific and highly oriented to results, mainly in the form of reinforcement of LRG institutional and operative capacities. However, the level of involvement of other stakeholders in their initiatives is low, and so is their direct contact with citizens. This means that they are less exposed to social control.

5 POLICY COHERENCE: THE TERRITORIAL APPROACH AS THE CORNERSTONE FOR EFFECTIVE DECENTRALISED DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The so-called territorial approach to sustainable development provides an excellent framework to articulate this new generation of decentralised cooperation partnerships. Although the concept of territorial development is not new, there is confusion on what it actually means and how it can be effectively supported.

This chapter will analyse the approaches taken by different institutions, such as the European Commission and UNDP. We will identify and present key elements such as the integrated and multi-dimensional nature of sustainable development (linked to the SDGs), the necessary coordination and complementarity between the different levels of government operating in the territory, the involvement and articulation of stakeholders (civil society, knowledge-based organisations, private sector, philanthropy), or planning as a methodology to define priorities, lay down action lines and allocate resources.

Local sustainable development has been understood as a process that coordinates all available resources in a specific territory, including not only the economic dimension but also the social, and environmental dimensions (and even the cultural and the institutional ones), and aiming to improve the quality of life of the citizens. In order to make the most of the territory's own resources, the territorial approach to local development contributes to it through a multi-sectoral and integrated approach to current problems, for which cooperation amongst the different territorial stakeholders is necessary. This includes the citizens, CSOs, NGOs, the private sector, philanthropy, academia, etc. Additionally, **the territorial approach cannot take place without the coordination amongst and contributions of all levels of government operating in the territory,** from the level of government that is closer to the citizenship (the local government) to the intermediary level (regional, provincial, state government), the national government and international organisations. It is however essential that this multi-level approach be based on intergovernmental cooperation instead of on hierarchical subordination.

Boosting democratic ownership of development

The territorial approach requires an enabling environment where each level of government has clear competences and sufficient financial, technical and human resources. Local and regional governments are the level of government that suffers lack of resources the most. For this reason, in order to optimise these governments' existing resources, strategies for the strengthening of their operative and institutional capacities are also necessary. When this enabling environment fails, the different stakeholders led by their local government, should carry out advocacy actions addressed at the national and international levels.

Given the large number of both public and private stakeholders that should have a say in the development of their own territory,

it is of utmost importance to define decentralised cooperation actions from a strategic perspective - a strategy which includes the economic, social and environmental dimensions - in order to adequately respond to the real needs of a given territory. Local governments are the most appropriate level of government to promote and manage local development policies based on the territorial approach: due to their proximity to their territory, they are more aware of its needs and the capacities and resources available and act as catalysts for change. Consequently, they have to ensure the correct coordination with the other governments operating in the territory (which includes the integration of development cooperation strategies), as well as the creation of spaces for the participation of the different stakeholders.

The EU, staunch defender of the principle of subsidiarity, has also defined the concept "territorial approach to development". In its Communication on Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes, adopted in May 2013, the European Commission described this concept as:

 "Tailored to territorial characteristics and needs, the territorial approach to development is characterised as a dynamic bottom-up and long-term process based on a multi-actor and multi-sector approach, in which different local institutions and actors work together to define priorities, and plan and implement development strategies. Through the guidance of Local Authorities and the mobilisation of additional private and community capacities and resources, the territorial approach to development could trigger a change in the quality of citizens' life and wellbeing, ensuring a balance between socio-economic growth, equity and environmental quality and increasing the resilience of the most vulnerable. Furthermore, this approach could reinforce local political processes, transparency and boost democratic ownership of development, via a continuous monitoring of progress towards sustainability."

As observed from the European Commission's Communication, **the territorial approach to local development is endogenous, incremental, multi-scalar and spatially integrated**. The term "local" is not only the place where things happen anymore (the where) but also the way things are done (the how) and the authorities and stakeholders who make it possible (the who). Local authorities are not expected to simply implement regional, national and global development objectives at local level. They are expected to lead the development of their territory, making the most of its specifities through place-specific resources, political and institutional mechanisms at a multiplicity of interdependent scales, and the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations.

The EU is aware of the role decentralised cooperation can play in unlocking the development potential of local authorities, and has promoted it for some years now. A number of successful experiences exist regarding the most imperative actions of planning, implementing or pooling resources for particular projects.

Other decentralised cooperation experiences of EU local governments and their peers in the South have more specifically aimed to "stimulate active citizenship or the use of public-private partnerships in delivering goods and services to local constituencies. There are also examples of effective support to strengthening the advocacy capacity of local authorities and their associations for more development-friendly decentralisation reforms and functioning systems of intergovernmental cooperation[7]".

Supporting Associations of Local Authorities in the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) Countries

Since 2010, in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, the EU-funded Regional Programme "Supporting and strengthening Local Government Associations at ACP national and regional levels" (ARIAL) has aimed to enable local and regional government associations to take part in the definition and implementation of development policies, through capacity and institutional development activities. ARIAL works to strengthen LRG associations at national, sub-continental and continental level. VNG International manages the ARIAL programme and is supported by its partners Commonwealth Local Government Forum CLGF (UK), Partenariat pour le Dévelopement Municipal (Benin), Municipal Development Partnership MDP (Zimbabwe), University of West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago) and Foundation of the South Pacific International PSPI (Fiji).

The key outcomes highlighted by the European Commission have been: 1) the support of five national associations, namely in Gabon, Chad, Swaziland, Kiribati and Vanuatu, through the Emerging Local Government Association Facility, and 2) the production of a series of capacity development toolkits, tailored on the demand of Associations of Local Authorities, in order to identify funding opportunities, to survey Local Authorities on their needs, to manage projects, to draft communication, advocacy and lobby plans.

> **Source:** *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes." http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ. do?uri=COM:2013:0280:FIN:EN:PDF*

The territorial approach as an important instrument to support sustainable local development was also stressed by the United Nations (UN) in the framework of the abovementioned Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. According to this Partnership, sub-national governments play a critical role in ensuring ownership of the development agenda of their countries and "applying a territorial lens to national development policies and global debates can render development cooperation more effective in addressing the real needs of people[8]".

More specifically, the UNDP ART Initiative in 2015 launched a Hub for territorial partnerships in order to support the implementation of the SDGs at the local level. Through this Hub, UNDP applies the territorial approach to harness the potential of LRGs and other social and economic actors of the territories as development partners and to promote the principles of development cooperation effectiveness locally. This includes, amongst others, supporting local actors in the process of making the SDGs part of the national and local development strategies and policies.

The Global Water Solidarity (GWS) international platform

GWS is a thematic platform dedicated to water and sanitation, established by the UNDP ART Initiative. The GWS enables the identification of local demands and then pairs them to what decentralised partners can offer. It also promotes and institutionalises articulation between and across levels (global, national and local).

UNDP ART in El Salvador, together with the Basque Country Water Agency and other decentralised cooperation donors, launched the project 'Improving Water Governance in El Salvador'. Its aim was to mitigate the fragmentation and dispersion of actors in the water sector and to promote planned interventions anchored in territorial development processes aligned with national priorities. While the territorial approach ensured the participation of all stakeholders, the multi-level approach helped tackle water issues at several levels: at the national level, to influence the legal framework; at the basin level, to promote articulation among actors; at the micro-regional level, to reinforce the necessary capacities and to promote inter-municipal management of water; and at the municipal level, to conduct small infrastructure projects that ensure ownership, the political commitment of elected mayors and user participation.

> **Source:** *Practice Guidelines. Decentralized Cooperation, Water and Sanitation. UNDP. 2013 / https://goo.gl/yMhTKD*

The territorial approach contributes to the creation of well-structured long-term partnerships amongst equals, with a view to tackling common agendas and problems in different parts of the world. By involving a wide range of stakeholders, local and regional governments will be able to lead, but not monopolise, the projects towards local governance and local development. 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. This, together with the correlation between strong stakeholder involvement and the achievement of empowerment and ownership, renders these partnerships more sustainable.

6 NEW FLOWS OF DECENTRALISED COOPERATION: SOUTH-SOUTH, TRIANGULAR AND TERRITORIAL COOPERATION

Northuth cooperation based on a top-down aid-centered approach has been long overcome by new horizontal modalities where all partners have something to teach and to learn. **New flows of decentralised cooperation have emerged in the last few years: South-South and triangular cooperation are two of them.** Both can be regarded as a means of achieving efficient and cost-effective ways of disseminating development solutions. In Europe, territorial cooperation has been developed for more than 25 years. There, partnerships and networks of local and regional governments share strategies and experiences in order to improve the impact of sustainable development policies.

This chapter analyses the validity and viability of these new flows, with their pros and cons, strengths and weaknesses. The aim is to capitalise on the elements that bring added value to these decentralised cooperation models through the analysis of real experiences.

South-South decentralised cooperation

South-South decentralised cooperation is a cooperation model with enormous added value. As pointed out in the previous chapter, decentralised cooperation is approached in a more efficient way when the exchange of experiences and the transfer of knowledge are based on horizontal partnerships between equals, whether bilateral, multilateral or through a network.

> Think for example about the strategy to fight against poverty carried out by a province in Ecuador, where the poverty line is set at 111 USD per month per person, and those of the most developed countries, regions and municipalities in Latin America such as Chile (127 USD), Brazil (130 USD), Mexico (184 USD) or Uruguay (206 USD)[9]. Now compare these strategies to those developed by the regions and municipalities of Spain, where the threshold reaches 750.05 USD[10].

It is clear that local and regional governments from the North can offer a great deal of knowledge and resources to their peers from the South. However, they operate in substantially different contexts. Indeed, their competences and fields of intervention might be very similar: we are talking about economic development, protection of the environment, education, health, social welfare and even about poverty reduction. But the priorities that local and regional governments have to deal with, and the strategies underpinning their policies, differ enormously from one territory to another. In South-South cooperation models, the idea of cooperation between equals becomes even more meaningful because partners operate in comparable contexts and address shared problems.

Priorities are different, whether in the field of food security, access to housing and basic services, social protection, employment, reproductive health or education. The policies to be developed are consequently different as well.

> Policies aiming to support informal female workers and microbusinesses led by women in Curitiba (Brazil)[11] will be more easily transposable to the reality of San Salvador (El Salvador) than those aimed at promoting female employability in Turin (Italy)[12].

The experiences and knowledge generated in the South, which are as valid and innovative as those generated in the North, will be easier to transfer to other realities that are closer from an economic, social, cultural and political point of view.

Local and regional governments and their associations in different areas of the world have been very dynamic in the last few years in terms of defining South-South cooperation initiatives. Though very diverse, these initiatives have mainly focused on the exchange of experiences, the transfer of knowledge and technology, mutual learning, the mobilisation of resources, the establishment of mechanisms for political dialogue and advocacy and the development of innovative pilot initiatives.

As a general rule, South-South cooperation partnerships focus on the strengthening of local governments' operative and institutional capacities, aiming to increase the efficiency of their public policies through the optimisation of the available resources and the participation of all territorial stakeholders.

In this sense, the networks of local and regional governments have played an increasingly relevant role. They are the ideal framework for the promotion of dialogue amongst local and regional governments, the capitalisation and replication of experiences, the joining of forces for political advocacy and communication with other international actors.

Many interesting experiences of networks that have promoted South-South decentralised cooperation have been developed in the different regions of the world. These networks are most often integrated by cities. Some of the examples are presented below.

Mercociudades

Mercociudades[13] is the oldest Latin American city network. Since 1991 this platform has defended the interests of the associated cities in the framework of a process of regional integration and strengthened their operative and institutional capacities to operate in the national and international spheres. These objectives have been developed based on a South-South cooperation approach.

> **Source:** *Mercociudades*
> *http://www.mercociudades.org/*

[9] *Panorama Social de América Latina 2014, CEPAL, Diciembre 2014.*
[10] *Encuesta de condiciones de Vida 2014, Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Mayo de 2015.*
[11] *http://curitiba.dieese.org.br/index.php*
[12] *These two examples and some of the ideas pointed out in this section are to be found in FERNÁNDEZ DE LOSADA, A. "La cooperación Sur-Sur con enfoque territorial, el nuevo paradigma de la cooperación descentralizada en el marco de la nueva Agenda post-2015". Revista Desarrollo y Cooperación Nº 37. Instituto Complutense de Desarrollo y Cooperación. Universidad Complutense de Madrid. 2016.*

[13] *http://www.mercociudades.org/*

Partnership for Democratic Local Governance in Southeast-Asia

The Partnership for Democratic Local Governance in Southeast-Asia DELGOSEA was launched in March 2010 and is co-funded by the European Commission and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. DELGOSEA has specialised in working with LGAs, local authorities, NGOs and academic institutions in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia, with the aim of fostering city partnerships through a network of local and regional governments to create a transnational exchange of good practices and capacity building. In their work we can find toolboxes and other materials on how to replicate best practices with the help of the authorities of the territory where the project has been successfully implemented.

In August 2016, a workshop on waste management organised by DELGOSEA took place in Siem Reap. Authorities from Marinika City presented the successful Eco-Savers Project, an innovative recycling scheme drawing on the cooperation with local schools to help collect recyclable waste, to deal with the problem of household waste and encourage environmental awareness in the younger generation. The presentation of the project, which has been replicated by four of the DELGOSEA pilot cities and proved successful in many countries, gave new ideas to the more than 70 representatives of DELGOSEA member organisations, international experts and Cambodian local governments who attended the meeting.

> **Source:** *DELGOSEA News. http://delgosea.eu/cms/News/Good-Practices-in-Waste-Management-from-Indonesia-and-the-Philippines*

CITYNET

CITYNET was created in 1987 in response to the needs of growing cities in the Asia Pacific, in order to improve the sustainability of cities through cooperative links and partnerships. The network of cities is supported by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Programme for Human Settlements UN-Habitat. It has grown to include 131 municipalities, NGOs, private companies and research centres.

Aware of the importance of experience exchange and strengthening of capacities, CITYNET has developed the Citynet Services. Through this platform, members conduct sustainable learning exchanges across the network in the form of technical assistance, study visits, and/or city-to-city partnerships. Its members are able to support their ongoing local development interventions while learning from other peers and improving their technical capacities.

For example, Sidoarjo Regency visited Seoul National University Boramae Medical Center in September 2016 to look into the Center's best practices in health care and hospital management. Since then, the two cities have signed a cooperation agreement on improving the local health service delivery in Sidoarjo through technical cooperation. Among the first concrete steps is a fellowship program where Sidoarjo's medical doctors will visit Seoul City.

> **Source:** *www.citynet-ap.org*

Africités

South-South cooperation can also be promoted through the organisation of regular summits. This is the case for the Africities Summit which is organised every three years by United Cities and Local Governments Africa (UCLGA). With a focus on decentralisation policies in Africa, the event has become an opportunity for African local authorites to evaluate the implementation of such policies. A central theme is determined for each summit, around which a strategic debate is built about what needs to be done with immediate effect at the local level to address the emergency of service delivery, shelter, economic opportunities, safe and affordable mobility and more.

> **Source:** *http://www.africities2015.org/?q=summit*

Apart from defending their interests through networks, local and regional governments are now building South-South cooperation relationships with their peers in their own regions and in other continents. This dynamic is widespread in emergent economies such as Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Turkey, South Africa, China or South Korea.

Mozambique and Brazil decentralised international cooperation

Brazil and Mozambique have forged a strong relationship in the field of decentralised cooperation. From January 2013 through to June 2015, a city-to-city peer learning project built on former engagements was developed thanks to the funding and support received from the European Commission, the Norwegian Government, Cities Alliance and the City of Barcelona.

The project sought to improve the management of local development in terms of effective governance, sustainability and participation to extend the population's right to the city. It involved six cities from Brazil and eight cities from Mozambique. The cooperation also sought to improve the institutional capacities of local authorities to manage development, consolidating them as development agents at a local level and as actors of development on national and international levels in the sphere of South-South decentralised cooperation. Followingthe conclusion of the project, participating cities have maintained their cooperation, and contacts and negotiations have continued.

> **Source:** *City to City. A guide to the UCLG learning universe. UCLG https://www.learning.uclg.org/sites/default/files/c2c-web.pdf*

It is also important to highlight the dynamism of local and regional government associations as regards the establishment of South-South cooperation relations.

The Centre for Leadership and Governance (SCLG) of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) in 2015 launched an ambitious new learning and development initiative, together with the country's leading tertiary institutions. The SALGA Centre for Leadership and Governance (SCLG) offers almost 2000 local government leaders and managers from South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (which includes 15 States) the opportunity to be trained and provided with the tools to help them steer the local government sector to deliver on its development mandate. The SCLG's purpose moves away from more formalistic approaches to skills and capacity development towards embracing alternative methodologiesthat seek to work more in the peer-to-peer space.

> **Source:** *Capacity and Institution Building Working Group. UCLG http://www.cib-uclg.org/news/launch-salga-centre-leadership-and-governance*

Despite the successful experiences mentioned above and the enormous added value of South-South decentralised cooperation, it is also necessary to adopt a critical perspective. It is important to analyse if this cooperation model allows for more efficient relations amongst the partners or if, on the contrary, it experiences the same contradictions as the traditional models of decentralised cooperation (such as the development of vertical relations amongst partners). Is South-South decentralised cooperation efficient per se? Are the impacts always positive or, on the contrary, could it generate debatable effects similar to the ones that once affected the North-South cooperation models based on an aid-centered approach?

Even though contexts are more similar, in South-South relations asymmetries still exist, particularly as far as resources are concerned. The conditions of local and regional governments in Brazil, South Africa and Mexico differ completely from those of Mozambique, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, Bolivia and other countries with less resources available.

Decentralisation processes developed in federal countries like Brazil, Mexico or India have been very relevant and their sub-national governments now have greater political weight and financial and technical resources. These conditions cannot be enjoyed by sub-national governments in most developing countries, which are usually much more centralised and clearly lack financial resources, hence provoking institutional constraints and operative weaknesses.

For this reason, as occurs in North-South relations, this asymmetry could end up becoming an aid-centered vertical relation and creating supremacy of the most developed partner over the least developed one. There exists the risk that South-South decentralised cooperation imposes models and practices that are not adapted to local contexts and to the resources and capacities of the least developed partner[14].

Another risk this cooperation model entails is the fragmentation or dispersion of efforts. This can be prevented through a strategic approach that focuses on those fields of specialisation that can create added value.

To sum up: the outcomes of decentralised cooperation will be positive as long as this is linked to the territorial approach. An effort to strengthen the institutional, financial and operative capacities of sub-national governments is paramount, if the aim is for them to become key actors of the development of their territories and to articulate the needs of their territorial stakeholders.

Triangular decentralised cooperation

Triangular decentralised cooperation is based on cooperation schemes between local and regional governments of different countries from the Global South that count on the support of one or more local and regional governments from the Global North.

When several LRGs from the North are involved, synergies and mutual cooperation will be developed as well amongst them in a North-North approach.

The cooperation schemes are very similar to those of South-South cooperation and of horizontal decentralised cooperation partnerships in general (territorial, agency and network modalities). The initiatives foster the exchange of experiences, the transfer of knowledge and technology, mutual learning or the development of innovative pilot actions, aiming to strengthen the operative and institutional capacities of the participating local and regional governments.

Triangular decentralised cooperation is a good example of the intense participation of local and regional governments in the globalisation process and of their capacity to act in different cultural and socio-institutional contexts.

The EU has fostered triangular decentralised cooperation for many years. During the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2007-2013, the EU launched the thematic programme 'Non-State Actors and Local Authorities,' whose objectives included the promotion and funding of multi-country, multi-region and international initiatives.

AL-LAs Network

The project AL-Las, linking local authorities of the European Union and Latin America, was born thanks to the European Union thematic programme 'Non-State Actors and Local Authorities.' The AL-LAs network[15] of Latin American cities is led by the Government of the City of Mexico and counts on the support of the EU and two European city networks (Cités Unies France[16] and Fondo Andaluz de Solidaridad Internacional). Through this project, a common space for dialogue and exchange was created around the international relations of local governments. Different development models have been shared, strategies strengthened and more visibility at the local and global levels has been achieved.

> *Source:* AL-Las https://www.proyectoallas.net/about_en

[14] *La cooperación Sur-Sur con enfoque territorial, el nuevo paradigma de la cooperación descentralizada en el marco de la nueva Agenda Post 2015. Revista Española de Desarrollo y Cooperación, nº 37, Instituto. Universitario de Desarrollo y Cooperación, Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Enero de 2016.*

[15] https://www.proyectoallas.net/
[16] http://www.cites-unies-france.org/

However, this multi-regional goal has not been included in the current iteration of this thematic programme (Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020). The programme has changed the focus to initiatives developed in individual countries and to the Strategic Partnership Agreements concluded with several regional and global networks and platforms (United Cities and Local Governments UCLG, PLATFORMA, UCLG Africa, UCLG Asia-Pacific UCLG AS-PAC, Commonwealth Local Government Forum CLGF and Association Internationale des Maires Francophones AIMF).

Territorial cooperation

As developed in the next chapter, many local and regional governments have understood the importance of articulating the participation of the main territorial stakeholders as a key element of their decentralised cooperation relations. Some have found an inspiring example in the EU's Territorial Cooperation model fostered in the framework of the EU Cohesion Policy.

This kind of cooperation is called integral cooperation by some, because it takes into account all dimensions and stakeholders of the territory, thus approaching territories from an integral, multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder perspective. The partnership initiatives include the main territorial stakeholders: public authorities, CSOs, the private sector, philanthropy, academia and knowledge-based organisations etc. They do not only seek the exchange and mutual support between partners, but also synergies with territorial stakeholders, who are also expected to exchange, open new spaces for collaboration and even develop new markets, particularly for micro- and small- and medium-sized enterprises. The focus is on strengthening the participation of those stakeholders in the sustainable development of their territories.

European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)

European Territorial Cooperation has become a cornerstone of the construction of a common European space. It helps ensure that borders are not barriers, brings Europeans closer together, helps solve common problems, facilitates the sharing of ideas and assets, and encourages strategic work towards common goals. Its success is proved by the fact that its budget has gone from €1.1bn in 1990 to €10.1bn for the period 2014-2020.

ETC has brought together local and regional governments, private companies, CSOs, universities and other stakeholders from all around Europe for the design and implementation of projects in a wide range of fields: environment, culture, infrastructures, employment or education, for example. It has allowed the creation of a cross-border hospital between Catalonia and France, the integration of the Roma in the labour market in the Bihor-Hajdu-Bihar Euroregion on the border between Hungary and Romania, and the transformation of heritage into an opportunity in cities of 9 European countries, amongst the hundreds of regional projects that have received support from the EU.

> **Source:** *European Territorial Cooperation. Building Bridges Between People. European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy. 2011 http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/information/pdf/brochures/etc_book_lr.pdf*

Integral cooperation, by the Union of Iberoamerican Capital Cities

Public decentralised cooperation between Iberoamerican cities has been going on for more than thirty years. Throughout the years, different methodologies have been put in place for the joint development of these cities: city twinning, the European Commission's URB-AL programme, UN-Habitat's city-to-city programmes, technical cooperation, South-South cooperation, city networks, the UNDP ART programme or indirect cooperation with local public funds through NGOs.

Indirect cooperation now builds on all these past experiences and proposes a new methodology based on strategic, efficient and complementary cooperation actions and programmes at local, regional and national level, that rely on a global citizenship actively committed to their governments' development policies. Territories become the cornerstone of the different actions, where actions lasting 2-4 years are implemented. These actions are part of a global framework that defines priorities, actors, fields, tools and actions, which might be complemented by new initiatives and further funding as the projects are implemented. All actions are guided by a set of ten principles: 1.Motivation, 2. Horizontality, 3. Participation and global citizenship, 4. SDGs, 5. Equity, Inclusion, equality and sustainability, 6. Complementarity, 7. Continuity of processes, 8. Use of new technologies, 9. Networking, and 10. International advocacy.

> **Source:** *Cooperación integral. UCCI http://ciudadesiberoamericanas.org/cooperacion-integral/*

7 NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT AT TERRITORIAL LEVEL: LRGs, CSOs, PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE KNOWLEDGE SECTOR

The territorial approach to decentralised cooperation fosters the opportunity to involve all stakeholders in partnerships led by LRGs. The final part of the previous chapter pointed out the growing number of local and regional governments who promote, lead and articulate the participation of territorial stakeholders within their decentralised cooperation partnerships. This is called integral or territorial cooperation.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this Study also mentioned the existing consensus on the essential role these stakeholders play towards the sustainable development of their own territories. The 2030 Agenda and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation are clearly in line with this statement.

I-STEPS: harmonization of territorial development partners

The initiative 'Innovation in Sustainable Territorial Partnerships' (I-STEPS) has been one of UNDP ART's mechanisms for supporting the harmonisation of decentralised cooperation partners and the promotion of Sustainable Human Development on the local level using the existing frameworks established by UNDP ART in the countries. The municipalities of Barcelona and Bilbao (Spain), Milan (Italy) and the Basque Country region have been part of the initiative since its beginnings. On the ground, I-STEPS has facilitated several activities and quick impact projects in Lebanon and Ecuador.

This project has allowed the matching of local needs with the resources available among I-STEPS partners in terms of territorial specialisation, know-how, technical support, and financial contribution with endogenous local development processes. In Ecuador and Lebanon, partnerships were established, and capacity-building processes in priority territories initiated, in

support of key initiatives that boost critical local development processes. Such activities include the productive matrix change in Ecuador -changing the way Ecuador produces and consumes to improve wealth distribution- and responding to the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon by improving sustainable access to water for vulnerable populations through the definition and implementation of a new national water management strategy.

Throughout these phases, I-STEPS has brought together local, national and global stakeholders. In this way, it is contributing to SDG implementation on all levels.

To reinforce this potential, think tanks that are part of the I-STEPS initiative are gathering and systematising ongoing successful development practices, processes, and policies in I-STEPS territories in order to promote and facilitate knowledge sharing with other countries and partners.

> **Source:** *UNDP ART - 2015-2016 in Review*
> *https://issuu.com/artpublications/docs/art_eng-_web*

It is also recommended that base decentralised cooperation should be based on the experience of the so -called Quadruple Helix; a model that links innovation and development in a framework in which government, the private sector, academia and civil society participants work together to co-create development and

drive structural changes far beyond the scope of what any one organisation or person could do alone. In Europe, as part of the EU's Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3)[17], several regions are working towards the consolidation of an effective regional innovation system.

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[17] http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/smart_specialisation_en.pdf

BUSINESS

ACADEMIA

GOVERNMENT

COMMUNITY
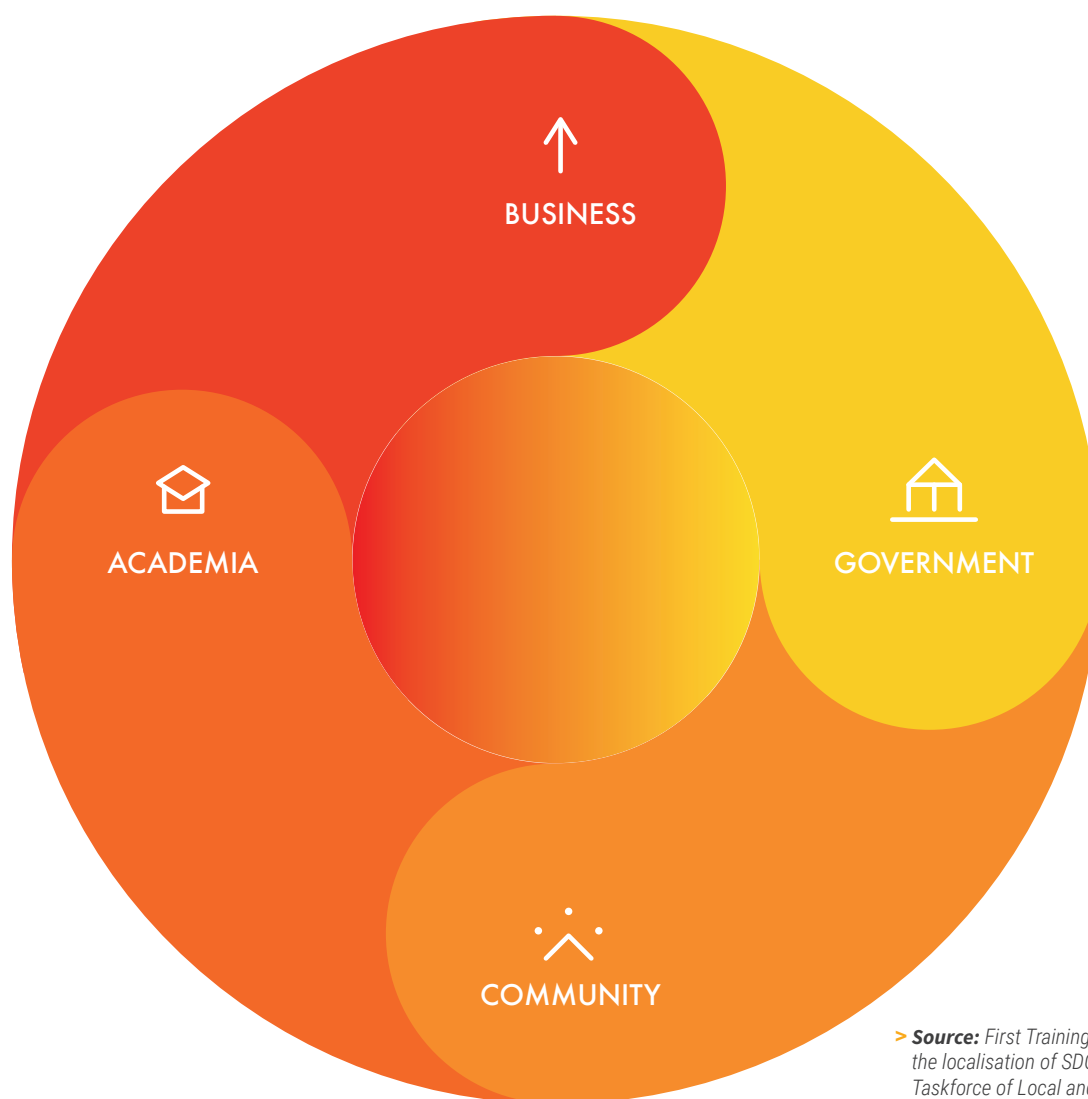
> **Source:** *First Training Module on the localisation of SDGs. Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, UNDP and UN Habitat, 2017.*

The involvement of territorial stakeholders should respond to different approaches and motivations depending on their capacity to contribute to sustainable development. The following paragraphs demonstrate how civil society organisations, (CSOs) the private sector, academia and knowledge-based institutions can contribute to effective territorial development.

Civil society organisations (CSOs)

In the achievement of territorial development through decentralised cooperation, NGOs working in the field of development (NGDOs) should not be the only organsiations considered. On the contrary, all CSOs have their place in this process, including community-based organisations, organisations for the protection of the environment, women, youth, students, migrants or workers, or other institutions working in the fields of education, health, sports, culture, etc.

In some countries — such as in Spain, Italy and France for the European case –, a very strong relationship between local and regional governments and NGDOs has been developed. Local and regional governments have been supporting these organisations

for a long time, in the framework of their development cooperation policies. Indeed, they have financed their cooperation projects in other countries, as well as their development education and awareness-raising initiatives. As observed above, this contribution has been called indirect cooperation; a model that, beyond contributing to the development of the least developed countries, reinforces the social fabric of solidarity institutions of the global North.

Although indirect cooperation offers CSOs the possibility to create and implement their own ideas and projects, thus fostering their involvement and ownership, this model presents some shortages. Indirect cooperation may lead to the fragmentation of the action, as different programmes and projects are being developed at the same time in a myriad of territories and in a number of differnet fields. This may in turn provoke parallel dynamics and inconsistency amongst actions, and even a loss of value in terms of decentralisation and investment in local capacities. Strong partnerships bringing together LRGs and their civil society organisations offer the possibility to remedy these shortages and create shared strategies of inclusive and territorial nature, thus fostering collaboration and ownership on all sides.

Tuscany – Kasserine partnership

Migrants have become crucial stakeholders for the development of the territories of both origin and destination, and their added-value in decentralised cooperation projects cannot be doubted. The region of Tuscany in Italy and the Governorate of Kasserine in Tunisia have developed solid relations since the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between both Governments in 2011. In the context of the project 'Support to the health system of the Governorate of Kasserine' that was executed between 2013 and 2015 thanks to the financial contribution of the Italian region, a specific project was implemented aiming at achieving more efficiency in the child-maternal health programs in Tunisia, through a development strategy involving the health systems of both Tunisia and Italy.

The project focused on marginalised areas of Tunisia and involved the work of several public authorities and CSOs from both regions: Croissant Rouge Tunisien – Delegation of Kasserine, the Regional Hospital of Kasserine, the Regional Health Direction of Kasserine, the University Hospital Meyer/Center of Global Health, the Cooperation for the Development of Emergent Countries (COSPE), the Association for Environmental Protection in Kasserine (ARPEK), the Euro-African Partnership, the Associazione Pontes and Nosotras Onlus, paying special attention to the involvement of the Tunisian community in Tuscany.

Several actions were developed during the project, such as the support to Tunisian local associations in the field of health education and promotion, and most particularly aimed at women given their crucial role in the dissemination of information on health. New equipment was also offered to the Tunisian medical centers and medical and health staff were able to participate in different training sessions offered by Italian and Tunisian experts living in Italy.

Source: Migration for Development. Project Pour une meilleure efficacité des programmes de santé maternoinfantile en Tunisie à travers une stratégie de développement qui implique les systèmes socio-sanitaires Tunisiens et Italiens.

> *Source:* *http://www.migration4development.org/sites/default/files/ health_for_all.pdf*

The private sector

The private sector also plays a key role in sustainable territorial development. The contribution of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises to the creation of jobs, the dynamisation of the economy, the definition of new solutions and the transfer of innovation is of key importance.. Bigger companies – multi-nationals included – as well as employer organisations, chambers of commerce and trade associations, can make substantial contributions too. They provide sound mechanisms for accountability and transparency anchored in respect for human rights, and the existing international, national and sub-national legal frameworks are guaranteed.

Including profit-seeking organisations such as businesses in the field of development cooperation is quite a challenge, all the more so in the particular field of decentralised cooperation. However, getting it right can bring significant added value to these partnerships. Businesses can contribute with knowledge, technology, innovation, new solutions and flexibility. Additionally, decentralised cooperation partners can foster business exchanges and the transfer of technology and know-how, and even open new markets for local companies.

The Global Compact

The UN Global Compact is a platform that promotes strategic actions by the private sector to advance broader societal goals, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with an emphasis on collaboration and innovation. Through the Global Compact's local networks, companies can make local connections with other businesses and stakeholders (NGOs, government and academia) and receive guidance to put their sustainability commitments into action. The platform also serves to contribute with good practices so that other companies can find inspiration for their policies and actions.

Similarly, the Global Compact's Human Rights and Business Dilemmas Forum aims to enhance the collective understanding of human rights themes and to stimulate discussion about the dilemmas responsible multinational companies may face in their efforts to respect and support human rights when operating in emerging economies. Questions are posed such as "When operating in countries with a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and poor health care systems, how does business implement an effective and responsible disease management programme that respects the right to privacy and ensures non-discrimination against employees?", and tips are given to this respect. The Forum also provides a series of case studies demonstrating realworld dilemmas faced by companies and their efforts to manage or resolve them in a responsible way.

> **Source:** *https://www.unglobalcompact.org/ and http://hrbdf.org/*

Although it is not the focus of this Study, it is important to mention that many voices point out the need to review the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and work on the shared responsibility of businesses in the achievement of sustainable development in the territories where they operate. Businesses should not channel all their contributions through philanthropic means but, instead, apply sustainability criteria in their everyday job as for-profit organisations: creating decent jobs, linking their economic activity with local development, fostering the development of new solutions and technology and complying with the applicable fiscal co-responsibility schemes.

Sharing responsibilities in the development process also fosters commitment and ownership amongst the businesses concerned and ensures a more sustainable involvement. The same happens when new channels for business cooperation are created because it allows businesses to operate in their natural environment: the market. The involvement of the business sector will not depend on the philanthropic will of companies but on their understanding that ethical business relations and the generation of employment and livelihood opportunities can contribute to a shared sustainable development.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have become a crucial tool for public service provision and infrastructure development at territorial level. They have recently been recognised as necessary for the implementation and achievement of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the SDGs. PPPs can contribute to development as long as they result in improved outcomes for end users and the citizenship, including improved service quality, accessibility and affordability.

This being said, access to private funding and advanced technologies are necessary for the provision of services and infrastructures, let alone in LRGs in developing countries, where resources are generally quite scarce. There are many opportunities, but several challenges have been highlighted as well. Communitas, through series of multi-stakeholder dialogues, harvested the following: "distortion of the public agenda, loss of local control over critical infrastructure and services, and co-option of government or civil society partners; commoditisation of commons; lack of strong local legal/regulatory frameworks and the need for institutional capacity-building; lack of transparency and accountability, including the need for improved monitoring and evaluation; inadequate investment in maintenance; and displacement of public employees[18]".

Many LRGs in developing countries, however, might not have developed the necessary capacities to conclude sound PPP agreements with the private sector. For this reason, decentralised cooperation (more specifically, technical cooperation) is a very suitable tool so that experienced LRGs and companies contribute in developing territories with new financial, legal and technical knowledge to effectively negotiate, implement, monitor, and enforce PPPs with the private sector, also pointing at creating an enabling environment.

[18] *Public-Private Partnerships for Urban Infrastructure: The Potential Benefits and Risks Concept Note for the June 7, 2016 Convening. Communitas Coalition http://communitascoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/Concept-Note-June-7-Convening-Public-Private-Partnerships-for-Urban-Infrastructure.docx.pdf*

The 2015 Infrascope: Evaluating the environment for public private partnerships in Africa

The 2015 Infrascope report for Africa is the first edition of an informational tool and benchmarking index that assesses the capacity of countries in Africa to carry out sustainable public-private partnerships (PPPs) in infrastructure based on a methodology developed in 2009 for Latin American countries. The index was built by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) and is supported financially by the World Bank Group.

The 2015 Infrascope underlines the relevance of local and regional governments in the management and implementation of public-private partnerships. In fact, while all countries allow subnational PPPs, and a considerable number have already been carried out in Nigeria, Egypt, Cameroon, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and South Africa, it is also true that technical capacity is weaker at local levels. In addition, regulations are more complex and municipal authorities are considered higher-risk by credit risk agencies, which poses serious threats to the good execution of projects. It is thus clear that strengthening the local governments' capacities is crucial. Decentralised cooperation becomes a particularly suitable tool for the reinforcement of these capacities.

> **Source:** *2015 Infrascope Africa https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=Afric-aInfrascope2015*

Another field of study which still has a long way to go is the link between the social economy and decentralised cooperation. Social businesses, cooperative businesses and mutual companies play an increasingly important role in the development of solutions for sustainable development. They operate in many different fields: education, health, sports, environment, urban planning, citizen participation, welfare and social care… and the amount of economic activity, jobs and opportunities they generate is constantly increasing.

Opening new ways of collaboration with this sector in the territories involved in decentralised cooperation partnerships would contribute to addressing shared problems in need of innovative solutions.

Urban rural policies for decent jobs in middle-sized cities. Pasto, Colombia

The Colombian city of Pasto held the forum South-South and Triangular Cooperation 'Urban-rural policies for decent jobs in middle-sized cities', organised in 2015 by the Pasto City Council, United Cities and Local Governments, the International Labour Organisation ILO and Connective Cities. The forum involved experts in social economy as well as local representatives from Santa Fe, Rosario, Cuenca, Ibarra, Tulcán, Montúfar, Barquisimeto, Pereira, Acapulco, Nariño, Lleida, Porto Alegre and Cochabamba. Based on the exchange of local experiences, it was demonstrated that the social economy is an appropriate platform to build strong relations in terms of production, distribution, consumption, funding, decent job creation and rural urban links based on justice, cooperation and reciprocity. The importance of organising local networks of public and private stakeholders was also highlighted in order to strengthen the dialogue mechanisms, open cooperation to other stakeholders and implement innovative funding instruments, amongst others.

> **Source:** *Economía Social y Solidaria y Cooperación Sur-Sur. Nuevos desafíos y lecciones aprendidas. Organización Internacional del Trabajo. Compilación de artículos cortos sobre la cooperación sur-sur. Academia sobre Economía Social y Solidaria. 2016*
> *https://goo.gl/2WoHH4*

Academia and knowledge-based institutions

Academia and knowledge-based organisations (public and private universities, research and technology transfer centres, think tanks etc.) are very powerful actors in decentralised cooperation partnerships. They possess knowledge and scientific evidence that can help strengthen shared sustainable development processes. Indeed, they can play a major role in the disaggregation of data at territorial level. This need has been made clear in the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs – while data was presented only at national level for the monitoring and evaluation of the MDGs, more emphasis has been placed on the need to disaggregate it by territories in order to "leave no one behind". In addition, with their capacities and tools to generate specific data, academia and knowledge-based organisations can contribute to qualitative monitoring and assessment, including the identification of relevant indicators and metrics.

Academia and knowledge-based organisations can also contribute to political advocacy initiatives. Last but not least, they can foster initiatives with their peers in other countries, such as the creation of platforms for the capitalisation and replication of successful experiences, the exchange of students and researchers and the launch of joint research projects.

The Phoenix Project. Wales and Namibia

With the support of the Welsh Government and a budget of 500.000£, this partnership between the Cardiff University and the University of Namibia provides opportunities for shared learning and development. This is achieved though training, the sharing of educational resources, support to staff, the organisation of student exchanges and the provision of information technology support among both universities. The project covers and benefits all departments of both universities and their support services, and contributes to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Phoenix Project has been conceived with the pourpose of bringing sustainable improvement to the lives of the peoples of Namibia and Wales by building educational capacities.

> **Source:** *Phoenix Project*
> *http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/phoenix-project/about-us*

8 TECHNICAL COOPERATION, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE SHARING AND LEARNING AS KEY ISSUES FOR EFFECTIVE DECENTRALISED COOPERATION

As has been highlighted throughout this study, strong consensus exists on the fact that the main added value of decentralised cooperation is its power to strengthen the capacities of local and regional governments, as well as those of their territorial stakeholders.

New decentralised cooperation modalities focus on this through different practices such as technical cooperation, experience exchange, the transfer of know-how and learning and benchmarking strategies.

There are several tools for the strengthening of both the operational and the institutional capacities of LRGs. Some of them are presented below, together with case studies. It is important to insist on the fact that the flows of knowledge and experience aiming to reinforcing capacities are bi-directional: they occur from the North to the South, but also from the South to the North or from the South to the South. LRGs from developed countries certainly have a lot to learn from their peers from middle-income and developing countries, for example in the field of citizen participation. In fact, the impact of the global crisis on developed countries in recent years has proved the importance of the experiences from the South in crucial matters such as poverty reduction, endogenous development or fight against corruption.

Technical cooperation

Technical cooperation is one of the main mechanisms for the transfer of knowledge and experiences amongst local and regional governments, aimed at the strengthening of capacities, the improvement of internal organisation and the quality of service provision. A requirement for technical cooperation to be efficient is for all LRGs involved to share the some of their main challenges, problems, needs, interests or solutions.

Technical cooperation focuses on the human dimension. It is the people who have the knowledge and experience. Consequently, technical cooperation involves the design of programmes by virtue of which specialised local staff, working for one of the partner,s give support to their peers who work for the other partner in the development of concrete policies or actions. Support usually entails the transfer of knowledge and experiences or the follow-up of their performance, even in person.

Of additional added value in technical cooperation is its strong contribution to the mainstreaming of development cooperation policies in local and regional governments and its support to policy coherence. Technical cooperation strategies make international relations and cooperation staff work together with the staff of other departments such as environment, local economic development, urban planning and housing, health or education, amongst others. Knowledge and experiences are thus exchanged also within the same local or regional government, which is very positive for the institution.

Technical cooperation is one of the most common tools used in the framework of the territorial partnership and agency modalities.

The South-South Decentralised Technical Cooperation Programme

The Federal Government of Brazil decided to support local governments in the definition of South-South technical cooperation strategies and initiatives. The South-South Decentralised Technical Cooperation Programme launched by the Secretariat of Federal Affairs, Brazil's Cooperation Agency and some city networks, has given Brazilian local governments the possibility of receiving funding for the implementation of South-South cooperation projects with their peers in other Latin American cities or cities in other continents such as Africa. This programme has allowed for the implementation of projects such as the Technical Support for Structuring the Citizen Security and Violence Observatory in Morón, in collaboration with the City Hall of Canoas and the project Integrated Development of Services for Citizen Support, between Curitiba and Rosario.

> **Source:** *Programa de Cooperação Técnica Descentralizada Sul-Sul*
http://www4.planalto.gov.br/saf-projetos

Platforms for the exchange of experiences and the transfer of knowledge

In the last few decades, many initiatives have appeared targeted at promoting the exchange of experiences and the transfer of knowledge amongst LRGs. It is important, however, to make a difference between those platforms that are organised by LRGs in the framework of their collaboration networks and those programmes that are created and fostered by multilateral organisations such as the European Commission.

The exchange of experiences and the transfer of knowledge have become one of the main objectives of LRG networks. Most of them have designed specific mechanisms to promote these exchanges: telematics tools such as best practice databases or webinars, face-to-face meetings in the framework of public events or ad hoc workshops and seminars. During these meetings, network partners exchange in an informal way and a number of cooperation initiatives emerge from these exchanges.
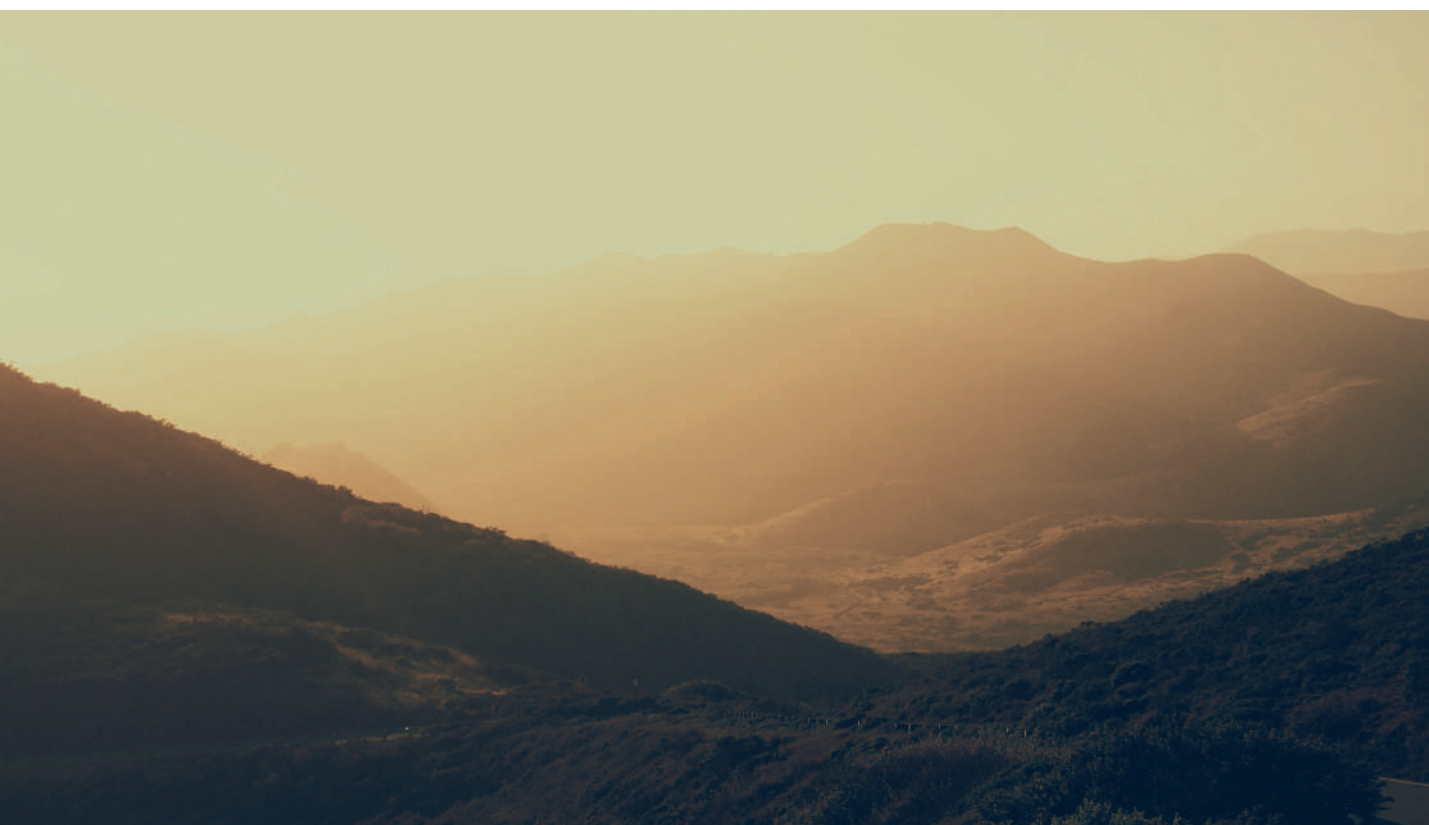
MedCities

MedCities is a network of Mediterranean cities created in Barcelona in November 1991 at the initiative of the Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme (METAP). The creation of MedCities resulted from METAP's objective of strengthening decentralised actions involving technical assistance as the best means of promoting awareness of urban environmental problems, and making those actions into a vehicle for empowering municipalities in developing countries in respect of management of urban environmental issues.

Aimed at achieving sustainable urban development, the main goals of the network, integrated by 43 local governments and their associations, are: 1) to develop the awareness of interdependence and common responsibility as regard policies of sustainable development, environmental conservation and social cohesion of the Mediterranean basin, 2) to reinforce the role, competences and resources (institutional, financial and technical) of local administrations in the adoption and implementation of sustainable local development policies, 3) to develop citizens' awareness and involvement in the sustainable development of their towns and cities, and 4) to develop policies for direct cooperation and partnership between partners and with other associations. In order to achieve this, all their projects are related to capacity-building and knowledge transfer in urban issues between the network's local governments.

> *Source:* *MedCities http://www.medcities.org/*

For a considerable period, multilateral organisations such as the European Commission or the UNDP have promoted the creation of spaces for the exchange of experiences and the transfer of knowledge amongst LRGs. The main programmes developed in the field of local and regional governance focus precisely on exchanging and transferring as the central axis of decentralised cooperation.

The EU "Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO-LA)," one of the main thematic programmes of the current Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020, is a clear example. Other landmark programmes are URBAL and territorial cooperation initiatives developed through the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI).

The Cross Border Cooperation Programme of the EU

Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) is a key element of the EU policy towards its neighbours. Given CBC's local character, it aims to ensure coherence between the actions financed by the CBC programmes and existing regional and local development plans in the concerned policy area. Thanks to the CBC, which is financially supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), local and regional governments from the EU and neighbour countries have been able to work jointly, with the national authorities and CSOs, sharing experiences and know how in a myriad of projects of different fields: environmental sustainability, economic growth and territorial development, cultural heritage and sustainable tourism, or promotion of human capital.

> **Source:** Cross Border Cooperation. European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations
https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/cross-border-cooperation_en

UNDP, in partnership with local governments networks, has also launched several initiatives such as the World Forum on Local Economic Development.

The World Forum of Local Economic Development

The World Forum of local Economic Development is an open working process that promotes dialogue on Local Economic Development, continues to strengthen a global alliance among engaged stakeholders, and promotes concrete cooperations at country and local level. The 4th Flobal Forum will be held in October 2017 in Praia, Cabo Verde, and national, regional and local government officials, practitioners and other stakeholders from all over the world will have the opportunity to debate about LED as an integral framework for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and face growing inequalities.

> **Source:** 4th World Forum on Local Economic Development. UCLG https://www.uclg.org/en/media/events/4th-world-forum-local-economic-development

Learning and benchmarking

Many decentralised cooperation partnerships address learning initaitives as an optimal tool to strengthen the capacities of LRGs. The main objective of learning strategies is to provide LRGs representatives, elected, managers and staff, with new and more accurated skills and knowledge to improve their capacities.

Learning initiatives usually focus on improving skills, like leadership, or capacities, in fields like planning, management or budgeting.. But they can also focus on providing new knowledge in the different fields of interest and responsibility of LRGs: climate change, resilience, social cohesion, human mobility, economic development etc.

Learning initiatives are more efficient when they build on the current experiences and knowledge of participants. Mutual learning goes far beyond the classicl top-down training methodologies, where the teacher transfers knowledge to the students, and carries out a facilitation process in which participants share, analyse, compare and learn through their own experiences.

Beyond receiving new skills and capacities, learning models based on sharing experiences and knowledge enable participants to understand their strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of their organisations, while incorporating important lessons learnt from peers. Thus, benchmaking is an optimal learning tool used worldwide to improve performance.

VNG International benchmarking model

VNG International developed the VNG International benchmarking model, a benchmarking methodology for local governments and other organisations in developing countries and countries in transition. The model is the result of practical experience with benchmarking and scientific research on benchmarking. Over five years of experience with the model have proven that it is a powerful instrument for capacity building of local governments and other organisations in developing countries and countries in transition.

The model consists of four stages. In the Collect stage information is collected about the performance of participating organisations on a certain topic. In the Compare stage the differences between the organisations are identified. In the Learn stage participants analyse these differences and learn from the good practices of other organisations. In the Improve stage organisations implement the learned practices and improve their performance.

The VNG International benchmark gives local authorities and other organisations insight into their achievements. It generates information on the effectiveness and efficiency of their policies and provides practical tools on how to improve their performance. It improves quality and reduces costs of public policies.

> **Source:** *www.vng-international.nl*

Some LRGs networks and agencies are currently providing high level learning platforms established in alliance with multilateral organisations (European Commission, UNDP, UN Habitat, etc.) or with other stakeholders like universities or CSOs. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) has recently launched a learning portal on the localisation of the SDGs.

First Training Module on the localisation of SDGs

Building on the partnership "on localising SDGs", the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, UNDP and UN Habitat have launched an introductory learning module on localising SDGs, targeted towards LRGs and other territorial stakeholders. The module is divided into four chapters that provide assets to LRGs to address the main challenges of the localisation process – awareness-raising and local stakeholders mobilization, advocacy, alignment and monitoring and reporting – and to achieve the SDGs at the local level.

> **Source:** *www.learning.uclg.org*

9 MONITORING EFFECTIVE DECENTRALISED COOPERATION TO CAPITALISE ON DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

Development cooperation projects should not be a one-time experience. Instead, their findings, as well as their successes and failures, should be used for further projects in the same territory and in others. Capitalisation is thus the key to learning lessons, replicating models and examples and/or adapting them to different realities. But even if capitalisation is very much encouraged, this is not the only aim of monitoring and evaluating decentralised cooperation.

In decentralised cooperation, monitoring entails all project partners tracking the ongoing project in terms of fulfillment of all actions devised and use of the resources allocated to these actions. But monitoring also involves assessing trends and risks, as well as taking new decisions on further strategies and actions to be taken in order to ensure progress. Evaluations provide a more extensive and in-depth assessment, based on the data collected throughout the monitoring process and additional information. They are usually made by independent actors, which confers a necessary external view and objectivity on the reports.

The object of the monitoring and evaluation tasks is obviously the given project. However, this project also needs to be contextualised in broader programmes and strategies, both at partnership level (if these programmes and strategies exist) and at partner level, with regard to their individual context (their own programmes and strategies aligned to those at national level).

Monitoring and evaluating require an important effort in terms of data collection and analysis, for which specific knowledge and resources are needed. Partners may be able to use data originated and/or collected by themselves and set the most adequate indicators according to their needs, priorities and capacities. However, local and regional governments of the least developed territories usually lack the capacity and resources necessary to perform this task. For this reason, they have to rely on data generated by their national governments, sometimes assisted by the UN in the set-up of data collection systems. For example, the UNDG endorsed the use of DevInfo to assist countries in monitoring progress in the MDGs. National Statistical Offices gathered at the UN have adopted a solid framework of a couple of hundred global indicators for monitoring progress in the implementation of the SDGs.

There is consensus that **global indicators will have to be completed with a regional, national and local ecosystem of indicators, including citizen-driven data.** Indeed, other powerful stakeholders should not be neglected when it comes to data generation and collection. CSOs and NGOs usually collect quality data through their own methods, while universities and research centres have the necessary techniques and instruments to generate scientific data which is difficult to obtain by a local or regional government. The power of Big Data accessed by the private sector is also emphasised.. In this context, decentralised cooperation partners should now establish a set of indicators that align with the global SDG indicators, to ensure that their programmes and projects contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

As higlighted in previous sections, involving stakeholders throughout the programming cycle ensures ownership, learning and sustainability of results. At the monitoring and evaluation stages they can also contribute with data collection and mobilisation of additional resources; as well as with a more objective, non-biased and critical approach to performance and results evaluation. However, permanent stakeholder engagement in monitoring and evaluation is hard to assume[19], which is the reason that the participation of stakeholders should be institutionalised through the set-up of boards or committees within the structure of each project partner. These bodies should be set up on an annual or biannual basis and collaborate in both the mid-term and the final evaluation of the project.

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[19] *Handbook on planning, monitoring and evaluating for development results. UNDP. 2009 http://web. undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/handbook/english/documents/pme-handbook.pdf*

The Catalan Development Cooperation Council

The Catalan Development Cooperation Council is the body that brings together the most relevant development cooperation actors of Catalonia, with the aim of giving a voice to their initiatives and proposals and controling the Government's action in this field. It is composed of several members of the different Government departments, NGDOs, trade unions, the private sector, universities, professional associations and other members of the civil society from the fields of gender, migration or youth. The Council participates in all policy stages, from planning to monitoring and evaluation.

> **Source:** *Consell de Cooperació al Desenvolupament*
> *https://goo.gl/tl8yDb*

It is important to determine the target audience for the monitoring and evaluation reports. While the reports submitted to these stakeholder boards or committees should be open for discussion and amendment, the final version of the reports is aimed at a broader audience in compliance with transparency and accountability requirements. These aspects are addressed in the following chapter.

Upon finalisation of a decentralised cooperation project, all partners should be ready to use the outcomes for future actions. Firstly, the project should be used for capitalisation purposes. Capitalisation will imply the collection of lessons learnt and orientations for replicating the project elsewhere or for elaborating new projects, either in the same institutions (whether working on the same partnership or not) or in others. Secondly, it is important to ensure that all data generated throughout the process is not used solely for the given project, but that is included in national data collection and analysis systems for further use. Thirdly, the monitoring and evaluation results should be internally disseminated within the partners' institutions with the aim of achieving policy coherence amongst the different departments.

10 ACCOUNTABILITY TO REINFORCE CITIZEN OWNERSHIP OF DECENTRALISED COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS

Because local and regional governments usually have competences over matters that affect the lives of citizens in a direct way (social cohesion, education, health), it is more likely that they will decide to get involved in decentralised cooperation projects. Different stakeholders will demand accountability to their public authorities if the project results are not satisfying enough, while good results will boost citizen ownership and confidence in this modality of development cooperation, and trigger their willingness to launch and participate in future projects of this kind.

In coherence with the ideas developed in the previous chapter, all stakeholders involved in a decentralised cooperation project should adopt the lessons learnt in the monitoring and evaluation reports in terms of project organisation and management.

In traditional aid-oriented development cooperation projects, the concept of 'mutual accountability' was coined as the "accountability between the providers and recipients of development cooperation, for the effectiveness of that cooperation in producing development results." Even though this is not completely applicable to decentralised cooperation – as the vertical nature provider-recipient of the relation should not define this kind of cooperation – there are some aspects which still apply.

Decentralised cooperation indeed reproduces some of the weaknesses of traditional development cooperation. Firstly, most commitments are voluntary and not-binding. As a consequence, they cannot be enforced; meaning that no action is taken against those who fail to meet their commitments. In addition, sometimes partners do not take enough time to clearly specify which commitments and goals are to be assumed by each actor; what indicators and targets will be used to assess if these commitments are achieved, and what consequences will arise from lack of commitment compliance. Thirdly, albeit not so obvious in decentralised cooperation, the lack of even-handedness amongst partners sometimes generates mistrust.

For all these reasons, accountability should be understood as an important element of the project at all its stages, which requires sound planning and should be taken seriously by partners. It is essential to remember that "accountability is not an end in itself, but a means for effective cooperation and thus for effective development results[20]." When necessary, for example when partners lack the capacity to carry out accountability tasks, partners can rely on third parties of mutual confidence, who will offer a valuable independent, objective view.

In addition, project partners should be held accountable for the success or failure of the project. Communication towards other stakeholders and citizens in general is a requirement. This is called social accountability and is actually the most rigorous model of accountability. Indeed, other stakeholders and citizens in general have intensified their calls for accountability. They have the right to know if public resources have been used in an efficient and successful manner, what results have been achieved, and the

impact and outcomes of these results on them and on the mid- and long-term development of their territories. Evaluations can thus provide responses and demonstrate achievements through credible and objective information.

Stakeholders enforcing their local or regional government's accountability have, however, different backgrounds and might expect different information. Financing bodies might require documents proving adequate financial performance, while they might not be so interested in the impact of the project on the territory and its citizens. Other public administrations might be more concerned about policy coherence and about actions and results that might interfere with their own competences. Citizens, NGOs and CSOs demand quality results at the lowest price in their own territories: in their families, households and communities, in the governance systems, in the environment. When it comes to development cooperation projects – particularly, when a certain verticality is perceived in the partner relationship – solid evidence of the impact on the territory of the more developed partner will be even more necessary.

Communicating

As a consequence, communication actions – and the particular message conveyed – will need to be adapted to each target group, underlining the benefits of the project at global level. The outcomes of the project might not be visible immediately after the conclusion of the project and some results might still not be ready for measurement. In this case, it is also crucial to make the stakeholders understand this and inform them about the fact that these future results will be included in an evaluation of impact at a specific moment in time.

Communicating the evaluation results of a decentralised cooperation project should not be a one-time action that might fall into oblivion some months later. On the contrary, it should be included in annual reports of the institution in order to be part of a more global evaluation. Transparency can also be promoted through the inclusion of all relevant information in open government data systems created by the partners individually, and/or in platforms created for the dissemination of decentralised cooperation project results at a more global scale.

Finally, the project outputs and outcomes, including the results of the accountability actions, should contribute to the identification of both positive and negative trends in the field of decentralised cooperation at national and international level. These trends should consequently be promoted and redressed, respectively, in order to nurture the ultimate goal of advancing human development. Apart from LRGs taking responsibility for their actions in the context of their decentralised cooperation projects and programs, they should use these results as a weapon for political advocacy, that is, for demanding more enabling environments (for instance, stronger decentralisation processes) to national governments and international organisations.

[20] Accountable and effective development cooperation in a post-2015 era. Background Study 3 Accountability for Development Cooperation. 2014 Development Cooperation Forum DCF GERMANY HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM. José Antonio Ocampo and Natalie Gómez Arteaga, Columbia University. March 2014 http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf13/dcf_germany_bkgd_study_3_global_accountability.pdf

11 CONCLUSIONS

Capitalising on the lessons learned and building upon the considerations outlined in the previous chapters, the following conclusions are highlighted in the hope that they can contribute to accelerating new generation of more effective and accountable decentralised cooperation modalities.

I. After decades of practice, general consensus on the concept of decentralised cooperation is much needed. Recognising it as a local or regional public policy on international development cooperation provides a broad and inclusive approach in which all modalities and practices can be accommodated.

II. A new generation of decentralised cooperation partnerships is emerging where knowledge and experience flow in different directions (North to South, South to South and South to North) and the territory is the node of exchanges among the core players of development led by their LRGs.

III. The new global agendas on sustainable development, especially the United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, should be acknowledged as the new roadmap for decentralised development cooperation.

IV. There is great potential to align decentralised cooperation with the principles of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. Capitalising on horizontal modalities of decentralised cooperation —territorial partnership, agency and network modalities — will improve the quality and the efficiency of results.

V. The territorial approach to sustainable development provides an excellent framework to articulate the new generation of decentralised cooperation partnerships. Enabling it requires multi-dimensional and integrated approaches that are anchored in policy coherence; take into account the necessary coordination and complementarity between the different levels of government operating in the territory (multi-level governance) and ensure the involvement and articulation of territorial stakeholders (multi-stakeholder approach).

VI. North-South cooperation based on a top-down aid-centred approach has been overtaken by new horizontal modalities where all partners have something to teach to and to learn from each other. South-South and triangular cooperation offer a new scope to decentralised cooperation that should be highlighted. However, asymmetries between partners should not be underestimated as they can turn these forms of cooperation into aid-centred vertical relations that should be avoided and prevented.

VII. The new generation of decentralised cooperation modalities is globally recognised as an efficient way of strengthening the capacities of LRGs as well as those of their territorial stakeholders. The added value of the different types of intervention such as technical cooperation, learning and benchmarking or the establishment of platforms for the exchange of experiences and the transfer of know-how should be underlined and enhanced.

VIII. The territorial approach to decentralised cooperation increases opportunities to engage all stakeholders. The modalities to engage each kind of stakeholder (civil society organisations, private sector, academia, philanthropy etc.) should cater to their specific capacities to contribute to the sustainable development of the given territory. It is advisable to build on the experience of new schemes such as the Quadruple Helix; a model that brings together innovation and development through the joint work of government, private sector, academia and civil society and aims to co-create development and drive structural changes.

IX. Monitoring and evaluating decentralised cooperation partnerships and initiatives is critical to drive actions, guarantee the proper use of allocated resources, improve results and capitalise on lessons learnt. In this context, raising awareness amongst local and regional elected representatives as well as strengthening local and regional government capacity for monitoring and review should be a priority.

X. To ensure more efficient social control, territorial stakeholders should be involved in the entire programming cycle of decentralised cooperation initiatives, including the monitoring and evaluation stages. With this aim, their capacities should be strengthened, appropriate participation mechanisms established and transparent access to information guaranteed.

XI. Accountability to citizens and territorial stakeholders, as well as mutual accountability amongst partners should be seen as an inherent asset of efficient decentralised cooperation.

XII. National governments and multilateral organisations have a significant role to play in setting enabling institutional, policy and financial framework to help unleash the potential of decentralised cooperation.

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AIMF	Association internationale des Maires francophones
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
CSO	Civil society organisation
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
LGA	Local government association
LRG	Local and regional government
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NUA	New Urban Agenda
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

GOOD PRACTICES

CPMR

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions brings together some 160 Regions from 25 States from the European Union and beyond.

Representing about 200 million people, the CPMR campaigns in favour of a more balanced development of the European territory. It operates both as a think tank and as a lobby for Regions.

Through its extensive network of contacts within the EU institutions and national governments the CPMR has, since its creation in 1973, been targeting its action towards ensuring that the needs and interests of its Member Regions are taken into account in policies with a high territorial impact.

It focuses mainly on social, economic and territorial cohesion, maritime policies and blue growth, and accessibility. European governance, energy and climate change, neighbourhood and development also represent important areas of activity for the association.

PLATFORMA

PLATFORMA is the European coalition of local and regional governments – and their associations – active in city-to-city and region-to-region development cooperation. Since its creation in 2008, PLATFORMA has been representing more than 100,000 local and regional governments. All are key players in international cooperation for sustainable development.

The diversity of PLATFORMA's partners is what makes this network unique. PLATFORMA reflects the diversity of local and regional governments' realities in Europe and across the world.

The aim of PLATFORMA is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and mutual learning, but also to strengthen the specific role of local and regional governments in development policies.

In 2015, PLATFORMA signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the European Commission. Its signatories commit to take actions based on common values and objectives to tackle global poverty and inequalities, while promoting local democracy and sustainable development.

AUTHOR OF STUDY

Agustí Fernández de Losada Passols, Director of Studies and International Technical Assistance at Tornos Abogados

Agusti Fernández de Losada Passols holds a Bachelor's Degree in Law and a Master's Degree in European Studies from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain. He also holds a Degree in Public Management from ESADE Business School, Barcelona, Spain, and carried out a research internship at the Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. Since January 2013 he has been the Director of Studies and International Technical Assistance at Tornos Abogados, a leading firm specialised in public law and governance. In his current post he has worked as a Senior Expert for several UN Agencies including UNDE - SA, UNDP, ECLAC, UN Habitat or UNOPS, the European Commission (AIDCO and OLAF); for several national and local governments from Spain, France, El Salvador, Chile, Uruguay, Mexico and Cuba, and for other public organisations, foundations and private companies. Previously, he was the Director of the Barcelona Centre for Territorial Studies (2012- 2013), the Director of International Relations at Diputació de Barcelona (2005-2012), the General Coordinator of the European Commission URBAL III Programme Coordination Office (2008-2012), and the General Coordinator of the Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation EU-LATAM. (2005-2012). He is the author of political reports such as the UNDG Localizing the Post-2015 development agenda, and various books, papers and articles on public governance, state reforms and modernisation, territorial development, decentralisation and international cooperation. He is also a frequent speaker at conferences and seminars, Professor of the Degree in International Relations at Blanquerna - Ramon Llull University, and has contributed to various academic programmes run by Universities in Spain, Europe and Latin America.

There is a general consensus that local and regional governments play a crucial role in sustainable development. Proof of this is that they were very active during the preparation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and they continue to be so in the localising process. Decentralised cooperation is consequently a key resource for achieving the SDGs with localised approaches, as well as the New Urban Agenda, and other global agendas.

Moreover, one of the main added values of the new modalities of decentralised cooperation is the involvement of territorial stakeholders. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the private sector, the academia and knowledge-based institutions and philanthropies, each have their own capacities and resources to contribute to sustainable development.

This Research Study aims to enhance understanding in multilateral organisations and governments at all levels on how to adapt decentralised cooperation models by regional and local governments. It also features key recommendations aiming to inspire and serve as an input to policy positions or similar documents.

PLATFORMA

Square de Meeûs 1
1000 Brussels - Belgium
+32 (0)2 265 09 30
platforma@ccre-cemr.org
@Platforma4Dev
http://platforma-dev.eu

CPMR CRPM

Rond-point Schuman 14
1040 Brussels - Belgium
+32 (0)2 612 17 00
secretariat@crpm.org
@CPMR_Europe
http://cpmr.org