EVALUATION 2007/2

DECENTRALISATION IN SDC'S BILATERAL COOPERATION

RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, SUSTAINABILITY AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Independent Evaluation of

Decentralisation in SDC's Bilateral Cooperation

Relevance, Effectiveness, Sustainability and Comparative Advantage

Commissioned by the Evaluation + Controlling Division
of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Contents:

I Evaluation Abstract
II Agreement at Completion Point and Senior Management Response
III Evaluators' Final Report

Bern, May 2007

Independent Evaluation Process

Independent Evaluations were introduced in SDC in 2002 with the aim of providing a more critical and independent assessment of SDC activities. Joint SDC/SECO programs are evaluated jointly. Independent Evaluations are conducted according to DAC Evaluation Standards and are part of SDC's concept for implementing Article 170 of the Swiss Constitution which requires Swiss Federal Offices to analyse the effectiveness of their activities. SDC's **Comité Stratégique (COSTRA)**, which consists of the Director General, the Deputy Director General and the heads of SDC's six departments, approves the Evaluation Program. The **Evaluation + Controlling Division (E+C Division)**, which is outside of line management and reports directly to the Office of the Director General, commissions the evaluation, taking care to recruit evaluators with a critical distance from SDC.

The E+C Division identifies the primary intended users of the evaluation and invites them to participate in a **Core Learning Partnership (CLP)**. The CLP actively accompanies the evaluation process. It comments on the evaluation design (Approach Paper). It provides feedback to the evaluation team on their preliminary findings and on the draft report.

The CLP also discusses the evaluation results and recommendations. In an **Agreement at Completion Point (ACP)** it takes a stand with regard to the evaluation recommendations indicating whether it agrees or disagrees and, if appropriate, indicates follow-up intentions. In a COSTRA meeting, SDC's Senior Management discusses the evaluation findings. In a **Senior Management Response**, it expresses its opinion and final decisions for SDC. The Stand of the CLP and the Senior Management Response are published with the Final Evaluators' Report. The Senior Management Response forms the basis for future rendering of accountability.

For further details regarding the evaluation process see the Approach Paper in the Annex.

Timetable

Step	**When**
Evaluation Programme approved by COSTRA	February 2006
Approach Paper finalized	August 2006
Implementation of the evaluation	August 2006 to January 2007
Agreement at Completion	March 2007
Senior Management Response in COSTRA (SDC)	April 2007

I Evaluation Abstract

DONOR	SDC
REPORT TITLE	Independent Evaluation of Decentralisation in SDC's Bilateral Cooperation: Relevance, Effectiveness, Sustainability and Comparative Advantage
SUBJECT NUMBER	
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Subject Description

The **primary** focus of this evaluation is the analysis of SDC's decentralisation measures in the agency's bilateral cooperation in the South and in the East and it includes decentralisation projects and programmes as well as decentralising approaches in sectoral projects (operational dimension). A **secondary** line of inquiry concerns the support provided by SDC's thematic department including backstopping mandates and how processes of learning are organised.

Evaluation methodology

The primary goal of the evaluation is to assess what works, where and why; accordingly, the main design approach consists in:

- Identifying and gathering data on four levels of analysis (SDC Berne, SDC country office, project/programme level and policy and national context level), where the designed set of questions will determine to a significant degree the effectiveness, sustainability and relevance of SDC decentralisation programmes, projects and other means of cooperation in five different countries;
- Analysing the performance of the various SDC agencies and of the implementing agencies such as NGOs in the management of programmes and projects in terms of their effectiveness, and the sustainability and relevance of programmes and projects;
- Analysing vertical and horizontal relations within SDC (SDC Berne and country offices) in development cooperation on decentralisation issues;
- Drawing conclusions on what factors affect positively and what factors impede the performance of projects;

- As a separate and crosscutting issue, deliberation of the overall SDC approach and strategy in the perspective of the Paris Declaration principles of ownership and institutional support, and assessment of to what extent SDC may have comparative advantages on development cooperation concerning decentralisation.

Major Findings

There is high relevance of individual projects and programmes in the countries studied judged from the reactions of end-users, but there are also critical views concerning policy and fiscal aspects of the cooperation, mostly coming from the professional side.

Relevance seen from the perspective of the end-users seems to be quite high, despite the relatively narrow focus of decentralisation issues dealing mostly with participatory aspects of local governance. Relevance is thus high in the areas of projects and programmes. However, it should be noted that the fiscal input from Switzerland is relatively small.

Effectiveness has generally been assessed to be relatively high for the projects in the five countries visited. However, *the scope* of projects and programmes is in most cases rather narrow, which makes the issue of effectiveness a less relevant measuring stick than is the case with larger, comprehensive programmes. However, there are important differences between the five countries studied concerning the scope and level of ambition of programmes and projects.

There are cases of what seems to be high effectiveness, but also cases of extra-governmental arrangements vis-à-vis the governmental institutions, where a non-governmental institutional anchorage which may lead to lower effectiveness and in particular an uncertainty concerning sustainability.

Impact sustainability is generally high: SDC is good at choosing solid and professional partners of cooperation and implementing agencies. It is a typical feature that the country offices are seldom directly involved in implementation of programmes and projects. What is even more remarkable is the rare use of governmental agencies and in this case national, local governmental structures to implement projects.

There seems to be a tendency to establish channels of communication and institutional arrangements that in the worst case might be characterised as parallel structures or outside the scope of local government in the national context.

Lessons learned

The overriding lesson learned is that, in national government decentralisation initiatives, support must include government at all levels, i.e. be holistic, or the support will be limited in its effectiveness and/or unsustainable in the longer run. Although there are obvious trade-offs between a "direct to the grassroots" approach favoured by Swiss cooperation in order to minimise transaction costs and reach populations that are off the central government's radar screen, and an approach that is primarily government focussed, it should not be an either/or proposition. An essential part of a good support strategy should involve an assessment of the "dosage" of support among various players, at various times, to ensure that you are dealing with the whole wheel, not just the axle or the spokes or the tires; they all need to be connected at commensurate and complementary levels of tensile strength or the wheel won't hold together, much less roll and support a vehicle.

This is the kind of strategic view and knowledge-driven contribution that SDC Berne should be bringing to the local network, for it to be meaningful and change the view from SDC local offices that the centre does not know what is really going on in the field. This perception carries over into the way local offices approach decentralisation in their own jurisdictions.

II Agreement at Completion Point
Stand of the Core Learning Partnership and of Senior Management regarding Evaluation Recommendations

A Overall Appreciation

Stand of CLP

The Core Learning Partnership (CLP) welcomes the well-structured and methodologically sound report and appreciates that the evaluation offers a professional outside view that stimulates discussion, even though the CLP does not necessarily agree with all the findings and proposed recommendations. It is further interesting to note that some strengths and weaknesses mentioned in regard to decentralisation are similar to points noted for SDC as a whole by other outside observations (e.g. on geographical distribution of activities see DAC Peer Review and Control Committee of the Council of States, a chamber of Swiss parliament).

The CLP further notes that the point regarding insufficient vertical and horizontal integration of SDC decentralisation measures is well taken. Even if decentralisation efforts consciously focus at the local level it is necessary to take note of political will, the regulatory framework and national policies (vertical integration) and to consider service delivery, fiscal and administrative aspect of decentralisation in addition to political processes and citizen participation (horizontal integration). However, SDC's strength in adapting cooperation to local and national contexts is not sufficiently noted. The CLP further accepts that the SDC approach is often project-oriented.

The CLP finds that the evaluation does not sufficiently reflect on the specifics and constraints of SDC as a small donor that due to its size cannot always play a major role at national level. The evaluation does not take into account the efforts in donor coordination particularly the informal efforts. The CLP further misses that the characteristics of the five case study countries are not sufficiently reflected in the synthesis report.

The CLP notes a main difference between the evaluation report and SDC in their approach to decentralisation. The evaluation considers decentralisation foremost as an instrument of government administration whereas SDC looks at decentralisation and its effects on (local) governance and thus also places greater emphasis on aspects of political participation and civil society. The CLP finds that the approach to decentralisation reflected in the report is rather formal and technical, not taking into account power relations and neglecting some of the relevant stakeholders.

This last point possibly reflects a basic cultural difference. Whereas the Swiss position believes in building the state and its institutions bottom-up from the communities and citizens, in many other parts the intention behind decentralisation is to bring the state and its administration and services closer to the citizens. While both positions deem the other to be interdependent and an integration to be necessary (see above vertical integration), depending on the position taken, one or the other is held to be the “natural” point of departure.

Senior Management Response

Decentralisation is an area within development cooperation whose importance is increasing. COSTRA, SDC Senior Management's Comité Stratégique, regards decentralisation as one of the trademarks of SDC both abroad and at home. COSTRA thus particularly welcomes this evaluation and finds that the good quality report well identifies the strengths and weaknesses of SDC's activities in decentralisation. COSTRA considers it very useful to have its activities mirrored by a competent outside view. The discussions so generated are very valuable for determining SDC's further course of action in the field of decentralisation.

COSTRA acknowledges that there is a need for a more integrated approach and adds that a systemic analysis needs to be conducted for identifying where a Swiss input is most useful, thereby considering both the needs in the partner country as well as the efforts of other donors and the partner country. It is of particular importance to strike the right balance between

participatory and delivery aspects of decentralisation measures. The evaluation assumes that decentralization is to large extent a matter of steering and decision making at the centre, an assumption not fully shared by SDC. COSTRA further raises the issue to what extent the evaluation has taken the limits of Switzerland as a small donor into account. COSTRA appreciates how the report treats the issue of comparative advantage. Ways and means should be identified for strengthening this advantage, possibly by better linking research in Switzerland to implementation abroad or by constituting an advisory council of eminent persons in Switzerland.

B Specific Recommendations

Recommendation 1 SDC strategic approach to SDC decentralisation support

Recommendation 1.1 Enhance SDC decentralisation guideline

The general conceptualisation of decentralisation in the SDC strategic documents is not assisting SDC a lot on the ground. The recommendation is not only to enhance the conceptual parts of the SDC Decentralisation Guideline particularly concerning the understanding of decentralisation, but also the more practical parts need a reformulation in order to make the document into a more practical and coherent guideline for the future SDC activities taking the Paris Declaration principles into consideration.

Stand of CLP

The CLP suggests that the need for a reformulation of the SDC Decentralisation Guideline should be reassessed after the capitalisation of SDC's experiences in local government scheduled for the first semester 2008. At present, the CLP favours to then produce a practice-oriented document (and not a policy). Such a document might include lessons learned from the capitalisation exercise, an overview of different types of decentralisation in different contexts and/or recommendations for putting into practice general principles of decentralisation.

Senior Management Response

COSTRA appreciates the standpoint of the CLP and advises that the preparation for the capitalisation exercise mentioned should already anticipate the possibility of reworking SDC's Decentralisation Guideline.

Recommendation 1.2 Clarify "pilot project"

It is recommended to strengthen the strategic approach of SDC primarily to develop demonstration projects, and, where possible, real pilot projects, and to anchor the projects strongly in the national or federal reform policy processes.

Stand of CLP

The CLP agrees that there is a need to more clearly define the term "pilot project" and its usage and to initiate pilot projects together with government structures with a view to scaling-up. Scaling-up should be based on principles and must include knowledge management, the dissemination of lessons learned, and including them in national policies. The CLP recommends complementing the pilot projects with the support to local initiatives and a process of mutual learning ("action recherche) for generating a demonstration effect.

Senior Management Response

COSTRA agrees with the recommendation and the CLP comments. SDC needs to reflect on the role and anchoring of pilot projects.

Recommendation 1.3 Broaden local government programmes and adopt a holistic approach

It is recommended to redesign SDC local government programmes (including existing programmes with a future duration over several years) to become broader, more encompassing of all policy areas, stronger vertical relations, and adopt a holistic approach to local governance.

Stand of CLP

The CLP agrees with some modifications. The CLP agrees that SDC's decentralisation programmes will profit from becoming broader, but it suffices if they encompass various and not necessarily all policy areas. Also the CLP prefers to speak of an integrated, and not a holistic, approach. The CLP finds it essential to take note of the relevant regulatory framework, political will and budgetary provisions as a prerequisite for engaging in decentralisation programmes. The CLP also recommends making an assessment before any redesigning of existing programmes. SDC sector approaches within cooperation strategies could contain an integrated decentralisation approach; some already do so (Mali, Peru).

Senior Management Response

COSTRA agrees with the recommendation and the modifications proposed by the CLP. A more integrated approach is needed that takes into account both inputs into the political, administrative and fiscal system, the system itself and its outputs (see tab. 12 in evaluation report). This does, however, not imply that all elements need to be covered. A Swiss contribution needs to be identified on the basis of a systemic analysis of needs and of other efforts by donors and the partner country.

Recommendation 1.4 Phase out support where there is no positive reception

It is recommended to phase out local government reform support in countries or states where there is no positive reception of comprehensive decentralisation by government and to focus on more fertile areas of cooperation.

Stand of CLP

The CLP agrees with the recommendation with the modification that support to local government reform and local governance should be phased out if there is no political will and regulatory framework. It adds that sectoral programmes can function as entry points for decentralisation.

Senior Management Response

COSTRA agrees with the CLP modified recommendation and adds that tracking the political will is part of context monitoring.

Recommendation 2 Management in SDC decentralisation issues

Recommendation 2.1 Organise a special management study

The complication of relations between an extremely thinly staffed Thematic Department (1.3 full time positions; 0.8 positions until April 2006) and the BUCOs requires management attention. It is recommended to organise a special management study of optimal use of the thematic department vis-à-vis country offices and country desks and vis-à-vis other departments.

Stand of CLP

The CLP is of the opinion that this recommendation touches on a much broader issue that is already being discussed in SDC, namely the relations between thematic desks, operational desks and country offices. The CLP does not consider this as a topic for a management study,

but rather as a field for an internal consultation that could be part of an organisational development process. Such a consultation should gather concrete propositions and include the country offices and implementing organisations and it should not overlook the thematic contributions of the geographical desks. A further consideration is the strengthening of the thematic networks.

Senior Management Response
COSTRA agrees with the standpoint of the CLP and particularly emphasizes the importance of thematic networks.

Recommendation 2.2 Provide decentralisation support to all sector programmes
It is further recommended to underscore the Thematic Department and the Decentralisation Desk's crosscutting functions in providing (mandatory) support and guidance to all sector programmes to be in closer coherence with decentralisation objectives.

Stand of CLP
The CLP disagrees with a top-down approach providing (mandatory) decentralisation support to all sector programmes. Such an approach is not realistic and it would not be coherent with the adaptation of programmes to local needs and national priorities and thus the Paris Declaration and the SDC decentralised structure. Some advice to sector programmes is already extended on demand. A minority opinion votes for considering how decentralisation support to sector programmes could be enhanced (see also 3.1).

Senior Management Response
COSTRA agrees with the standpoint of the CLP.

Recommendation 3 Relevance of SDC decentralisation support

Recommendation 3.1 Increase decentralisation support in the design of sectoral programmes
The relevance of SDC cooperation is already high. However, the relevance in the area of decentralisation could be higher if there was more emphasis on support to fiscal, administrative and service management decentralisation in the design of sectoral projects and programmes.

Stand of CLP
The CLP basically agrees with the recommendation but it cautions that SDC should not put too much on its plate.
If fiscal, administrative and service management decentralisation in sectoral measures at the local level is to be promoted, then the required regulatory changes also need to be discussed. Further points to be considered are the quality of services and the principles of participation, transparency and accountability in the strategic planning of public services. It is important to work with agents of change and strategic alliances and to use selected aspects of decentralisation as entry points. As has been pointed out in 1.3, decentralisation in sector-programmes is already the norm in some cooperation programmes.

Senior Management Response
COSTRA agrees with the CLP standpoint and adds that in providing support on demand to sectoral programmes a systemic analysis is needed that particularly includes fiscal aspects and thus sustainability.

Recommendation 3.2 Focus also on urban areas
There is a tradition for focusing mostly on the rural areas and smaller communities. Focus should be changed to encompass more urban local government units.

Stand of CLP
The CLP agrees that SDC's focus should be extended to include peri-urban and urban areas and suggests that the links between urban and rural areas should be strengthened. In a regional approach to decentralisation it is necessary to work with different level communities.

Senior Management Response
The issue of putting emphasis on rural and/or urban development goes beyond the field of decentralisation and needs to be discussed at the appropriate level in SDC.

Recommendation 4 Effectiveness of SDC decentralisation support

Recommendation 4.1 Include scaling-up in the programme design
The effectiveness has generally been considered as good or acceptable. However, effectiveness might be higher if a progression from project to programme and further to institutional support based on periodical (annual) assessments was part of the programme design.

Stand of CLP
The CLP agrees with this recommendation. Starting small-scale with the intention to move from project to programme and institutional support in a process of mutual learning is an approach which introduces scaling-up from the start. This can positively influence effectiveness. Local organisational capacities need to be considered and it has to be clearly defined what type of institutional support is to be provided.

Senior Management Response
COSTRA agrees with the recommendation and the CLP standpoint.

Recommendation 4.2 Consider to provide budget support to municipalities
Fiscal decentralisation support in the form of budget support to the municipalities in question should in many cases be included as an incentive for participating LGAs to enhance accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

Stand of CLP
The CLP basically agrees with this recommendation and adds a few caveats. Local budget depends on national legislation. Accountability need not only be considered at the municipal level but also at the level of donors, NGOs and other actors involved. Participation, transparency and accountability are criteria for local budget support provision.

Senior Management Response
COSTRA agrees with the CLP standpoint and adds that any budget support to municipalities needs to meet international standards (of sub-sovereign lending) and to be conform with national systems.

Recommendation 5 Sustainability of SDC decentralisation support

Recommendation 5.1 More direct cooperation with local government structures

The institutional sustainability could be improved if there was on a general basis more direct cooperation with local government structures and agencies and less dependency of external organisations.

Stand of CLP

The CLP partly agrees with the modification that decentralisation and local governance should be fostered in a multi-stakeholder approach. Furthermore it needs to be clearly spelled out which reforms in local government the cooperation aims for. The CLP points out that it prefers to use "to avoid dependency on parallel structures" - and not as the recommendation suggests "less dependency on external organisations".

Senior Management Response

COSTRA emphasizes the need for strengthening cooperation with legitimized local government structures and for avoiding the generation of parallel structures. This does, however, not exclude cooperation with other actors.

Recommendation 6 Swiss comparative advantages of SDC decentralisation support

Recommendation 6.1 Take other Swiss partners on board in cooperation

Utilisation of undoubtedly advantages for Switzerland in comparison to other bilateral donors could be enhanced if other Swiss (local governments, associations of government units, research etc.) and even international partners of cooperation were taken on board.

Stand of CLP

The CLP only partly agrees with the recommendation. Comparative advantage of Swiss cooperation in decentralisation is based on extensive field-level experience. Of course the field level cooperation is influenced by the exposure to Swiss federalism and informed by the principle of subsidiarity, the relatively good coordination between different levels of government, the system of financial equalisation, etc. The issue, however, is not to reproduce the Swiss system in the field, but to draw from it when this is deemed to be advantageous, including support from relevant Swiss organisations like SEREC or SEAT or enhancing peer exchange between sub-national government bodies. Likewise it is important to learn from the experiences of other donors and partner country peers.

Senior Management Response

COSTRA agrees with the recommendation.

Recommendation 6.2 More active role in donor coordination and policy development

SDC should play a more pro-active role in donor coordination and policy development in partner countries.

Stand of CLP

The CLP agrees that SDC could and should better utilize its field level experiences in policy dialogue and donor coordination. The CLP, however, wants to point out that in some (case study) countries like Mali and Peru SDC already plays an active role in this respect and that SDC not only participates in formal but also in informal coordination.

Senior Management Response

COSTRA agrees with the recommendation.

III Evaluators' Final Report

Independent Evaluation of

Decentralisation in SDC's Bilateral Cooperation

Relevance, Effectiveness, Sustainability and Comparative Advantage

Commissioned by the Evaluation + Controlling Division
of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Copenhagen, Denmark May 1st 2007

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Table of contents

Executive Summary 5
1 Introduction: Purpose of evaluation and its organisation 8
2 Summary of conclusions and recommendations 9
2.1 Strengths of SDC 9
2.2 Weaknesses of SDC 10
2.3 Relevance of SDC's decentralisation approach 11
2.4 Effectiveness of SDC's decentralisation approach 11
2.5 Sustainability of SDC supported projects on decentralisation 12
2.6 SDC main dilemmas in decentralisation support 12
3 Brief on context and prospects for decentralisation 13
3.1 SDC, Switzerland 13
3.2 Bulgaria 14
3.3 India 17
3.4 Mali 19
4 Methodological issues 25
4.1 Information and data collection 25
4.2 Methodology and approach 26
5 Decentralisation support of other donors and of SDC compared 29
5.1 Typical approaches to decentralisation 29
5.2 The general picture 29
5.3 Funding modalities 30
6 Project portfolio and cooperation with other organizations 31
7 Strategic documents issued by SDC on decentralisation 34
8 Findings and conclusions 36
8.1 Relevance 36
8.2 Effectiveness 39
8.3 Sustainability 41
8.4 Comparative advantages of the SDC approach 44
9 Cooperation with other partners and aid effectiveness 45
10 SDC Berne support and relations with country office 46
10.1 Strengths of cooperation between Berne and country offices 46
10.2 The staffing of the Thematic Department 46
11 Recommendations 47

List of tables

Table 1: Key SDC decentralisation support in Bulgaria 16
Table 2: Key SDC decentralisation support in India 18
Table 3: Key SDC decentralization support in Mali 20
Table 4: Key SDC decentralization support in Peru 23
Table 5: Key SDC decentralisation support in Rwanda 24
Table 6: Evaluation analysis matrix 27
Table 7: Various donor-funding modalities 30
Table 8: Overview of the SDC project portfolio in five countries: Main thrust 31
Table 9: Organisation of cooperation 32
Table 10: Methodology and procedural arrangements 33
Table 11: Organisation, strategic issues and donor cooperation 33
Table 12: Functional areas of local governments 37

Annexes

Annex A – Overview of country studies 49
Annex B – Case Study Report: Bulgaria 51
Annex C – Case Study Report: India 79
Annex D – Étude de cas: Mali 95
Annex E – Étude de cas: Rwanda 117
Annex F – Case Study Report: Peru 151
Annex G – List of documents 175
Annex H – Approach Paper 179
Annex I – Evaluation design and methodology 193
Annex J – Case Study tactics and responses 205
Annex K – Initial questions for Country Office desk officers 207

Abbreviations

BTC	Belgian Technical Cooperation
BUCO	Bureau de la Coopération
CHF	Swiss franc
CND	National Council on Decentralisation (Peru)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDC	Direction du Développement et de la Coopération
DGCID	Direction Générale de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement (Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development)
DGIS	Directorate General for International Cooperation (Netherlands Foreign Aid Agency)
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH (German society for technical cooperation)
LED	Local economic development
LGA	Local government authority
NAMRB	National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria
NCG	Nordic Consulting Group
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
PRIA	Strengthening local self-governance in India
PRISMO	Panchayati Raj institutions' support and mobilisation programme
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
TA	Technical assistance
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary

Introduction

In accordance with the Approach Paper the evaluation of SDC's decentralisation support has been carried out to serve the following five purposes:

- Determine the extent to which SDC's decentralisation efforts are relevant, effective and sustainable;
- Assess the state of SDC's cooperation with local authorities and harmonisation with external partners' policies and activities;
- Assess the support of SDC's Thematic Department to operational units, i.e. SDC country offices;
- Clarify whether SDC has a comparative advantage, i.e. relative to other donors and to partner countries' activities, in support of decentralisation;
- Provide to SDC practical recommendations on the preceding objectives.

In conjunction with the evaluation of recent and ongoing project and programme activities the evaluation is also forward-looking providing advice and recommendations on future SDC operations particularly considering possible consequences of the Paris Declaration on development cooperation, to which Switzerland is a signatory party.

The evaluation has taken place between July 2006 and March 2007 and has included visits and interviews at SDC, Berne (three visits including interviews of key staff members) and field studies in five selected partner countries, Bulgaria, India, Mali, Peru and Rwanda, plus desk studies of numerous documents. The evaluation team has been well facilitated by the Evaluation Unit of SDC.

Conclusions

There is high relevance of individual projects and programmes in the countries studied judged from the reactions of end-users, but there are also critical views concerning policy and fiscal aspects of the cooperation, mostly coming from the professional side.

Relevance, seen from the perspective of the end-users seems to be quite high, despite the relatively narrow focus on decentralisation issues dealing mostly with participatory aspects of local governance. Relevance is thus high in the areas of projects and programmes. However, it should be noted that the financial input from Switzerland is relatively small.

Effectiveness has generally been assessed to be relatively high for the projects in the five countries visited. However, *the scope* of projects and programmes is in most cases rather narrow, which makes the issue of effectiveness a less relevant measure stick than is the case with larger, comprehensive programmes. However, there are important differences between the five countries studied concerning the scope and level of ambition of programmes and projects.

There are cases of what seems to be high effectiveness, but also cases of extra-governmental arrangements vis-à-vis the governmental institutions, where a non-governmental institutional anchorage may lead to lower effectiveness and in particular to an uncertainty concerning sustainability.

Impact sustainability is generally high: SDC is good at choosing solid and professional partners of cooperation and implementing agencies. It is a typical feature that the coun-

try offices are seldom directly involved in implementation of programmes and projects. What is even more remarkable is the rare use of governmental agencies and in this case of national and local governmental structures to implement projects.

There seems to be a tendency to establish channels of communication and institutional arrangements that in the worst case might be characterised as parallel structures or outside the scope of local government in the national context.

Comparative advantages

SDC has a number of assets and strengths in its development cooperation. The evaluation team has identified the following strengths, which are seen as the major assets of SDC's cooperation with partner countries:

- Good reputation of SDC among stakeholders
  SDC is considered to be a serious, high-quality partner in development cooperation both by its partners of cooperation and by external development agencies.

- Neutrality, independence

- Long-term partnerships with partners of cooperation and with implementing organisations

- Good knowledge of decentralisation and local government principles

- Flexibility in relations with partners of cooperation

- Willingness to cooperate with other donors and agencies

Some weaknesses were detected

Certain weaknesses in the SDC approach to decentralisation processes in partner countries have been identified at the various tiers of evaluation. However, there are important variations in this overall picture between the various countries and programmes.

- Lack of institutional anchorage
  Swiss development cooperation often stops short of dealing with the governmental and administrative aspects of local government.

- Particularistic approach to decentralisation
  The general approach taken to decentralisation support is in most cases a non-holistic approach (little emphasis on service management, fiscal decentralisation and service implementation in most countries cooperating with SDC).

- Large number of countries involved in cooperation

- Reliance on NGOs and other external agencies

Recommendations

The following main recommendations are further detailed in Chapter 11.

1 Sharpened SDC strategic approach to decentralisation support is needed

2 Reorganisation of SDC's management of decentralisation issues particularly concerning the role of the Decentralisation desk

3 Enhancement of relevance of SDC decentralisation support

4 Enhancement of effectiveness of SDC decentralisation support

5 Enhancement of sustainability of SDC decentralisation support

6 Enhancement of Swiss comparative advantages of SDC decentralisation support introducing new partners

1 Introduction: Purpose of evaluation and its organisation

SDC has decided to carry out an evaluation of its cooperation on decentralisation with a number of countries, organisations, non-governmental agencies, Local Government Authorities (LGA) and central government agencies. An Approach Paper (see Annex H) developed by SDC has been circulated, debated and amended as part of the consultancy and further developed during the initial stages of the evaluation exercise. The Approach Paper has defined key evaluation questions and described main methodological issues, and the paper is further providing conceptual clarifications. The Approach Paper introduces the decentralisation evaluation in the following way:

"Given the long-standing preoccupation in SDC with decentralisation described above and taking Switzerland's political tradition into account, a thorough examination of decentralisation and development in SDC is called for. The sheer volume of SDC supported projects with a decentralisation/local government focus in all regions warrants a critical look at how effectively and relevantly these topics are promoted in SDC, a consolidation of past experiences and a thorough reflection on how to proceed in the future."

The Approach Paper has defined the purpose and main issues of the evaluation:
"The *purpose* of the evaluation is to investigate the relevance and effectiveness of SDC's decentralisation measures and to explore whether SDC holds, as is frequently assumed, a comparative advantage in the field of decentralisation and management of local government affairs (accountabilty aspect). The evaluation is furthermore expected to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations on how to improve the relevance and effectiveness of decentralisation measures as well as strengthening the conceptual and strategic support in this field (learning aspect)."

In accordance with the Approach Paper as quoted above the evaluation of SDC's decentralisation support has been carried out to serve the following five purposes:

- Determine the extent to which SDC's decentralisation efforts are relevant, effective and sustainable;
- Assess the state of SDC's cooperation with local authorities and harmonisation with external partners' policies and activities;
- Assess the support of SDC's Thematic Department to operational units, i.e. SDC country offices;
- Clarify whether SDC has a comparative advantage, i.e. relative to other donors and to partner countries' activities, in support of decentralisation;
- Provide to SDC practical recommendations on the preceding objectives.

In conjunction with the evaluation of recent and ongoing project and programme activities the evaluation is also forward-looking providing advice and recommendations on future SDC operations particularly considering possible consequences of the Paris Declaration on development cooperation, to which Switzerland is a signatory party.

The evaluation has taken place between July 2006 and March 2007 and has included visits and interviews at SDC, Berne (three visits including interviews of key staff members) and field studies in five selected partner countries, Bulgaria, India, Mali, Peru and Rwanda. Reports from the country studies are annexed to the present report. These studies have greatly contributed to the observations and conclusions of the present synthetic report. The field studies were all conducted with great help from the SDC country

offices in a combined effort of the international consultants of Nordic Consulting Group (NCG) and the national consultants.

The over-all conduct of the evaluation has been well facilitated by SDC Berne, not least the Evaluation Unit and the country desks and offices and all required information has been offered and provided to the consultant.

2 Summary of conclusions and recommendations

2.1 Strengths of SDC

SDC has a number of assets and strengths in its development cooperation. The evaluation team has identified the following strengths, which are seen as the major assets of SDC's cooperation with partner countries:

Good reputation of SDC among stakeholders

- Interviews with clients, public authorities, beneficiaries and other donors have revealed that SDC generally has a good reputation. This is caused by several factors that are included in the following points, but it also reflects the strong position of Switzerland in international cooperation. SDC is considered to be a serious, high-quality partner in development cooperation both by its partners of cooperation and by external development agencies.

Neutrality, independence

- The comparatively strong position of SDC in this respect attracts a lot of comments of appreciation from the partners of cooperation. It seems clear to the evaluation team that Swiss development cooperation and SDC in particular has a major resource base from being Swiss, independent and open-minded.

Long-term partnerships with partners of cooperation and with implementing organisations

- The long-term relationships help in building experience, trust and institutional memory. The country studies have clearly indicated that the implementing bodies benefit from the building of trustful relationships and a high extent of delegation of responsibilities to them.

Good knowledge of decentralisation and local government principles

- SDC has generally a good knowledge of decentralisation issues. There is a feeling in the partner countries that SDC is one of the serious partners of cooperation with a solid knowledge of decentralisation and decentralised governance, although the experience from management of Swiss local government is only utilised to a rather limited extent.

Flexibility in relations with partners of cooperation

- The flexibility in SDC's dealings with partners of cooperation is one of the strong assets mentioned all-over as a comparative advantage of SDC. The flexibility should be seen in the context of the long-term partnerships with implementing

organisations. Less time is spent on reporting, monitoring and control issues and relatively more time on programme and project execution.
- Non-bureaucratic, flexible mode of operation both by SDC Berne and by the BUCOs and country offices is one of the major advantages of Swiss development cooperation although there may be some internal variations in the conception to what extent flexibility and informality should be pursued.

Willingness to cooperate with other donors and agencies

- SDC is involved in donor coordination in the countries visited. However, a number of problems exist in this area. Although the willingness is high there are two other issues at stake. First, the strength of the individual country offices in terms of staffing may present practical obstacles to a very active part in cooperation on decentralisation. Second, SDC has not taken a leading role in the coordination of decentralisation in any of the five countries studied.

2.2 Weaknesses of SDC

Certain weaknesses in the SDC approach to decentralisation processes in partner countries have been identified at the various tiers of evaluation. However, there are important variations in this overall picture between the various countries and programmes.

Lack of institutional anchorage

- Swiss development cooperation on decentralisation is in the majority of cases focused on means and ways of political participation and capacity building in this respect and stops short of dealing with the governmental and administrative aspects of local government.
- There are few direct relations from SDC with local government units. Relations with LGAs are often done through NGOs and projects are focusing on contextual or procedural aspects of participation, mobilisation etc. in local government institutions. Again, there are major exceptions to this over-all tendency.

Particularistic approach to decentralisation

- The general approach taken to decentralisation support is in most cases a non-holistic approach (little emphasis on service management, fiscal decentralisation and service implementation in most countries cooperating with SDC).
- There are few relations with urban, local government. This rural bias does not reflect present demographic trends in developing countries.
- Limited geographical coordination of the various projects and programmes of SDC in some countries, i.e. projects dealing with social services take place in other areas than the decentralisation projects.
- Decentralisation is not fully developed as a crosscutting concept in programmes or projects dealing with social services in some countries, and with implementation through various NGOs this issue is difficult to resolve.

Large number of countries involved in cooperation

- There may be lack of visibility of SDC in some countries because of the small scale of projects.
- When resources are spread thinly the overhead cost will increase as a proportion of the total development package.

- There can be lack of policy clout because of small-scale interventions and small-scale country offices, which are quite heavily burdened. There is in some countries not a particularly strong, strategic position of SDC in relation to other donors and in relation to the governmental agencies.

Reliance on NGOs and other external agencies

- It is a complication to work through Swiss or local NGOs on government issues.

2.3 Relevance of SDC's decentralisation approach

SDC is supporting decentralisation issues in several countries. However, a rather unified and similar approach has been adopted in most countries, and the relevance is thus less than it might have been if a more country-specific and holistic approach had been adopted. The country studies point to the problem that the reliance on popular participation leaves other areas of local level governance untouched, even though for example basic, social services might be of the highest importance for the communities.

In the evaluation the following key issues were raised: Is the decentralisation approach sufficiently relevant, i.e. taking the national context into consideration to a sufficient extent? Is there a tendency to copy and paste approach from one country to the next?
Relevance may be questioned if and when only very specific aspects of decentralisation policies are included in the programmes and projects, and broader governance issues are not taken on board. So, relevance may in these cases be high, but would be considerably higher if followed by other and broader initiatives.

There is high relevance of individual projects and programmes in the countries studied judged from the reactions of end-users, but there are also critical views concerning policy and fiscal aspects mostly from the professional side.

Relevance seen from the perspective of the end-users seems to be quite high, despite the relatively narrow focus on decentralisation issues dealing mostly with participatory aspects of local governance. Relevance is thus high in the areas of projects and programmes. However, it should be noted that the financial input from Switzerland is limited and spread between 20 countries, which impacts negatively on the over-all relevance.

Dedication behind SDC's overall cooperation to assist the vulnerable groups is high.

2.4 Effectiveness of SDC's decentralisation approach

For the evaluation it has been important to see effectiveness (to which extent a programme or project objective is accomplished) *in the context of sustainability and in particular institutional sustainability*.

A combination of sustainability considerations with effectiveness considerations in the evaluation will provide more valid results than relying on an assessment of each of the three main evaluation variables independently.

Effectiveness has also been considered in relation to how effective the cooperation has been in relation to an intended, gradual move towards over-all strategic goals for decentralisation policies as a result of a project or programme intervention.

Effectiveness has generally been assessed to be relatively high for the projects in the five countries visited. However, *the scope* of projects and programmes is in most cases rather narrow, which makes the issue of effectiveness a less relevant measure stick than is the case with larger, comprehensive programmes. However, there are important differences between the five countries studied concerning the scope and level of ambition of programmes and projects.
There are cases of what seems to be high effectiveness, but also cases of extra-governmental arrangements vis-à-vis the governmental institutions, where a non-governmental institutional anchorage which may lead to lower effectiveness and in particular an uncertainty concerning sustainability.

The large number of countries cooperating with SDC leads to rather limited fiscal resources for each country and each project or programme, which impacts on scope of the general effectiveness.

2.5 Sustainability of SDC supported projects on decentralisation

Impact sustainability is generally high: SDC is good at choosing solid and professional partners of cooperation and implementing agencies. It is a typical feature that the country offices are seldom directly involved in implementation of programmes and projects. What is even more remarkable is the rare use of governmental agencies and in this case local governmental structures to implement projects.

One example of this tendency is the Citizens' Forum approach, which is an arrangement outside the committee and council system in Bulgaria and other countries in this region. In other cases capacity building initiatives are directed towards local NGOs and CSOs.

When a closer and more direct cooperation with local governments is at stake the approach is still in most cases to use extra-governmental agencies to build capacity of for example women political leaders at village level. The danger is that sustainability will be low because these systems are not internalised into the local government structures, but rely on external funding of private organisations, and this funding is limited in time.

There seems to be a tendency to establish channels of communication and institutional arrangements that in the worst case might be characterised as parallel structures or outside the scope of local government in the national context.

2.6 SDC main dilemmas in decentralisation support

Finally in this section some of the main dilemmas for SDC in its cooperation on decentralisation support are highlighted.

1) As a signatory part to the Paris Declaration SDC is obliged to work with and through governmental structures. This is not the place to discuss this principle but only to flag the issue and point to the fact that working through and with governmental structures has not been the main tradition of SDC.
2) Should SDC go for smaller demonstration projects or should SDC go for integration with other and bigger donors working in the area of decentralisation, which again might imply less SDC influence on the design and fewer possibilities of learning lessons for future programmes?
3) A continued use of Swiss NGO implementation may be difficult if the strategy is to build capacity and transfer for implementation to local government authorities.

4) Should SDC make use of local or national NGO management or work directly with local government authorities?
5) The SDC approach to local government reform is not generally characterised by *strategic and policy level cooperation.* Support to governmental agencies on policy and strategic development – Why is there little emphasis on this aspect?
6) *Input functions:* (Political participation and fiscal resources)
   Participation, mobilisation, elections, capacity building of political leaders is a priority functional area for SDC with many activities. This includes mobilisation of marginalized groups.
7) *Output functions:* (services and regulations).
   There is relatively little emphasis on development of local government regulatory framework. There are also few activities related to public service management and financial management issues. Should more emphasis be directed towards the output functions of local government?

3 Brief on context and prospects for decentralisation

The contextual issues have been complex as the five selected countries have demonstrated considerable differences concerning their national administrative and political institutions related to decentralisation. In this section a brief overview of these differences are explained, and some observations on the Swiss background are offered.

3.1 SDC, Switzerland

SDC's development assistance covers 17 priority countries and a number of other programmes and projects in alltogether about 40 countries. Decentralisation projects and programmes are currently in operation in 21 countries. At the multilateral level, SDC collaborates with UN organs, the World Bank, and regional development banks. The large project portfolio in Eastern Europe is implemented in cooperation between SDC and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

The Swiss context is a positive and facilitating environment for support to decentralisation in the sense that SDC and its development partners have clearly demonstrated their concern for and good understanding of the main issues related to both the broader issue of development cooperation and, more specifically, the issue of decentralisation. Decentralisation for SDC is related to governance and seen as an aspect of "good governance", but not as a fully transversal issue. Decentralisation is seen as closely related to, but not necessarily always coherent with good governance.

SDC has made some crucial decisions concerning the priorities of thematic issues, which was formulated in the following way in the Approach Paper:

"In the course of the on-going Portfolio-Analysis in SDC that aims to sharpen the geographical and thematic focus of the organisation, it has recently been decided that governance will become one of only two transversal subjects in SDC and that "rule of law and democracy" will be one of ten thematic foci with decentralisation to be given special emphasis. As the list of thematic fields covered will be reduced, the relative importance of the topics retained will increase. This makes a stock taking in view of shaping the future of decentralisation in SDC's (bilateral) operations a very timely undertaking."

SDC has developed cooperation with research based institutions and persons such as the Institute of Federalism at Fribourg University and the Department of Political Science at Bern University. However, as mentioned by several key players, there has never been a Swiss process of decentralisation, but rather the opposite. The Swiss history is a history of nation building or building federal structures. Nevertheless, there is a huge experience with the management of local government units. There is little practical cooperation between SDC and cantonal or municipal organisations development cooperation, and several institutional explanations lie behind.

SDC is put in a difficult situation concerning development cooperation. The number of development partners is large and maybe too large for a limited budget.

3.2 Bulgaria

For Bulgaria (see country study Annex B) the situation was somewhat different from most countries of cooperation. Bulgaria is now a member of the EU, and any reforms or activities have to be seen in the light of this development. The acquis communautaire is not specific concerning local government, which implies that Bulgaria has discretionary powers concerning the development of its local government system.[1]

Bulgaria's transition towards a democracy and free market economy was characterized by lack of real market and democratic reforms for five to six years after the old communist regime was overthrown and a marked lag behind the other Central European countries. The period after 1997 was marked with various changes in the socio-political life, including the process of decentralisation, which is on-going. For six or seven years after the start of the first reforms in this area decentralisation has been implemented with varying speed and is still a topical issue. The transition to democracy included the enforcement of some important laws and other legislative norms related to the process of decentralisation. Frequently citizens' expectations for better public services are related to the local rather than the central government, regardless of the means and responsibilities for provision thereof. In parallel with the establishment of free-market relationships and improvement of living standards, there is a significant reduction in citizen participation in the social and political life as well as the interaction and collaboration among the local stakeholders.

The long decentralisation process in Bulgaria may be divided into three stages:
The first stage covered the period from 1990 to 1995. The democratisation and decentralisation processes were initiated with the adoption of the new Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria. The government undertook the so-called "administrative and territorial reform" laying the legislative foundations. This stage initiated administrative decentralisation, identified powers and responsibilities of LGAs and the specific activity areas (intrinsic and delegated). The main principles for identification of priorities, objectives and powers of the local authorities were: the general competence principle, the universality principle, and the subsidiarity principle. However, despite the expressed willingness for decentralisation the real steps taken in this direction were rather small.

The second stage lasted from 1996 to 2000. During those five years a major contribution to the decentralisation process was made with the adoption of the Law on Municipal Ownership in 1996. In 1997 the municipalities were granted financial independence with their own municipal budgets, incomes and mechanism for sharing of state taxes, principles for re-distribution of financial resource and support of financially weaker local au-

1 The European Charter for Local Self-government, Council of Europe, 1986.

thorities. Another important event was the territorial and administrative re-structuring of the country implemented in 1999.

Municipalities were delegated a lot of responsibilities without financial and/or human resource support, which resulted in increased tension between central government and the local authorities. The long-lasting and fruitless debate over the conflict did not result in taxation and budgeting reforms and did not justify the efforts for decentralisation.

Bulgaria: Meeting in Citizens' Forum

The third stage started in the beginning of 2001. It is characterized by an integral development of the administrative and territorial reform and the reform of administration relating the decentralisation problems to the processes of de-concentration of the central executive authorities. The efforts of the government were focused on the development of the territorial, functional and institutional structure of government as well as on the optimisation of the activities of the de-concentrated state-authority structures.

In December 2001 NAMRB (the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria) and the Council of Ministers signed a Cooperation Agreement for the development of the financial decentralisation and consolidation of the financial independence of the local authorities. In the beginning of the following year the Government established an interdepartmental committee – the Financial Decentralisation Workgroup – to develop and implement the financial decentralisation policy.

The most significant progress in the field of decentralisation was achieved in 2002 by the adoption of the Concept for Fiscal Decentralisation and the programme for its implementation. The adoption in 2002 of the Law on Local Taxes and Fees played an important role for the implementation of the Concept. It provided for the implementation of independent municipal policies for provision and financing of various services and as well as for independent service pricing, rates and means of provision.

In 2003 by Decision No. 637 the Financial Decentralisation Programme was revised. By Decision No. 671/2003 a special section dedicated to the decentralisation of the state administration was included in the Strategy for Modernisation of the State Administration. What still remains on the agenda is a programme combining financial decentralisation and decentralisation of powers and functions, the creation a second tier of local government as well as an optimisation of the functions of the decentralised units of the central authority.

The changes in the local tax legislation introduced in 2005 enabled the municipalities to collect the revenue from local taxes and fees. In 2005 half of the Bulgarian municipalities took advantage of this option and in 2006 all of the Government approved in 2006 the both the Decentralisation Strategy (2006–2015) and the Programme for Implementation of the Decentralisation Strategy (2006–2009).

The activities of SDC Bulgaria include a variety of programmes implemented through various projects and activities. The main programmes are:

- Citizens and Democracy
- Sustainable Natural Resources Management
- Equitable and Effective Health and Social Services
- Favourable Framework for the Private Sector
- Infrastructure Development

In table 1 an overview of the Citizens' Forum project is highlighted:

Table 1: Key SDC decentralisation support in Bulgaria[2]

Name of Project	Phases I - IV	Focus	Implementation	Type of Project	Financial volume per phase
Citizens' Forum in Bulgaria	I: 2000-01 II :2001-/02 III: 2002-04 IV: 2005-07	Development of democratic culture Moderated discussion between various actors	Tulum, 2 local NGOs	Local governance Organisation of cycles of 30 forums of discussion between municipal, civil society & local economic actors and implementation of small projects coming out of forums. Various forums in regional development.	Phase I: 450'000 CHF Phase II: 150'000 CHF Phase III: 3'400'000 CHF Phase IV: 2'500'000 CHF

SDC has supported decentralised governance in Bulgaria since Programme 2000, focusing specifically on the Citizens' Forum concept. The Forum Programme is the most substantial project financed by SDC supporting the decentralisation process. A Forum is a public meeting of citizens including citizens' leaders to discuss important questions of mutual interest to enhance local living conditions. The programme encourages the dialogue among various formal and informal groups and civil servants institutionalising the debate through the regular meeting sessions of a common council. The main objective of the Forum project is to foster citizen's participation in local politics and various initiatives, to develop projects at the municipal level, and to formulate recommendations to

2 Tables 1 – 5 are based on Survey on support to local governance and decentralisation for the informal donor working group on local governance and decentralisation. Final report, 2006. DEGE Consult and NCG. But the content is adjusted and corrected according to own data and the format changed.

the local administration and political decision-makers. Limiting the democracy only to the act of elections not only deprives the authorities of an important corrective but also constrains the possibility for generation of innovative ideas.

For the period 2006 the budget for technical support provided by SDC within the four main programmes amounted to CHF 5,85 million, complemented by CHF 1,26 million extended by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). The first programme, Citizens and Democracy, aimed at improving the participatory policy process. Its total budget for 2006 was CHF 2,82 million.

3.3 India

The cooperation with India is constrained by a federal government decision on restrictions of activities of bilateral donors, particularly concerning cooperation with governmental agencies. This constraint has major impacts on decentralisation programmes. SDC has decided to restructure its cooperation profile in India accordingly to rely more on strategic support in certain areas. Details are yet to be formulated.

Decentralisation in India is not something new, and from the early 1960s India has had a system referred to as the Panchayati Raj in place (see the Annex C with the full country study report). However, while some political leaders of the time (India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru being a strong supporter) considered the Panchayati Raj as important for development and poverty reduction measures, the principle behind the support for the Panchayati Raj has been more an effort to improve service delivery rather than an inclination of furthering democracy and the participation of people for its own sake.[3]

Decentralisation, in the sense of devolution, and as administrative, political and fiscal decentralisation has taken place to different extents in different states. In India there is no uniform level. Each state enacts its own legislation on decentralisation. This legislation, however, has to conform to the principles contained in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. This leaves considerable scope for individual states to devolve substantial powers to the institutions of local government (panchayats) or to limit the devolution to the minimum required for meeting constitutional enactment. An immediate factor of crucial importance is to recognize that by and large state legislators have not been particularly enthusiastic about devolving more powers to the panchayats. This is found across the several political parties in the country. Except for the fact that decentralisation had strong supporters at various times, it is unlikely that such legislation to devolve powers to the panchayats would have succeeded. Having said that, decentralization in India has reached a point where it is unlikely to be derailed or brought down.

The important limitation that all institutions of local government (panchayats) have is that they are financially almost entirely dependent on the state government and the federal government. Only the third tier of the panchayat institution, the gram panchayats, can raise funds through local taxes. This is found virtually all over the country. However, the problem which gram panchayat representatives in some states face is that their capacity to tax their own neighbours makes them unpopular with the other residents of the villages, and it restricts their ability to use any coercive measure to ensure the payment of taxes. In some cases, therefore, even if taxes are imposed, their collection is not very effective. This may not be the case in states such as Kerala and Karnataka, where local revenues are able to provide substantial contributions (particularly in gram panchayats

3 See for example, George Mathew, ed. Panchayati Raj in Karnataka Today: its national dimensions, Institute of Social Sciences and Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1986

of Kerala) to the panchayats' services.[4] As institutions, which can effectively reduce poverty, the panchayats have not had any notable success.[5]

Government agencies in India tend to look at the panchayats as instruments of service delivery and for implementing government schemes to reduce poverty and other development activities. Panchayats are not always seen as institutions of governance and democracy, which provide scope for people to participate in decision making or in local planning. Thus, an unfortunate outcome is that gram sabhas (people's assemblies) are not usually attended by the 10% of the local population required as a quorum. People tend to attend the gram sabhas only when they see an individual benefit or when they can be effective participants in planning activities.

Table 2: Key SDC decentralisation support in India

Name of Project	Starting Date	Focus	Implementation	Type of Project	Financial volume per phase
Capacity Development for Decentralisation in Kerala (Capdeck)	01.07.1999	Empowerment of Panchayat Raj institutions (local authorities) (including capacity development)	SDC	Local governance Bilateral	Phase 1: 4'605'000 CHF Phase 2: 3'650'000 CHF
PRIA Strengthening local self-governance in India	01.07.2000	Improve the functioning of Panchayat Raj institutions and strengthening of people's participation	PRIA	Local governance Bilateral	Phase 1: 720'000 CHF Phase 2: 900'000 CHF
PRISMO, Panchayati Raj institutions' support and mobilisation programme (Rajasthan)	01.07.2002	Support to people driven and centred democratic decentralisation (through mobilisation of people's assemblies; capacity building of elected members; advocacy)	SDC	Local governance Bilateral	Phase 6: 4'700'000 CHF
The Hunger Project, Decentralisation	01.06.2004	Empowerment of women elected representatives; advocacy	THP	Local governance Bilateral	Phase 1: 3'500'000 CHF
Indo-Swiss Project Sikkim (since 2002: one project component on decentralisation)	01.04.2002 (original project dates back from 1993, but decentralisation component only from 2002)	Strengthen Panchayati Raj institutions and civil society organisations to become institutions of participatory self-governance	SDC	Local governance Bilateral	Phase 7 (last): 1'500'000 CHF
Community Rehabilitation and Empowerment in post-tsunami	01.08.2005	Empowerment and capacity building of Panchayats for effective local selfgovernance for disaster preparedness and management	3 local NGOs	Local governance Bilateral	Phase 1: 1'450'000 CHF

4 Sethi, Geeta, 2004. ed., Fiscal decentralization to rural governments in India, The World Bank, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

5 A major concern is that fiscal decentralisation has not been taken on board as a key dimension of the overall decentralisation policy.

The major issue for SDC in the Indian context is whether it is beneficial for the development partners if SDC remains active in the local government area. This concern is underscored by the Indian Federal Government decision to keep smaller bilateral donors away from direct relations with local government institutions. The current arrangement involving large Indian NGOs does only partly resolve the issue of risking losing institutional alignment.

For support to decentralisation the proliferation of activities in several states is an issue. Intensive support to local government development on a holistic basis is not possible with the approach taken. The different projects are spread over several states in both North and South India.

Capacity building forms a crucial objective in most of the decentralisation projects. This is of particular significance since most people who enter the panchayats are either new to politics or new to holding elective positions, and they need training in how they should function in the panchayats. Even the projects, which were initiated as a reaction to the tsunami of December 2004, have included issues of governance, participation and women's empowerment.

3.4 Mali

Mali opted for a comprehensive decentralisation reform in 1992 and followed through with a series of legislations that culminated in the first local government elections being held in 1999. Councils were elected in 703 communes for a five-year term and a second set of elections took place in 2004.

Although decentralisation is acquired at a political level, and communal powers are determined in legislation, fiscal transfers to the local governments remain very poor: 75% of the national budget is spent by central ministries in Bamako, 24% by deconcentrated ministries and 1% goes to the "collectivités territoriales". These are extreme figures considering the adopted decentralisation policy, even in West Africa.

The government established a national agency to make financial resources available to local governments, the Agence Nationale pour l'Investissement des Collectivités Territoriales (ANICT). Although the collectivités territoriales may apply directly to the agency for investment funding, the level of funds available falls far short of the financing requirements of communes.

In addition to this financial instrument, a technical body has been created to provide technical support to communes in the implementation of their investment projects.

The increase in budget support as a financing instrument tends to concentrate donor funding at the central government level and reduces the local governments' ability to access external donor funding directly.

Key external donors in terms of decentralisation are France and the EU that commit many times the total funding provided by SDC. In this context the SDC office in Mali (BUCO) has opted for a direct funding approach to local governments, by-passing most intermediaries and effectively moving in the opposite direction of that taken by the vast majority of the donor community in Mali.

BUCO's approach to "cutting out the middlemen" extends to its historic sub-contracting relationship with both Swiss and local NGOs; Helvetas is wrapping up its last SDC pro-

ject and BUCO does not intend to renew this cooperation nor to seek cooperation with a Malian NGO in the near future.

Despite its position and approach, the BUCO considers itself a privileged partner of the Ministère des Collectivités Territorials and seeks to play a role of initiator and ground-breaker in terms of modes of assistance, and to influence donors and players involved at the local government level. As such, the BUCO sees its approach more in terms of support to local governance than as a support to decentralisation per se.

The BUCO seeks to accompany local government partners in their development and considers that the initiatives should come from the collectivités territoriales themselves. There is a concerted effort by BUCO to finance projects that support, among others, local and regional economic development.

Mali: Event for the promotion of local artists, Sikasso Region. Photo by PAD, Helvetas, Mali

Table 3: Key SDC decentralization support in Mali

Name of Project	Starting Date	Focus	Implementation	Type of Project	Financial volume per phase
Mali 35	01.07.2001	Prestations Helvetas PAD, Budget opérationnel PAD, Budget appui financier PAD, Contribution Buco à ANICT,	Helvetas	Local governance Developpement rural	4'285'000 CHF
Mali 35	01.10.2004	Evaluations PAD et Actions Buco Helvetas Mali, Appui conseil, Dispositif CCC, Equipe PAD terrain, Frais opérateur local, Opérations transitoires Appui financier aux communes	Helvetas	Local governance Deconcentration Developpement rural + Decentralisation	2'480'000 CHF

3.5 Peru

The Peruvian Constitution of 1979 established decentralisation as a cornerstone of government development for the 1980's. The trend was however reversed with the presidency of Fujimori (1990-2000) who sought to centralise control and government functions in order to bring macro-economic stability to the country while countering the insurgency by the Shining Path guerilla group among others. At his departure the decentralisation process was rekindled, with both parties to the elections promoting it: Perú Posible (Toledo) and el APRA (Garcia). The election of Alejandro Toledo (2001-2006) led to a reinstatement of the decentralisation process most notably with the creation of regional governments whose officials are elected.

The National Council on Decentralisation (CND) is the national body that is legally and politically mandated to direct and oversee Peru's decentralisation process. Its president is appointed at the ministerial level and participates in the council of ministers but cannot vote. The CND has not involved itself directly with decentralisation issues although it has sought to maintain it as a priority focus of government management. The CND is currently being re-organised.

The ministry of Economy and Finance has a key role through its responsibility to implement participatory budgets and the integrated system of financial administration as well as oversee the public investment system.

Of the 187 competencies that are destined to be transferred to regional governments, only 87 have been transferred to date. They concern mostly administrative responsibilities. The regional governments were not provided with the necessary resources for fulfilling their sub-national roles and responsibilities.

The redistribution system for transferring resources from the central to regional governments is pegged to the amount of taxes collected from regions so that transfers are unequal and to the advantage of those few regions that have a rich tax base, i.e. mining, gas and oil. As such, only 6 of the 25 regions benefit from this system and there is growing frustration and resentment in other regions that threatens the current government's decentralisation agenda.

The Association of Municipalities, created in the 1990's, plays a role of interlocutor vis-à-vis the central government while attempting to provide advice and access to technical assistance for local governments.

A key demand of regional governments is fiscal decentralisation and this will be a priority issue over the coming year.

Major donors involved in decentralisation in Peru include USAID, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, Spain, the Netherlands and Germany.

Activities of SDC in Peru include:

Program of Support to Decentralization in Rural Areas (APODER)
The project's main purpose is to contribute to the decentralization process through the development of participatory experiences of local management that produce local development opportunities and help in the fight against poverty. APODER is in the first stage of operation (2004–2007) and it is present in three regions of extreme poverty.[6] It institutionally strengthens five associations of municipalities (53 municipalities directly and 150 indirectly). The project operates by means of cooperation agreements and technical assistance in partnership with local NGOs specialized in each topic. It is directly related to decentralization in local areas. It does not develop any direct political activities.[7] The policy conditions are quite difficult. APODER participates with other programs of the international cooperation –Caprodes, Spanish Cooperation, Prodes (American cooperation), Agorah (EU), and CARE– in a group where experiences of management, materials and analysis of the decentralization process are exchanged.

Project "Support for Ombudsman Five-Year Program"
The project contributes to the fulfillment of human rights in Peru by promoting democratic institutionalism and the inclusion of the poorest people, taking equity into account. It operates by means of the "basket fund", implemented together with the Peruvian Agency of International Cooperation (APCI), the Swedish Agency of International Cooperation, the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation, the Belgian Agency of International Cooperation, and the Canadian Agency of International Cooperation.

Project "Access to Justice"
The project aims to promote equal access to justice for the rural population of the country by means of strengthening communal justice systems and their connection with formal justice. It operates through local NGOs.

Project "Basic Environmental Sanitation in the Southern Highlands"
The project strengthens participatory management abilities of regional, local and communal governments so that they can better assume their responsibility in basic rural sanitation and in providing sustainable services. This project is in the last stage of execution after an implementation period of ten years. Its counterparts are: Regional Office of Health and Employment, Regional Government of Cusco, Ministry of Housing and Construction, and municipalities. Its expertise has allowed it to promote public policies in basic sanitation at the local, regional and national levels.

Project "Sustainable Management of Land and Water in Laderas"
The project promotes self-strengthening of institutional and human abilities of municipalities and economic and social organizations for the coordinated management of natural resources. The project started in 1997; Phase III is currently under implementation. Its counterparts are the Ministry of Agriculture and the Regional Government of Cusco. Its impact is remarkable in districts. The project works with local and national NG's. It is part of the group for Territorial Zoning, together with GTZ, SNV and AECI.

Program of Support for Small and Micro Businesses (SMB) in Peru
The project aims to improve competitiveness and negotiation power of Small and Micro Businesses, promoting coordinated economic development. Its counterpart is the Vice-Ministry of Employment and SMB Promotion. This project is executed by the Swiss NGO Intercooperation, it is associated to the center of Research, Study and Development Promotion MINKA-Peru. The project started its operations in 2005.

6 Cajamarca, Cusco and Apurimac. Paradoxically, these 3 regions have been favored by the export-mining boom, having more public resources at their disposal, which come from taxes on mining and gas companies.

7 REMURPE (Rural Municipalities Network of Peru) is the main counterpart, and is the institution in charge of duties with incidence in national policy.

Table 4: Key SDC decentralization support in Peru

Name of Project	Starting Date	Focus	Imple-menta-tion	Type of Project	Financial volume per phase
APODER	15.10 2002	Support to different key-actors of decentralisation at local, regional and central level in order to en-hance their participation and social control in political processes and management of public funds. Strengthening capacities for the promotion of LED. Support to other SDC programmes in Peru for work-ing with decentralised structures and linking up with different actors.	Direct, backstop-ping IC	Network Local governance	Phase. 1: 600'000 CHF Phase 2: 3'700'000 CHF

COSUDE PERU's decentralization approach is relevant because it is connected to the national context and its priorities. It is also closely linked to SDC's strategic orientations regarding decentralisation.

Peru: Participative budgeting: a concrete contribution to local governance

3.6 Rwanda

Rwanda is in the process of major local government reforms, and the donor community is contributing to different types of support and cooperation. Rwanda's political context is an authoritarian tradition and extensive centralisation on the one hand, and the genocide on the other hand. Rwanda comes from an extremely centralised political tradition with little or no options for popular participation. The decentralisation policy is thus a new fea-ture, which is not easily taken on board.

The genocide resulted in 3.5 million external refugees and a similar number of internally displaced people in 1994. Poverty is widespread (70% in 1998) and the return of massive numbers of refugees in 1996-97 has aggravated this problem. In this perspective policies to protect and promote national unity, security matters and rapid social development have been given high priority. The political situation has been complicated, and a new consensus and national beginning not easy to achieve.

Decentralisation and democratisation are adopted as strategies for local social development. In May 2000 the Council of Ministers approved a policy and strategy for decentralisation based on constitutional provisions. The decentralisation policy is rather ambitious, bearing holistic features and aiming at social development assisted through means of popular participation. Improved local service delivery has thus been at the core of the new decentralisation policy.

Decentralisation is constrained by a lack of capacity at the different levels of administration and a weak coordination between tiers. The very concept of decentralisation is poorly conceived by many key players. Fiscal resources and infrastructure are lacking in many areas. The second phase of decentralisation (2004–2008) is confronted with these challenges. One of the achievements so far is the new demarcation of administrative units merging 106 districts into 30 and 1,956 so-called sectors (secteurs, i.e. lower-level local government units) into 416 and 9,165 cells into 2,150. On top of this a new system of units of 50-150 households called “imidugudu” has been established, but not to enhance public service delivery.

The set-up of the SDC supported programme in Rwanda is a classical project design with a separate project office in the field operated by a Swiss agency. The project design does not allow full integration into the institutional structures of the local government system. SDC has been rather weak in relation to the development of new decentralisation policies. The coordination and coherence between donors is not ideal. The strategic input to the government is mostly done by other donors than SDC. Rwanda is characterised by rather diversified donor approaches to decentralisation support.

Many donors are present in decentralisation related programmes including DFID, GTZ, SIDA, UNDP, WB and others.

Table 5: Key SDC decentralisation support in Rwanda

Name of Project	Starting Date	Phases	Focus	Implementation	Type of Project	Financial volume per phase
Projet paix et décentralisation	01.08.2002 - 31.12.2002 01.01.2003 - 31.12.2004 01.01.2005 - 28.02.2006 01.03.2006 - 31.05.2007 01.06.2007 – 31.12.2009	Phase d’entrée en matière Phase 1 Phase 2 Phase 3 Phase 4	Projet d'appui aux municipalités de Kibuye. Coopération avec le Community development fund (CDF), fond étatique de financement des investissement municipaux Formation des élus et CDF	Tulum, Buco pour le CDF	Local governance area based project in partnership with several municipalities, network with national level	500’000 CHF 3’900’000 CHF 2’150’000 CHF 1’350’000 CHF 5’475’000 CHF

As regards the overall portfolio of the SDC presence in Rwanda a brief description in the country study points to the following (see Annex E for the full country study):

> Dans l'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda, les principales interventions de la DDC sont au nombre de trois programmes à savoir (i) le Programme d'appui à la décentralisation dans les districts de Karongi et Rutsiro, (ii) le Programme d'appui au Fond Commun de Développement et (iii) le Programme d'appui au système de santé (PSP) dans les districts de Karongi et Rustiro (Budget PSP 2007-2009 4'990'000 CHF).
>
> Les deux premiers programmes qui sont les plus liés à la mise en oeuvre du processus de décentralisation sont la continuité de l'ancien Programme Paix et Décentralisation (PED) qui couvrait toute l'ancienne Province de Kibuye (six anciens districts) depuis 2003, dont la première phase s'est achevé en décembre 2004 et devait être suivie d'une période de transition de 2005 devant permettre d'élaborer les documents de la seconde phase qui était prévue de 2006 à 2008.
>
> Toutefois, suite aux récentes réformes administratives et restructuration du territoire dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de la deuxième phase de la décentralisation au Rwanda, cette phase de transition a été prolongée à l'année 2006 pour permettre au programme de s'ajuster aux réformes et restructurations susmentionnées. Il est pour le moment en préparation de la planification de la deuxième phase (2007-2010) des deux premiers programmes susmentionnés.

Rwanda provides a good example of executing decentralisation and sector programmes in the same geographical location.

4 Methodological issues

4.1 Information and data collection

The evaluation has been guided by the main evaluation matrix depicted below in table 6, which defines the main levels of analysis and the key evaluation variables. The methodology and approach was carefully described in the preparatory stages of the evaluation and in the Approach Paper.

The collection of data included firstly that the SDC Evaluation Unit supplied the consultant with all key documents both at the central level, and, assisted by the country offices, also from the five participating countries.

Secondly, a Flash Survey was initiated by the Evaluation Unit and distributed to all relevant staff members (see annexes). The Flash Survey is reflected in the present report and was particularly helpful in the early stages of the evaluation.

Thirdly, a desk questionnaire was sent to all five countries in preparation of the country visits. However, these were not in all cases completed before the initial country visits were conducted, but they nevertheless provided valuable information. The desk questionnaires have been received from all five countries with a few omissions, where the questions may have been difficult to answer.

Fourthly, interviews were conducted on three occasions at SDC Berne and in partner organisations in Berne and Zurich. Presentations of early findings and ideas were done on two occasions in Berne, which provided good feedback to the evaluators. Debriefings

were done by the international evaluators at the end of their brief, introductory visits. More formal debriefings were conducted by the national consultants when presenting their draft country study reports.

4.2 Methodology and approach

Specifically, the evaluation design includes a multiple case study with literal replication. This means that each country has been treated as a case in which the local evaluator was obliged to:

- Analyse the relationships between the key characteristics (or variables) of SDC, the national context, the implementing organisation and the programme or project and their influence on the effectiveness, sustainability and relevance of decentralisation programmes, projects and other means of cooperation;
- Conclude what factors enhance and impede the success of cooperation on measures to enhance decentralisation efforts in the countries selected for evaluation;
- Recommend actions to improve the results of cooperation on decentralisation.

The main methodological considerations guiding the evaluation team have been listed and the methods to enhance validity and reliability mentioned. The multiple sources of evidence from written and oral sources, and the possibilities offered by SDC to do follow-up interviews in Berne have greatly contributed to better reliability and validity.

Standardised and semi-structured interviews were used all through the evaluation based on the evaluation questions raised in the Approach Paper. Personal interviews were conducted under the condition that individual persons would not be quoted directly. Follow-up interviews plus additional information from external sources has been collected.

The methodology depicted in
Annex H (which was a key part of the technical proposal's approach) has been carefully followed throughout the evaluation as can be seen from the additional comments inserted in parentheses in the last column of the table. The opportunity of having the international consultants together with the national consultants in all five countries and the combination of desk study, questionnaires, direct interviews and the detailed evaluations from the national consultants have contributed importantly to the construction of internal and the external validity. Reliability has been assured through standardised and controlled procedures for data collection and handling. The country case studies have been compared and analysed by the international NCG evaluation team who has identified across the cases similar factors, i.e. pattern matching, that affect positively and negatively the outcomes of decentralisation measures.

In Annex I the ensemble of evaluation questions are presented. In table 6 the levels of analysis are combined with main evaluation variables. All evaluation questions will fit into the cells of the matrix. Only a selection of the main issues are indicated in the table cells.

Table 6: Evaluation analysis matrix

Analytical variables / Levels of analysis	Relevance	Effectiveness	Sustainability	Comparative advantage
SDC Berne	Programme relevance	Programme designs	Institutional approach	Experience; reputation; quality
SDC country offices	Appropriateness of available expertise	Implementation and supervisory capacity	Exit strategies; capacity building	Flexibility, expertise, durability
Programme/ project execution	Perception among end-users and local authorities	Detailed design; quality of implementation	Input to decentralisation agencies and actors	Linkage to decentralisation experience
National policy context	Interplay with national decentralisation policies	Appropriateness and responsiveness	Linkage to national reform policies and strategies	Reputation; neutrality; commitment

The four levels are characterised as follows:

1) SDC Berne level includes all offices and functions with a relation to country offices and any agencies such as Swiss NGOs involved in execution, planning and control of projects and programmes.
2) Country offices are agencies of SDC. As SDC is an organisation with a relatively high degree of decentralisation the country offices will also be analysed according to the main analytical variables.
3) Programme and project level is the level of execution of development cooperation and may also include other ways and means of development cooperation, donor coordinated initiatives etc., which includes cooperation initiated from SDC Berne and a partner of cooperation, projects between SDC country offices and local partners and multi-donor projects. All these means of cooperation need to be taken on board in the evaluation.
4) National policy context includes the national, regional and local frameworks and working conditions of a legal, institutional, cultural, economic and environmental nature that set the operational parameters for the SDC development cooperation and particularly for the relevance of the measures of programmes and projects.

The four key evaluation variables have been defined as follows:

Relevance
Relevance is here defined as the appropriateness of development cooperation measures in their capacity to enhance decentralisation of public service management, better local living conditions and good governance at the local level. Relevance of the SDC supported measures is seen in relation to SDC policy, partner country context, and state-of-the-art discourse. The higher the degree of relevance for programmes and projects, the more development cooperation will assist the communities, local government units and other actors involved in sub-national governance to enhance the institutional arrangements and performance of social service providers (better public service delivery, better financial management, better means of participation, enhanced accountability), leading in turn lead to improved social conditions in the communities. *Relevance will thus be assessed in relation to the assessed and recognised benefits for the target groups of interventions.*

Effectiveness
This evaluation variable relates to the degree to which programmes and projects supported by SDC are leading to the expected results as agreed between the partners of cooperation and seen in relation to improvement of local conditions as per the project or programme document. The main issue in relation to effectiveness is to what extent the decentralisation measures supported by SDC achieve the expected outputs and intended outcomes. What are the unintended outcomes, if any? The execution of projects and programmes is influenced by the contextual conditions. Implementation through non-governmental agencies is included in the assessment of effectiveness. Efficiency is not part of the design for the present evaluation.

There is little new added to the traditional definition of this concept. However, it is important to see effectiveness (to which extent a programme or project objective is accomplished) *in the context of sustainability and in particular institutional sustainability.*
A combination of sustainability considerations with effectiveness considerations in the evaluation may provide slightly different results than relying on an assessment of each of the three main evaluation variables independently.

Effectiveness may also be considered in relation to an intended, gradual move towards over-all strategic goals for cooperation on decentralisation policies.

Sustainability
Sustainability is measured in accordance to two dimensions: Institutional sustainability and impact sustainability.

Institutional sustainability is the degree to which decentralisation measures from programme and project cooperation are set in the context of legal, organisational and fiscal structures or reforms of the country of cooperation and assisting to build and maintain these institutions. Institutionalisation should thus be assessed in relation to its ability to contribute to a more solid basis for decentralisation measures independent of any future donor support.

Impact sustainability is the extent to which results of a programme or project can be expected to be maintained in the longer perspective. It is assumed that a high degree of sustainability represents a solid impact.

Comparative advantage
Comparative advantage is the relative advantage of SDC approaches, programmes and projects dealing with decentralisation compared to other agencies' involvement in cooperation on decentralisation and local government reform.

In Annex A all the evaluation questions are presented. Country study reports follow a standardised structure given to the national consultants.

5 Decentralisation support of other donors and of SDC compared

5.1 Typical approaches to decentralisation

Donors are engaged in different ways and modes of cooperation on decentralisation, and the general picture is thus quite varied. Main categories of cooperation include the following approaches:

1. Traditional project approach: In its traditional form the project has its own management, its own reporting system, the project reports and refers to the donor agency, and the project operates within a defined, local territory. This approach is still the most typical and frequent approach and is seen more or less also within SDC's portfolio.
2. Projects with a programmatic design, where LGAs have the executive and the management responsibilities in relation to mutually agreed areas of activity supported financially and by means of capacity building, but the donor still has decisive influence through a steering committee (usually determined as veto-powers).
3. Programme design, where a broad-based support to local government reforms is provided. Cooperation will typically be with the Ministry responsible for local government or a particular government agency responsible for development and execution of the local government reform. Support will ideally be provided to an agreed action plan and budget for the reform steps.
4. Budget support with a support to institutional development of existing or reforming structures. Budget support can be directed at local government units, but needs to be channelled through.

5.2 The general picture

A general conclusion of a recent report to the EC points to the following, sobering conclusions:[8]

"In spite of donors general commitment to joint financing and programming, the dominating approach for delivering donor support to decentralisation and local governance is still a project approach where each donor supports a discrete project with its own project institutional arrangements.

Project budget size varies, but many of the projects surveyed are very small – and the average budget of the 500 projects surveyed is 4-6 million Euros with a substantial number of projects with budgets below 500,000 Euro.

From the information availed it is not always clear how many of these projects are supporting comprehensive national decentralisation reform efforts where major decentralisation reform aspects (legal, policy, political, fiscal, and human resources) are addressed in a substantive manner. Only approximately 10% of the projects surveyed can be categorised in this manner."

8 Survey on support to local governance and decentralisation. For the informal donor working group on local governance and decentralisation. Final report, December 2006. DEGE Consult and NCG.

It is thus clear that SDC's main operational modalities are, despite the Paris Declaration, in line with a large part of donor-supported interventions, except perhaps for the heavy reliance on NGOs. In the following section the funding modalities are shown. However, it seems also clear that SDC is definitely not in the more advanced part of the donor group, and that SDC relies on a project approach, which will make it difficult to contribute in a big way to reform of local governance.
SDC's philosophy to support participatory aspects of local governance may contribute to the institutional development of local governance, but only if these projects are internalised in the over-all reform process and made part of a general reform strategy for the particular country (or state).

5.3 Funding modalities

Table 7 presents the preferred funding modalities from various bilateral and multilateral donors. What should be added to this quantitative overview are some qualitative remarks. There are countries in the process of major local government reforms, whereas other countries are less prone to decentralise. In the case of a local government reform in execution or in preparation, the issue is whether a strategic and relevant support is provided, whether donors are setting the agenda for the reform process or whether donor support is strategically aimed at supporting the national processes that are preparing the reform execution. However, also taking these qualitative aspects into consideration it seems clear that partaking in local government reform policy preparation and strategy development is not one of the main SDC priorities.

Table 7: Various donor-funding modalities[9]

Agency	Multi-donor / Basket / Budget Support	Individual Programme/ Project Support
Belgium/BTC	4	17
Denmark/Danida	2 joint funding programme support activities	10 (many projects but they are within sectors and not reported)
EC/EuropeAid	3 sector budget support 1 basket funding 7 multi-donor trust fund	54 projects of which 48 follow EC procedures and 3 follow national procedures
France/DGCID/AFD	No info	36 (more projects but within sectors and not reported)
Germany/GTZ/KFW/InWent	Info not sufficient to deduct how many of the supported programmes and projects have basket funding or budget support elements	276 (many more projects with decentralisation and/or local governance might exist within sector support)
9Netherlands/DGIS	Earmarked 15 Non-earmarked 4	81 projects
Swiss/SDC	Bolivia presents one example of SDC using this approach	28

Table 7 indicates that SDC relies on project support rather than on advanced and combined efforts to support local government reform processes on a broader scale. SDC has in many cases relied on, what has been labelled to be pilot or demonstration projects. This approach is definitely justified, but the critical question to be discussed is: Are the pilot or demonstration projects appreciated as pilots by the relevant national or local authorities and seriously considered for national implementation?

9 See footnote 6.

Funding of projects has generally been through a rather traditional project method and not through more advanced modes of cooperation. In the context of partner countries, most of these have had autocratic and hierarchical regimes, where decentralisation reforms require major changes in regime forms and strengthening of fragile state institutions.
Basket funding arrangements are currently outside the scope of SDC's decentralisation cooperation. With projects aiming at being demonstration projects or even official pilot projects the main issue is whether the limited fiscal resources from SDC would be best utilised when pooled together with a number of other and probably bigger donor contributions into a basket fund arrangement. Or would Impact be better through demonstration and pilot arrangements? For demonstration and pilot arrangements it should be remembered that procedural arrangements should be in place and recognised by the authorities to assess and, in case of positive evaluations, implement the pilot arrangement on a large scale.

6 Project portfolio and cooperation with other organizations

There are clear patterns in the Swiss cooperation on decentralisation issues. A systematic view of the project portfolio on decentralisation and related issues presents the following picture of the five countries visited. SDC is deeply involved in input to lower-level governments and in participation and other aspects of input to these councils. Management is delegated to Swiss and national NGOs, projects are relatively small, cover small parts of the countries involved and resemble demonstration projects. The country offices are relatively autonomous in relation to SDC Berne and there are relatively few relations between the Thematic Department and the country offices' project responsibles.
There is not a fully universal and homogenous picture from the five countries (plus 16 others with decentralisation projects and programmes). The level of ambition differs with countries like Mali having an advanced and comprehensive approach to decentralisation and even moving into an urban area with the "Programme de Développement Social Urbain de la Ville de Koutiala" and Bulgaria at the other end of the scale with an interesting, but rather limited scope of decentralisation activities.

In the following tables a summarised view of the main thrust of the five country portfolios on decentralisation support is presented.

Table 8: Overview of the SDC project portfolio in five countries: Main thrust

Main thrust of projects	Bulgaria	India	Mali	Peru	Rwanda
Participation/ mobilisation	Citizens' forum	Participatory planning principles and practice	Civil society participatory support	Enhancing people's participation in budgeting, communication with civil society partners	Support to participatory planning and budgeting methods
Capacity building	Learning by doing with com-munity leaders and councillors. Training of 150 forum moderators. Training in PCM in each Municipality.	Village council members are trained; focus on women	Building capacity of actors. Information, proliferation and didactic development.	Enhancing the skills of municipal staff and community leaders to promote economic development	Capacity building of participants

Table 8: (ctd)

Main thrust of projects	Bulgaria	India	Mali	Peru	Rwanda
Local government finance	Forum hearings on local council budgets and small development grant (off budget)	Lacking	Focus on local, economic development and management. Moving to direct budget support to municipalities.	Local economic development training	Training in financial management
Relevance	Relevance is felt to be relatively high	Need of increased relevance with improved design	Good relevance	Relevance felt high among end-users	Need of enhanced relevance through better design

The main thrust of projects is definitely on the input-functions and in particular the participatory and awareness aspects. As for relevance there seems to be a mixed picture, and a need of re-design in two of the cases.

Table 9: Organisation of cooperation

Main thrust of projects	Bulgaria	India	Mali	Peru	Rwanda
SDC management	Phasing-out of Swiss projects and small staff at SDC	Delegated to NGOs for all execution	Delegated responsibilities	SDC project office management	Critically small staff at the BUCO makes SDC follow-up difficult
Swiss NGO management	Swiss consultant is involved but does not assume management tasks	Previous use of Swiss NGO expertise	Strong involvement of two major Swiss NGOs in previous implementation	Involvement of Peruvian professional associations	Swiss consulting group subcontracting local NGO
Swiss consultants	Swiss consultants involved	Involved in early stages of project development	Working with local government authorities	Country office appointed consultants	Project interventions managed by Swiss consulting group
Local NGO management	Several Bulgarian NGOs are involved in the organization and implementation of Forums	All implementation managed by large Indian NGOs	Swiss/Mali NGOs and local operator to be phased out	Working with specialised, local NGOs on implementation	Civil society very weak, but one NGO involved
Sustainability issues	Some uncertainty exists when funding dries up	Many activities dependent on external funding	Lack of serious fiscal decentralisation makes sustainability a key issue	The national policy environment makes sustainability uncertain	The political situation, the management of decentralisation and donor issues question sustainability

Involvement of Swiss and national NGOs is a dominating feature in the execution of projects and programmes, but also on this issue there are variations and developments. Delegation of duties to NGOs are discussed elsewhere in this report.

Table 10: Methodology and procedural arrangements

Main thrust of projects	Bulgaria	India	Mali	Peru	Rwanda
Approach taken	Pilot arrangements and building of a new institutional arrangement. Small development grants serve as incentives.	Geographical diversity has been applied. Small scale projects could be tried out, modified, and later implemented nation-wide.	On a regional basis contribute to development of structures. Municipal support	Rural development and local government support, but not SWAP	Pilot in two districts, but an institutionalised learning process not in place
Procedural arrangements	Agreements with the involved LGAs form the basis for operations of the Forum	Due to the Federal Government policy only indirect relations to government agencies are allowed	Cooperation with communes and with the Sikasso region	Relations with rural units, but missing relation to regional government level	Rwanda subdivided between donor-supported projects. Weak central coordination.
Conceptual understanding of decentralisation		Issues of governance, participation and women's empowerment are key concepts	Not depending on the general, SDC conceptual framework	Not certain if a general support to decentralisation is provided	General concept not playing any major role; more context-specific ideas are needed
Strategic approach	Pilots are hoped to be replicated in more municipalities	Capacity building directed at civil society and lowest tier political leaders	Decentralisation and mostly rural development	To promote the development of small, rural communes and strengthen their strategic position	Focus on participation and planning at pilot LGAs. Cooperation with the Health Programme in the same area
Effectiveness	Potentially the impact is relatively large from a small financial input	The effectiveness in a narrow sense seems to be relatively high, but the wider impact more uncertain	Because of the weak national policy framework effectiveness may be less than could be expected	Effectiveness is not hampered by design issues, but by difficult political and institutional conditions	A real pilot design has not been taken on board: diversified donor approaches reduce the over-all potential impact on decentralisation.

There are methodological and procedural aspects at stake. A stronger conceptual and institutional approach is needed in some cases, although there are examples of good solutions to these problems within the partner countries.

Table 11: Organisation, strategic issues and donor cooperation

Main thrust of projects	Bulgaria	India	Mali	Peru	Rwanda
SDC Berne thematic support	Citizens' forum is a centrepiece of SDC and has attracted the interest of other country desks	Infrequent and not seen as important, rather the other way, giving experience to Berne	Little need for and use of thematic support	Infrequent, looking forward to peer review	Infrequent
Strength and organisation of BUCO	Office is small	Strong delegation from country office to national NGOs	BUCO well staffed to manage the programme	Small and heavily burdened, but effective	Small and overburdened BUCO (serving as regional office)

Table 11: (ctd)

Main thrust of projects	Bulgaria	India	Mali	Peru	Rwanda
Cooperation with other donors	Cooperation will be phased-out	Not active because of difficult circumstances for bilateral donors	Searching for harmonisation with several other bilateral donors	Many other donors active in decentralisation support, subgroup has been formed	Lack of cooperation and coherence in the donor community
Cooperation with government and non-government agencies	Intense cooperation between local government officials and local NGOs	Not feasible to work with government. Lots of delegation to Indian NGOs.	Working with regional and local governments through the national branch of the Swiss NGO	Cooperation with five regional associations of rural communes	The situation is complex, and SDC not in a key position
Comparative advantages	Since Bulgaria is now in the EU a comparative advantage is not an issue	Small bilateral donors have comparative disadvantages in the present Indian context	Comparative advantage on local government exploited	Difficult to assess	There is some competition between donors, potential comparative advantages are difficult to utilise

There are several problems involved in donor coordination and full acceptance of the Paris Declaration principles on donor harmonization. SDC as a small donor present in many countries finds it difficult to play a leading role.

Tables 8-11 point to a number of similarities between the approaches taken in the five countries:

- Emphasis on input-functions (mobilisation, capacity, elections, general participation);
- Close cooperation with Swiss and national NGOs and delegation of functions to these agencies;
- A highly selective approach on support to local governance;
- Capacity of country offices in most cases quite stretched because of small number of staff. However, given the limited budget for the programmes and projects additional administrative costs would hardly be justified;
- Close cooperation with national ministries and agencies responsible for policy design is rarely found and represents a sustainability issue;
- Swiss comparative advantages, particularly on local government management issues, are not exploited;
- There are generally project and programme design issues at stake;
- In the partner countries not presented in the table (and in the sample) there is a similar tendency, although the cooperation in West Africa generally is broader-based and more aiming at local government reform. Bhutan is aiming particularly at enhancement of local finance management.

7 Strategic documents issued by SDC on decentralisation

The SDC Decentralisation Guide includes conceptual clarifications and some strategic concerns regarding development cooperation dealing with decentralisation issues. The chosen definition of decentralisation is taken from earlier World Bank Institute publica-

tions, and directly quoted from a 1999 publication.[10] The chosen decentralisation definition in the "Decentralisation Guide" is not sufficient to cover decentralisation reforms, institutional development and central-local relations. There is also a mix of concepts, which are not normally included as decentralisation such as deconcentration (which may be centralisation) and privatisation, which is another issue altogether. However, the definition has found its way also into regional strategic documents of SDC.

The definition is not a practical tool for practical cooperation on decentralisation and particularly not for coordination between sector programmes dealing with potentially decentralised social services and decentralisation support. The definition is inadequate to guide programme formulation and integration with the local government institutional framework. There is thus a need to develop a conceptual and methodological framework that can guide the country offices and other actors involved in programme development. There is a need for SDC to look at cooperation on decentralisation in a more holistic and strategic way, and the following conceptual clarification may apply. Decentralisation is often described as having four main dimensions[11]:

Political decentralisation, i.e local decision-making powers and democratic institutions. Political decentralisation includes central-local relations with devolution of powers from higher to lower administrative and political tiers, local councils having discretionary powers over own affairs.

Functional decentralisation, which is the subsidiarity principle for distribution of public service functions between tiers, i.e. public service management as close as possible to the end user. This issue relates to seeing decentralisation as a crosscutting concept with an impact on other sector programmes and projects.

Administrative decentralisation. This principle implies staff accountability lines to the relevant authority according to subsidiarity, i.e. local government staff is accountable to the respective local council and not to the line ministry in question.

Fiscal decentralisation, i.e. own revenue sources plus government grants are made available for local government councils with discretionary powers to set priorities and make fiscal allocations. Without fiscal decentralisation the other dimensions of decentralisation become rather empty. With this fourth dimension of

10 Decentralisation Briefing Notes, J. Litvack and J. Seddon, eds., World Bank Institute, Washington D.C. 1999, pp. 2 – 4. This work is building on much earlier publications by D. A. Rondinelli, e.g. Decentralisation in Developing Countries. A Review of Recent Experience, D.A. Rondinelli et al., World Bank Staff Working Papers Number 581, Management and Development Series Number 8, World Bank 1983. One of the problems with this school of thought is the mixing of privatisation with the issue of decentralisation of public structures, actors and processes. The definition is in clear contradiction to mainstream definitions of decentralisation among European researchers.

11 See for example Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government, Republic of Tanzania, Strategy Paper for Local Government Reform, 1998. In 1994, the Ministry of Local Government in Uganda summarised the decentralisation policy objectives as follows:
"In sum, decentralisation is a democratic reform, which seeks to transfer political, administrative, financial and planning authority from centre to local government councils. It seeks to promote popular participation, empower local people to make own decisions and enhance accountability and responsibility. It also aims at introducing efficiency and effectiveness in the generation and management of resources and the delivery of services." Decentralisation Secretariat, MOLG, 1994, "*Decentralisation in Uganda – The policy and its implications"*. Administrative decentralisation is defined as follows by the Uganda government: "*Administrative decentralisation* refers to the delinking of local authority staff from their respective ministries and bringing them under the control of the local authority; which includes procedures for establishing a local pay-roll." Joint Annual Review of Decentralisation for 2004. MOLG, Uganda, 2005.

decentralisation a holistic concept of decentralisation is presented, which at the same time points to the operational aspects of development cooperation.

The advantage with this definition and its four dimensions is that it is related directly to the practical governmental structures and functions and possible reforms of these structures and functions.

8 Findings and conclusions

In this Chapter findings and concluding observations are presented. Examples are drawn from the five country studies where they have particularly relevant observations that can highlight the evaluation discussion. The entire country studies are presented as annexes to this main report. The chapter is structured according to the four main analytical variables and the four tiers presented in table 6.

8.1 Relevance

Relevance has been defined as the appropriateness of development cooperation measures in their capacity to enhance decentralisation of public service management, better local living conditions and good governance at the local level. Relevance has thus been assessed in relation to the regard to recognised benefits for the target groups of interventions.

SDC general

With regard to SDC in general, there is no doubt that support to decentralisation in countries suffering from centralised, bureaucratic and inefficient public services is pertinent. SDC's activities are generally perceived as pertinent and welcome by the end-users. The democratic and participatory key aspects of the Swiss cooperation are particularly relevant in transitional countries and countries undergoing major changes or reforms such as Rwanda, Bulgaria and Mali.

A number of specific relevance issues apply:

- Building capacity of implementing NGOs, rather than of local governments is a problem for sustainability of the programmes;
- Exit strategies aiming at sustainability of a programme, although there is awareness of this problem, are generally not integrated into the programme designs;
- Institutional memory will in many cases remain with the NGOs rather than with SDC and the local government institutions;
- There is a risk of creating duplicate institutions outside the local government structures when not dealing directly with the local governments themselves;
- There is a risk that NGOs may set policy priorities contrary to or not fully in correspondence with local council priorities;
- Whereas relevance of the support to participatory arrangements in itself is high, a broader relevance would be achieved if a more holistic approach to decentralisation support was chosen;
- Relevance may be based on a diagnosis of the needs deriving from bottlenecks and de-railing of the intended policy cycle. Typical problems for local governments include: Transformation of priorities, plans, budgets and decisions into

execution of these policies; derailment of policy decisions by mismanagement or by high transaction costs and low local social service management capacity. Finally, distortion and poor financial management constitute areas of relevant interventions to enhance performance.

SDC approach to decentralisation

When SDC's approach to cooperation on decentralisation is summarised the following, over-all picture can be presented. In relation to local governments four main functional areas can be identified:

- Input functions to the political system, subdivided into political input such as elections, participation, recruitment of leaders and their formation on the one hand and fiscal inputs from transfers and own revenues on the other hand.

- The second functional area consists of the internal relations, procedures and activities within and between the political and administrative systems.

- The third functional area consists of outputs such as the provision of social services, social benefits and security, i.e. the service functions serving to reduce the consequences of poverty, regulations, control etc.

- The last functional area is feed-back into the policy process. These functional areas are presented in the following figure:

Table 12: Functional areas of local governments

Input Functions à	**Political system à**	**Output functions à**
Participation, recruitment, mobilisation, sensitisation, capacity building	Political system (national and local councils, standing committees)	Provision of public services, benefits, security, rights
Fiscal input, own revenues, transfers, budget support	Government administrative procedures, tiers, departments, public service management	Regulations, statutory plans, bye-laws, control, monitoring
		← **Feedback**

For SDC the main focus is and has been on input functions and relatively little in the other main functions, except where sector programmes are coordinated with decentralisation projects as in the case of Rwanda. There are examples of small budget transfers, but this is not a typical project activity.

Country offices

At the country office level the over-all picture is that the selected areas of cooperation are generally relevant, but also that the areas of cooperation are rather narrow in scope and in a few is it difficult to achieve the defined purpose.

In Mali SDC has supported the emerging local government system for more than a decade and the pertinence of this support are generally deemed to be high.

> "L'option générale prise par le BUCO de renforcer les collectivités territoriales à différents niveaux particulièrement dans la région de Sikasso, à travers la mise en place de dispositifs locaux facilitant un appui rapproché et élargi aux besoins pratiques, organisationnels et institutionnels des collectivités, apparaît globalement très pertinent."

The BUCO has, as one of the few cases, succeeded in positioning itself strategically in relation to the reform process and is highly appreciated by the various partners involved in the decentralisation process. The Mali country study can thus conclude that:

> "En inscrivant la gouvernance locale et la décentralisation comme une thématique transversale de l'intervention du BUCO au Mali, l'agence de coopération s'est inscrite dans la dynamique actuelle du développement politique et socio-économique et culturelle du Mali. En effet, la décentralisation constitue aujourd'hui la réforme fondamentale menée depuis l'élaboration et le vote de la nouvelle constitution du Mali votée en 1992. Le BUCO est donc en phase avec cette reforme et ses interventions sont très appréciées par les partenaires nationaux et les autres agences de coopération et ONG internationales intervenant à différents niveaux".

The problems related to country offices are on the one hand the weak, strategic position in relation to ministries and agencies responsible for local government and local government reforms and on the other hand the great challenges for small and often much stretched desk officers. These challenges were highlighted for Rwanda as follows:

> "Ces différentes attributions prouvent combien il était important et très approprié que le bureau de coordination puisse avoir une unité chargée de la gouvernance, en général et de la décentralisation en particulier pour renforcer la coopération dans le cadre de l'appui à la gouvernance locale et à l'amélioration des conditions de vie des citoyens de la zone appuyée."

Programme and project level

National policy and institutional context differs considerably between the countries visited, and certainly also for countries of cooperation with SDC not covered by the current evaluation. It seems that projects to a large extent take these context specific conditions into consideration.

One positive example of relevance was studied in the Bulgarian context:

The relevance of SDC programmes is confirmed by the synergetic effect of the measures related to the capacity of the civil society and the local administration to identify, discuss, and substantiate problem-solving projects with the aid of other donor programmes and projects. This results in an improved institutional capacity for provision of public services on a local level (and on more general levels for some services) by exploring the available sources of financing in order to solve a pertinent problem (improvement of the financial management)."

For India the following observation applies:

> "The projects are substantially relevant, to the efforts of decentralisation as well as the needs of the development of the institutions of decentralisation. However, the links with state governments in question also need to be emphasised. For the most part the projects that have been taken up through SDC support are on a relatively small scale, and deliberately so, it appears."

One concern raised is the variation in reception of decentralisation in different states and the difficulties encountered in one or two states compared to others. The small scale of projects may raise relevance questions, particularly if visibility is low and access to decision-makers is also low.

Project and programme weaknesses concerning relevance

- Coherence with wider reform perspectives for local governance is not evident;
- The programmes' local government reform strategic position is in most cases not sufficiently strong to make a bigger impact on development of the local government system;
- There is a bias on input activities to local government units rather than on systemic and output functions such as service management under decentralised governance conditions, but some sector projects deal with the output functions;
- A single-tier approach, i.e. support to only one tier of government such as the village level is questionable concerning relevance related to poverty alleviation and LED. This was highlighted in the Indian country study: "As institutions, which can effectively reduce poverty, the panchayats have not had any notable success.[12]

8.2 Effectiveness

SDC Berne

Effectiveness can be seen in a narrow sense related directly to project goals and objectives. But effectiveness can also be seen in a broader context, where sustainability concerns are included and the larger developmental objectives concerning decentralisation are considered. For the evaluation it has been important to see effectiveness (to which extent a programme or project objective is accomplished) *in the context of sustainability and in particular institutional sustainability*, which refers to the extent development cooperation will provide lasting, institutional results pertaining to decentralised governance.

With the high extent of decentralisation of BUCOs the effectiveness of SDC Berne depends on other means than the traditional and bureaucratic methods of control. However, for development of new projects and programmes SDC Berne has a major and decisive influence.

Flexibility and good relations generally characterise the internal relations, which fosters effectiveness in a good working environment. However, with resources thinly spread over projects and countries, effectiveness is not easily achieved for the decentralisation support.

The support of SDC's Thematic Department to operational units, i.e. SDC country offices

- For obvious reasons the relations between the Thematic Department at SDC Berne, with one 80% allocation and one part-time (50%) staff member at the Decentralisation Desk, and the many country offices are infrequent;
- What *can* the Thematic Department do in relation to country offices/BUCOs? It seems that the organisational model is not optimal and may not foster effectiveness in the promotion of decentralisation. Some country offices are not particularly interested in any support from the Thematic Department (and it needs to be emphasised that this is definitely not for personal reasons).

In Chapter 10 this issue is deliberated further and recommendations are offered in Chapter 11.

12 See M. Govinda Rao, 2002. "Fiscal decentralization in Indian federalism," in Ehtisham Admad and Vito Tanzi, eds., *Managing Fiscal Decentralization,* Routledge, London. Rao, M. Govinda 2002. "Poverty alleviation under fiscal decentralization," in M. Govinda Rao, ed., *Development, Poverty, and Fiscal Policy: Decentralization of Institutions,* Oxford University Press, Delhi.

Country offices

At this level the effectiveness in its narrower interpretation is considered to be relatively high because of several factors:

- The feasibility of projects and programmes selected for implementation is high, the project design realistic, and the scale is relatively small;
- There is a comparative flexibility in SDC's management also at the country office level, although some offices seem to be rather over-burdened because of their smallness and the diversification of projects and geographical zones of operation;
- SDC seems to be good at selecting solid and reliable partners of cooperation, which ensures effectiveness of the projects.

Generally, the strengths and weaknesses at the country office level vary. The following observations apply:

Strengths

- Promotion of municipal associations with the cooperation agencies and of debate spaces for the civil society are areas of SDC strength;
- Support to civil society and to participatory arrangements, capacity building etc.
- Capacity development for the agents of the decentralisation process particularly concerning the input side.

Weaknesses

- There is often no explicit strategy for the national impact on decentralisation;
- The visibility of SDC projects' contribution to the national decentralisation process is weak;
- Sometimes too much reliance on NGOs and other external agencies' implementation and too little direct cooperation with local government bodies.
- Incorporation of a vision of LED in rural local area is often not evident.

Programme and project level

Effectiveness seems generally to be high at the programme or project level. One example of this comes from Bulgaria, where the country study concluded that:

"The Forum Programme demonstrates a high degree of effectiveness of achievement of its goals. Even in the cases of deviations of public forums of their principles the overall effect on the local communities was greater than the effect of other donors' programmes and projects."

Also in Peru the over-all assessment is positive:

> "APODER has remarkably contributed to the decentralization process from its rural work field. In this face of implementation it has consolidated as a public policy the subject of local economic development. Furthermore, its strategy to improve the relationship between the state and the citizens, promoting spaces of debate and coordination, has been very effective."

However, in the broader perspective problems have been identified, but also some very good progress is anticipated. The Mali country report states on effectiveness:

> "Les programmes en cours sont en train de développer des initiatives d'accompagnement de la maîtrise d'ouvrage du dispositif technique par les collectivités territoriales, un enjeu majeur de la décentralisation au Mali. Quelques résultats inattendus ont été obtenus et à titre d'exemple, les appuis de la DDC au Mali sont en train d'inspirer d'autres services de coopération à changer leur démarche d'appui au processus de décentralisation au Mali".

In the Bulgarian case it is debated whether the Citizens' Forum will survive and multiply when main donors pull out. One of the executing NGOs is 90% dependent upon two donors, SDC and USAID. Also the small scale raises some concerns:

- The size of the programmes implemented by SDC defines to a large extent the force of their impact in the target areas. Although significant for a country the size of Bulgaria, in the period 2005–-2006 their capacity to initiate and stimulate changes declined with the growth of the price levels following the medium-term trend of convergence with the European price levels.
- Another restrictive factor was the number of programmes included in the portfolio of SDC Bulgaria. The availability of a greater number of programmes fragmented the resources and impaired their efficiency. We should also take into account the administration costs, which are a more or less permanent expenditure and hinder the target impact, too.

National policy and institutional context

The national policy context is presenting challenges and serious problems in most cases. An example of this is from Peru, where the distance between principles and practice presents obstacles for the decentralisation cooperation:

> "The current decentralisation process has a legal framework that consists of laws for local and regional governments and laws that encourage citizen participation, transparency and accountability at the local and regional level. However, important topics such as fiscal decentralization, the system of transfers to sub-national governments . . . have not been considered yet.

We conclude that there are regulations, which consider the interests of target groups. However, their disobedience makes the results more formal than real; therefore, the decentralization process has not had an impact on the quotidian life of this country's poorest and excluded people."

With the over-all emphasis on participation and the input-aspects of local governance the tasks are often complicated, new and in contradiction to the previous and sometimes still prevailing, authoritarian power structures. Despite these problems effectiveness is generally good. Fiscal decentralisation is typically mentioned as an area where SDC could contribute and enhance cooperation.

8.3 Sustainability

Sustainability is measured in accordance to two dimensions: Institutional sustainability and impact sustainability.

Institutional sustainability is seen as the degree to which decentralisation measures from programme and project cooperation are set in the context of legal, organisational and fiscal structures or reforms of the country of cooperation and assisting to build these institutions. Institutionalisation will thus contribute to a more solid basis for decentralisation measures independent of donor support.

Impact sustainability is the extent to which results of a programme or project can be expected to be maintained in the longer perspective. It is assumed that a high degree of sustainability represents a solid impact.

SDC Berne

The over-all programming processes have provided a strong supportive measure to both institutional and impact sustainability without being overly complicated and slow. SDC is willing to take risks, probably to a higher extent than the majority of donors, which should be strongly appreciated, but at times may lead to inevitable losses.

It is assumed that funds will continue to flow from the Federal Government to SDC and the Swiss development aid will be maintained or increased in order to meet the UN requirements.

However, reliance on extra-governmental agencies may not be fully sustainable or at least will be difficult to maintain concerning enhanced governance and better use of the available human resources. Particularly the reliance in most countries on NGOs and less cooperation with local government agencies at all administrative tiers is a design issue to be considered for future support.

India: Local government - Meeting in a “Gram Panchayat”

Country office level

Sustainability of SDC supported programmes and projects on decentralisation

- Impact sustainability is generally high: SDC is good at choosing solid and professional partners of cooperation and implementing agencies;
- Institutional sustainability is a much more complex and difficult issue, and a definitive answer to this problem cannot be given at this point in time. However, there are examples pointing in different directions;

- However, there seems to be a certain tendency to establish channels of communication and institutional arrangements that in the worst case might be characterised as parallel structures or outside the scope of local government (referendum on local budgets, NGOs playing governmental roles, project offices outside local government structures);
- Sustainability may be weak if the support to the implementing NGO dries out.

In the case of Peru there are concerns about sustainability, which would cover other countries as well:

> "Moreover, we consider that the sustainability strategy is weak because it does not connect more actively the lessons it has learned with the work on national political incidence; especially by leaving in the hands of its counterparts such key tasks as institutional work and it does not assume responsibility in the support of national incidence strategies sponsored by other development agencies."

Programme and project level

Problems with sustainability at the programme and project level are also illustrated in an example from the Peru country study:

> "Regarding the effectiveness of its interventions, APODER has developed more effective activities related to management by consensus and participation and to the promotion of the communication between the authorities and the civil society. The activities involved in the improvement of public services provision are more the result of linked processes and are not promoted by them. The sustainability of the process is weak because it depends on the political will and on the still incipient legitimacy of social leadership."

Sustainability concerns were also raised in the Indian context despite the overall positive assessment of the programmes and projects:

> "The strong reliance on NGOs in design and implementation of projects may impact negatively on development of sustainable capacity building systems, particularly in a situation with a less prominent role of SDC. There is a need to develop strategies for sustainability without major SDC financial support."

The India country report points to one of the really critical areas, the high dependency on NGOs for implementation and the few direct relations with local government structures at the various tiers. A key issue is that there is no in-built progression in the programmes moving from traditional project design to programme design, to institutional integration and finally local budget support. Such a progression is best guided by an incentive structure that stimulates local governments to enhance their governance performance.

National policy and institutional context

It is an interesting fact that all the five countries studied are engaged in some form of local government restructuring or reform, but these reforms vary considerably in level of ambition and scope. To what extent does SDC contribute to the development of these reforms? How well are the programmes and projects designed in order for them to contribute to decentralization and local government reforms?

Whereas the national policy context and the SDC activities go hand-in-hand in countries like Mali there are examples of approaches with less policy relation. In the Peru study this issues was raised as follows:

"The current decentralization process has a legal framework that consists of laws for local and regional governments, and laws that encourage citizen participation, transparency and accountability at the local and regional level. However, important topics such as fiscal decentralization, the system of transferences to sub-national governments, the Law of the Executive Branch, and the Law of Public Employment have not been considered yet."

8.4 Comparative advantages of the SDC approach

The assessment of possible comparative advantages is not easily answered without exact knowledge of "compared to what"? There is no doubt that SDC has comparative advantages, but they may be slightly different from what was hinted in the Approach Paper.

Compared to other donors SDC has the following advantages and disadvantages:

Strong reputation

One of the comparative advantages relate to the strong and good reputation of SDC in development cooperation. The evaluation team has met this reaction in many places and from many surces.

Qualified experts

It has also been mentioned that the Swiss experts are qualified partners because of their familiarity with all local government issues. However, because of the thinly spread resources SDC relies on other parties to implement and follow-up on decentralisation projects such as Swiss and national NGOs, which may dilute this comparative advantage.

Non-holistic approach

It is surprising that SDC in cooperation with Swiss LGAs do not adopt a more holistic approach to decentralisation support, which should be a key area of Swiss comparative advantage.

Good knowledge of decentralisation and local government principles

There is a feeling in the countries of cooperation that SDC is one of the few serious partners of cooperation with a solid knowledge of decentralisation and decentralised governance, although the experience from management of Swiss local government is only utilised to a rather limited extent.

Compared to mode of operations:

Good reputation of SDC among stakeholders:

SDC is considered to be a serious, high-quality partner in development cooperation both by its partners of cooperation and by external development agencies.

Neutrality, independence

This is one of the repeatedly recognised assets of SDC, which should not be underestimated in days of increasing dominance by big partners such as the EU and the WB.

Long-term partnerships with partners of cooperation and with implementing organisations

The country studies have clearly indicated that the implementing bodies are benefiting from the building of trustful relationships and a high extent of delegation of responsibilities.

Flexibility in relations with partners of cooperation

The flexibility in SDC's dealings with partners of cooperation is one of the strong assets that are mentioned all-over as a comparative advantage of SDC compared to some of the larger development agencies.

9 Cooperation with other partners and aid effectiveness

Donor coordination and cooperation varies tremendously from one country to another, but there are no examples of very close donor cooperation and coordination among the five countries studied. In Rwanda there is a so-called cluster of donors involved in decentralisation projects, but coordination is partial. However, also at government level there are problems in several countries concerning cooperation, coordination and coherence. The Rwanda study concludes that:

> "Comme mentionné ci haut la collaboration entre la DDC et ses autres partenaires dans l'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda est suffisamment forte au niveau local (avec les autorités administratives et les membres des conseils) et au niveau régional (avec les autorités de la province). Elle est toutefois très faible avec l'Association des Gouvernements Locaux (RALGA) et très modérée avec les agences du Gouvernement Central.

Par contre la collaboration entre la DDC et les autres bailleurs bilatéraux ou multilatéraux est forte car le BUCO/Kigali est membre du cluster décentralisation et participe dans d'autres groupes de travail sur le secteur de la décentralisation. Ces groupes de travail qui deviennent de plus en plus très actifs pourront permettre d'assurer une meilleure harmonisation et coordination des interventions et des activités du domaine de la décentralisation.

For India, the absence of donor coordination concerning decentralisation support is remarkable leading to a fragmented and incoherent cooperation. It should be mentioned that India is not a signatory party to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and, as mentioned, has disallowed bilateral donors to deal directly with governmental agencies on development aid. The country report on India states:

> "A small project would have a very localised impact, while the larger programmes would have a much more significant impact (the recent disaster relief activities on the tsunami affected areas of Tamil Nadu are an example of a much larger scale of funds and activities supported by various agencies). However, there is no active donor coordination forum for decentralisation in which SDC might participate and get support from under the present difficult, political circumstances."

SDC expresses willingness to take part in donor coordination, but is not involved in joint government-donor reform processes supported through basket funding or dedicated funding to general local government reform strategy components.

10 SDC Berne support and relations with country office

10.1 Strengths of cooperation between Berne and country offices

SDC has established a network involving its own desks and departments, the country offices and their staff, Swiss NGOs and national NGOs in partner countries. Since SDC is operating in a large number of countries compared to donors of more or less the same size the network is comprehensive and depends on good relationships, which generally seems to be the case.

The relations between SDC Berne and the country offices are generally non-hierarchical, and the preferred mode of operation between Berne and country offices is indicated as consensus building. The circulation of staff between Berne and country offices is also to a large extent organised in a voluntary and consensual way. The circulation of staff between SDC Berne and the country offices facilitates the good relations between country offices and the Berne office for the Swiss staff members.

The inner SDC network is characterised by relations between the parties that typically involve several functions. For example, in the field of decentralisation country office responsible persons are brought together with the Swiss and national NGO experts and executive officers, but they rely on availability of local government expertise from these organisations considering the small decentralisation desk and the small number of staff in the country offices.

The Thematic Department's Decentralisation Desk is placed in a nearly impossible situation between the country projects, country offices with a limited desire for assistance from the Thematic Department and internal requirements at SDC. A number of dilemmas are facing the desk:

- What is the role of decentralisation support, when decentralisation is not accepted as a transversal theme? How does decentralisation relate to sector programmes and country desks? What may be a re-defined role of the Thematic Department in this respect?
- When decentralisation is placed under the heading of good governance (a transversal theme), how does it relate to the formulation of sector programmes?
- Would it be more effective from the perspective of decentralisation to focus on sector related issues rather than country offices' decentralisation projects?
- Would it be better to have decentralisation expertise within sectors?

There are several ways of organising and implementing decentralisation projects. However, involvement of NGOs is by far the preferred option.

10.2 The staffing of the Thematic Department

The Thematic Department desk for decentralisation is part of the Governance Division of SDC. The desk is currently staffed with one full time person and one part time (50%) person (up to April 2006 there was only a 80% position). Not surprisingly the country offices report that visits and contacts with the thematic desk are infrequent or absent. With the large numbers of countries of cooperation it would be impossible for the desk to keep regular contacts with all projects and programmes unless at a very superficial level.

It would also be surprising if such a small unit could find staff members with sufficiently deep and broad expertise within local government and governance to be able to guide and direct the country offices in their endeavours.

One critical interviewee remarked:

> "On the other hand, the thematic department of SDC has not a lot of contact with the field reality. In our case, it was involved in the first phase, when the programme has to be developed but no follow-up missions were organised. We had external consultants who came for leading external evaluations but the SDC thematic department as such does not have a real understanding of the context's specificity. Therefore, also we need their support . ."

Others have remarked that the relation between SDC and the country office should be seen in a different perspective: The country offices are data and information centres, which can feed into the Decentralisation Desk and SDC Berne.

11 Recommendations

The following main and detailed recommendations are given below.

Recommendation 1: Strategic Approach of SDC decentralisation support

Responsible agency: SDC Berne, Thematic Division

1.1 The general conceptualisation of decentralisation in the SDC strategic documents is not assisting SDC a lot on the ground. The recommendation is not only to enhance the conceptual parts of the SDC Decentralisation Guideline particularly concerning the understanding of decentralisation, but also the more practical parts need a reformulation in order to make the document into a more practical and coherent guideline for the future SDC activities taking the Paris Declaration principles into consideration.

1.2 It is recommended to strengthen the strategic approach of SDC primarily to develop demonstration projects, and, where possible, real pilot projects, and to anchor the projects strongly in the national or federal reform policy processes.

1.3 It is recommended to redesign SDC local government programmes (including existing programmes with a future duration over several years) to become broader, more encompassing of all policy areas, stronger vertical relations, and adopt a holistic approach to local governance.

1.4 It is recommended to phase out local government reform support in countries or states where there is no positive reception of comprehensive decentralisation by government and focus on more fertile areas of cooperation.

Recommendation 2: Management of SDC decentralisation support

Responsible agents: SDC Berne and SDC Country Offices

2.1 The complication of relations between an extremely thinly staffed Thematic Department (1.3 full time positions; 0.8 position until April 2006) and the BUCOs requires management attention. It is recommended to organise a special manage-

ment study of optimal use of the thematic department vis-à-vis country offices and country desks and vis-à-vis other departments.

2.2 It is further recommended to underscore the thematic department and the Decentralisation Desk's crosscutting functions in providing (mandatory) support and guidance to all sector programmes to be in closer coherence with decentralisation objectives.

Recommendation 3: Relevance of SDC decentralisation support

Responsible agencies: SDC Berne (Governance division and other thematic divisions)

3.1 The relevance of SDC cooperation is already high. However, the relevance in the area of decentralisation could be higher if there was more emphasis on support to fiscal, administrative and service management decentralisation in the design of sectoral projects and programmes.

3.2 There is a tradition for focusing mostly on the rural areas and smaller communities. Focus should be changed to encompass more urban local government units.

Recommendation 4: Effectiveness of SDC decentralisation support

Responsible agencies: SDC and partner countries and partner LGAs

4.1 The effectiveness has generally been considered as good or acceptable. However, effectiveness might be higher if a progression from project to programme and further to institutional support based on periodical (annual) assessments was part of the programme design.

4.2 Fiscal decentralisation support in the form of budget support to the municipalities in question should in many cases be included as an incentive for participating LGAs to enhance accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

Recommendation 5: Sustainability of SDC decentralisation support

Responsible agencies: SDC and partner countries and partner LGAs

5.1 The institutional sustainability could be improved if there was on a general basis more direct cooperation with local government structures and agencies and less dependency of external organisations.

Recommendation 6: Swiss comparative advantage in decentralisation support

Responsible agencies: SDC and Swiss partners including Swiss LGAs and national agency responsible for local government reform

6.1 Utilisation of undoubtedly advantages for Switzerland in comparison to other bilateral donors could be enhanced if other Swiss (local governments, associations of government units, research etc.) and even international partners of cooperation were taken on board.

6.2 SDC should play a more pro-active role in donor coordination and policy development in partner countries.

Annex A – Overview of country studies

Country	National and International Consultant	Mission dates for international consultant	Period of evaluation by national consultant	Debriefing at SDC country office by national consultant
Bulgaria	Stoyan Prodanov		October 2006 – January 2007	December 2006
	Søren Villadsen	October 16th – 18th 2006		
India	Anand Inbanathan		August 2006 – December 2006	November 9th 2006
	Søren Villadsen Julie Thaarup	August 28th to September 5th 2006		
Mali	Mamadou Goïta		September 11th to December 30th 2006	December 21st 2006
	Ian Davies	September 13th to 19th 2006		
Rwanda	Alexis Dukundane		September to November 2006	October 25th 2006
	Søren Villadsen	September 26th – October 1st 2006		
Peru	Ivan Castillo		November 4th 2006 to January 11th 2007	January 2007
	Ian Davies	November 6th to 12th, 2006		

Annex B – Case Study Report: Bulgaria

Table of contents

1. Introduction: Purpose of the evaluation, evaluation issues and its organisation
2. Overall conclusions
3. Context: The Situation for Sub-national Governance
4. Brief on other donors' involvement in decentralisation support
5. Overview of the project portfolio plus cooperation with other donors and with local and international NGOs on decentralisation issue
6. Strategic documents issued by SDC on decentralisation: Main issues
7. Main findings and conclusions
8. Analysis of SDC comparative advantages, strengths and weaknesses
9. Cooperation with other partners and aid effectiveness
10. SDC Berne Support and relations with country office
11. Recommendations
12. Management Response of SDC Bulgaria and SDC Bern/country desk

Reference documents

1. Introduction: Purpose of the evaluation, evaluation issues and its organisation

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to investigate the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of SDC's decentralisation measures implemented in Bulgaria. The other purpose is to explore comparative advantages in the field of decentralisation and good local governance of SDC in comparison with other donors and to partner countries' activities, in support of decentralisation. The evaluation is expected to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations on how to improve the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of decentralisation measures. These conclusions and recommendations may be used for improvement of the existing programmes and projects in the country as well as for transfer of good practices in other countries in the region and around the world based on bilateral agreements aimed to support decentralisation and democracy.
The evaluation of SDC's decentralisation measures in Bulgaria was hindered by certain restrictions related to the short term (less than a month). The restrictions were related mainly to the limited possibilities for field visits of ongoing forums, the need to draw conclusions based on various information sources exceeding the team's capacity, and the lack of Programme efficiency reports.
The independent evaluation started with the visit to SDC Bulgaria in the period 16-19 October by the international evaluator joined by the national expert. The evaluation report is based on:

a) Interviews with key managerial staff at the office of SDC Bulgaria in Sofia. The evaluation began with a meeting of the evaluation team with the office and programme managers and dissemination of the aims, methods and scope of the report. The team of SDC Bulgaria briefed the evaluators on the Country Programme, its aims, objectives, areas and activities.
b) Field visit to 2 ongoing and one completed Community Forums. Visits were realized with support by Balkan Assist team and Business Centre-Svishtov team. The visits covered the overall forum process and included interviews with local participants in the process – representatives of municipal administrations, local NGOs, business, and young people.
c) Individual interviews with managers of partner organisations - Balkan Assist Association, Foundation for Local Government Reform, moderators, participants in the forum process, mayors, council members and administrators.
d) Desk research of more than 30 internal and external documents, reports, guidelines, overviews, legislation, forum bulletins, books with relevant information.

2. Overall conclusions

Decentralisation as a major element of good government practices is also an important factor of the transition to democracy, institutional reforms, and social welfare. The political, administrative, and fiscal decentralisation as its key constituent elements define the priorities for the rule-of-law, institutional democratisation, better public services, local control over the resources, and eradication of poverty. These decentralisation and democracy concepts are the underlying principles of SDC's programmes, projects and activities in Bulgaria.

- The specific approach of SDC was based on the principle of subsidiarity - a principle in social organisation, functions which subordinate or local organisations perform effectively belong more properly to them than to a dominant central organisation. Following the historical Swiss traditions in separation of municipal, cantonal, and federal government decentralisation is considered a grass-root phenomenon. It requires vigorous local activities - participation, development

based on local resources, the needs and wants of people at the local level, co-operation with local organisations. In Bulgaria the long-standing traditions of centralised government predetermined the lack of experience and knowledge in the field of local dialogue and grass-root decentralisation.

- The Forum Programme is the most substantial project financed by the Citizens and Democracy programme supporting the decentralisation process. The Forum Programme is a public forum with its own set of rules, regulations, and format for discussions on issues of specific interest for the local community.
- One of the immediate and obvious effects was the fact that the Forum sessions gave rise to democratic debate, and generated various recommendations for municipal action and development projects. Moreover, the Community Forums promoted local participatory governance in Bulgaria and could change conditions for local public-private partnerships.
- Undoubtedly, the approach may contribute to the good governance at the local level by intensifying the dialogue between the citizens and the local authorities where the citizens actively participate in the Community Forum and the implemented demonstration projects coincide with the public preference. On the other hand the growth of the public service management decentralisation is hard to achieve using the approach described above due to its indirect influence on the elite, political parties, and legislation.
- The relevance of SDC' programmes is confirmed by the synergetic effect of the measures related to the capacity of the civil society and the local administration to identify, discuss, and substantiate problem-solving projects with the aid of other donor programmes and projects. This results in an improved institutional capacity for provision of public services on a local level (and on more general levels for some services) by exploring the available sources of financing in order to solve a pertinent problem (improvement of the financial management).
- Another direct benefit for the target groups is the improved transparency and accountancy, as well comprehensive reporting of results before the financing institution and the public.
- The prolonged operation of the Public Forum may be considered an extravagance to a certain extent (as far as the project cycle goes) but at the same time it was a priceless advantage for the creation of working relations among local authorities, public and private sector.
- The Forum Programme demonstrates a high degree of effectiveness of achievement of its goals. Even in the cases of deviations of public forums of their principles the overall effect on the local communities was greater than the effect of other donors' programmes and projects.
- The decisions in some forums openly contradict the decisions of the local government – the Mayor and the City Council – on issues related to the municipal budget, capital projects priorities, provision of additional public services, etc. This may be considered a substitution of the vote giving certain powers to the legitimate authorities. Such phenomena do not reinforce decentralisation and the powers of the local government.
- Another extreme is the enforcement of decisions (and especially project selection decisions) taken by the local government disguised as decisions of the Forum. Such cases constitute a breach of the principles for SDC forums organisation and implementation.
- The support of the forum process depends on the efficiency and viability of the two organisations. Balkan Assist was established following the model of a Swiss NGO and depends on SDC financing. The financial resource related to the support of the public forums prevails in their budget. Although less so, the Founda-

tion for Local Government Reform is also prone to such a risk since 90% of their budget incomes are derived from SDC (40%) and USAID (49,5%).

- Comparative advantages:
  - Good reputation of SDC among stakeholders
  - Neutrality, independence
  - Long-term partnerships
  - Good knowledge of decentralisation and local government principles
  - High relevance of individual projects and programmes
  - High effectiveness concerning impact
  - Flexibility in relations with partners of cooperation
  - Good visibility of SDC on local level
- Comparative weaknesses:
  - Non-holistic approach to local governance (too little emphasis on management, finances and service implementation) due to limited resources
  - Few direct relations with local government units
  - Insufficient impact because of small-scale interventions
  - Working on government issues through NGOs
  - Few activities on regulatory framework
  - Lack of regularity, organisation and co-ordination among the donors supporting Bulgaria

3. Context: The Situation for Sub-national Governance

Bulgaria's transition to free market economy was characterized by lack of real market and democratic reforms for 5 to 6 years after the old communist regime was overthrown and a marked lag behind the other Central European countries. The period after 1997 was marked with various changes in the socio-political life, including the process of decentralisation, which is going on. For 6 or 7 years after the start of the first reforms in this area decentralisation has been implemented with varying speed and is still a topical issue.

What are the local status quo context and the prospects for further development of decentralisation? Bulgaria's transition to free market economy was characterized by lack of real market and democratic reforms for 5 to 6 years after the old communist regime was overthrown and a marked lag behind the other Central European countries. The period after 1997 was marked with various changes in the socio-political life, including the process of decentralisation, which is going on. For 6 or 7 years after the start if the first reforms in this area decentralisation has been implemented with varying speed and is still a topical issue. The transition to democracy included the enforcement of some important laws and other legislative norms related to the process of decentralisation. Frequently citizens' expectations for better public services are related to the local rather than the central government, regardless of the means and responsibilities for provision thereof. In parallel with the establishment of free-market relationships and improvement of living standards, there is a significant reduction in citizen participation in the social and political life as well as the interaction and collaboration among the local stakeholders.
The long decentralisation process in Bulgaria may be divided into three stages:
The first stage covers the period from 1990 to 1995. The democratisation and decentralisation processes were initiated with the adoption of the new Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria. The government undertook the so-called "administrative and territorial reform" laying the legislative foundations. This stage was marked by the start of the administrative decentralisation – identifying the powers and responsibilities of the local au-

thorities and the specific activity areas (intrinsic and delegated). The main principles for identification of priorities, objectives and powers of the local authorities were: the general competence principle, the universality principle, and the subsidiarity principle.
However, despite the expressed willingness for decentralisation the real steps taken in this direction were rather small.
The second stage 1996 to 2000. During those five years a major contribution to the decentralisation process was made with the adoption of the Law on Municipal Ownership in 1996. In 1997 the municipalities were granted financial independence with their own municipal budgets, incomes and mechanism for sharing of state taxes, principles for redistribution of financial resource and support of financially weaker local authorities, allocation of the common sudsy and regulations for the target-related subsidies, technology for development and control over municipal budgets as well as the powers of the participants in the budget-development process. Another important event was the territorial and administrative re-structuring of the country implemented in 1999.
Municipalities were delegated a lot of responsibilities unsupported with financial and/or human resource, which resulted in increased tension between the central government and the local authorities. The long-lasting and fruitless debate over the conflict did not result in taxation and budgeting reforms and did not justify the efforts for decentralisation. Since the greatest problem related to the intended reforms was the problem of finance the financial decentralisation remained a topical issue and a synonym of the decentralisation in Bulgaria for many years. The discrepancy of powers and responsibilities on the one hand and possibilities for raising the necessary funds on the other was eventually overcome with the implementation of the long overdue financial and taxation reform introduced in 2001.
The third stage started in the beginning of 2001. It is characterized by an integral development of the administrative and territorial reform and the reform of administration relating the decentralisation problems to the processes of de-concentration of the central executive authorities. The efforts of the government were focused on the development of the territorial, functional and institutional structure of government as well as on the optimisation of the activities of the de-concentrated state-authority structures.
In December 2001 NAMRB (the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria) and the Council of Ministers signed a Cooperation Agreement for the development of the financial decentralisation and consolidation of the financial independence of the local authorities. In the beginning of the following year the Government established an interdepartmental committee – the Financial Decentralisation Workgroup – to develop and implement the financial decentralisation policy. The sectorial ministries, which are essential for the major public services provided by the municipalities (such as education, social benefits and services, healthcare, culture, etc.) actively participated in the dialogue encouraged by several international cooperation agencies.
The most significant progress in the field of decentralisation was achieved in 2002 by the adoption of the Concept for Fiscal Decentralisation and the programme for its implementation. It provided for the mechanisms of financing of the municipal functions and activities as well as the financing of the shared and delegated functions and activities. DCM No. 612 of 12 Sept. 2002 regulated the expenditure standards for state-delegated services provided by municipalities and the programme for reduction and liquidation of municipal debts. The adoption in 2002 of the Law on Local Taxes and Fees played an important role for the implementation of the Concept. It provided for the implementation of independent municipal policies for provision and financing of various services as well independent service pricing, rates, means of provision. Another important factor for the implementation of the Concept was the change in the structure of shared taxes – the Law on Corporate Taxation was eliminated as a source of municipal finance (the Municipal Tax was eliminated) and replaced to the full revenue from the Law on Taxation of Individual Incomes for better predictability and regularity of local authority revenues.

These documents are still the foundation of the financial decentralisation on the level of Current budget revenues and expenditures.
In 2003 by Decision No. 637 the Financial Decentralisation Programme was revised. By Decision No. 671/2003 a special section dedicated to the decentralisation of the state administration was included in the Strategy for Modernization of the State Administration – from accession to integration (2003—2006). What still remains to be done is a programme combining the financial decentralisation and the decentralisation of powers and functions, the creation of a second level of local government as well as the optimisation of the functions of the decentralised units of the central authority.
The changes in the local tax legislation introduced in 2005 enabled the municipalities to collect the revenue from local taxes and fees. In 2005 half of the Bulgarian municipalities took advantage of this option and in 2006 – all of them. Since 1 January 2006 every municipality has a taxation centre for collection of the local taxes and fees. Other legislative changes led to an average increase of 30% of real-estate tax evaluation, which improved the potential for generation of local revenues from real estate taxes and fees on deals with real estates. These changes were intended to equalize the tax evaluation and the real market price of the real estates and to eliminate the existing discrepancies on the real-estate market. The Government approved this year, both the Decentralisation Strategy (2006—2015) and the Program for Implementation of the Decentralisation Strategy (2006—2009). Thus, Bulgaria renewed and updated an official midterm decentralisation reform agenda.
The decentralisation agenda for Bulgaria also includes: constitutional amendments allowing the municipalities to determine the extent and rates of the local taxes and fees in order to plan and control their expenditures better; legislative provisions for referendums providing for the easier and less problematic implementation of public opinion polls on local issues; decentralisation of the public capital expenditures, over 80% of which are presently controlled by ministries and state agencies.

4. Brief on other donors' involvement in decentralisation support

Among the most influential foreign donors working in the field of decentralisation in Bulgaria should be mentioned:

1. United States Agency supports projects in the fields of decentralisation, transparency, local business environment, and ethnic integration. USAID supports decentralisation through their Local Government Initiative programme. LGI plays a leading role supporting the decentralisation process and focusing on the legislation, the local government political framework, and the development of the capacity of local government authorities to function as efficient democratic institutions. LGI has been active in Bulgaria since the beginning of the transition to democracy and free-market economy. USAID has financed several consecutive stages of the LGI programme intended to establish more efficient and responsible local governments through reforms of the political framework of the local government and development of the capacity of local authorities. Presently the fourth stage of the implementation of the program (which started in 2004) is being concluded. LGI focuses on the following decentralisation issues:
   - Financial decentralisation – greater powers and independence of municipal finance management, easier access to resources, adoption of comprehensive rules for relations among the various levels of government;
   - Sector decentralisation – promotion of the role of municipalities in education, defining the municipal interests in the fields of healthcare, social services and water supply;

- Infrastructure financing – capital investments planning, development of project application packages and creditworthiness analyses, municipal crediting legislation, changes in the government policy for infrastructure financing;
- Decision-making on municipal level – encouraging the civil participation as well and responsible and transparent decisions taken by municipalities, cooperation and teamwork of mayors and municipal councils.
- De-concentration of state activities – improvement of the communication between the municipalities and the regional administrations, re-defining the role of the regional level of governance, analysis and comparison of key municipal services.

2. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Improving democratic institutions and introducing procedures more receptive to the needs of the ordinary citizen are two major challenges both government and civil society are facing. Specific examples for decentralisation collaboration are the local, regional and national development plans. UNDP's programme for Bulgaria is the largest programme for Europe and CIS – in 2005 its budget reached almost USD 29 million. Its key priorities include:
   - Democratic governance for equal local and regional development. The main decentralisation projects and initiatives encourage the active participation of citizens in the process of decision-making on local level. These projects focus on: development of local partnership capacity in compliance with the principles of the European funds and development of public-private partnerships involving Bulgarian municipalities; improving the capacity of the rural communities to develop sustainable local development plans and local community projects, eradication of poverty and development of social capital in the rural regions; supporting the efforts of the national network of over 450 culture clubs to look for innovative approaches for better development of the rural communities as well as adoption of the principles of electronic government in order to achieve better responsibility transparency of the activities of the local administration and better access to ICT in remote and poor regions of the country.
   - Social inclusion and local economic development for poverty reduction
   - Energy and environment conservation for sustainable development.

   Unlike other donors who withdrew their support for the country UNDP consolidated their activities and supported new initiatives for their Country Programme for Bulgaria 2006–-2009. New initiatives and support modalities were launched, building on successful projects and targeting new disadvantaged groups to promote the EU cooperation and development policies.
3. World Bank. The collaboration in the field of forest management also has strong decentralisation implications for Bulgaria. It requires intensive collaboration of authorities on local, regional and national level. The aims of the reform of this sector are yet to be achieved and the collaboration is presently a topical issue.
4. The UK Department for International Development (DFID). DFID put an emphasis on the improved public administration and the process of reform, including civil service development, regional development and revenue collection and Improved Government and local authority capacity to manage effective and sustainable regional economic development. The organisation withdrew from the country in March 2005 and discontinued its bilateral collaboration with Bulgaria.
5. Japan's Official Development Assistance. Japan has utilized its ODA to actively support economic and social infrastructure development, human resource development, and institution building. In particular, humanitarian problems, such as extreme poverty, famine, refugee crises, and natural disasters, as well as global issues such as those related to the environment and water, are important issues that need to be addressed in order for the international community as a whole to achieve sustainable development. The Government of Japan started the Grants Assistance for Grass-

roots Human Security Projects (GGP) in 1989 to assist NGOs, local government organisations and other grassroots organisations in developing countries to implement small-scale projects that directly affect basic needs of target communities in health, education and other sectors.

5. Overview of the project portfolio plus cooperation with other donors and with local and international NGOs on decentralisation issue

Bulgaria has been aided by Switzerland in the process of transition to democracy and free-market economy since 1992. The portfolio of programmes and projects for Bulgaria was shaped according to the country-specific problems and challenges such as:

- The lagging of the country behind the other Central-European countries in the process of transition to democracy;
- Slow and late economic reforms;
- Lack of experience and traditions in the field of decentralisation and local self-government;
- Political and economic instability on the Balkans;
- Specific cultural and social factors such as ethnic structure, major religions, the Cyrillic alphabet, certain Eastern cultural and historical influence.
- The main aspects of the aid were the technical support implemented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC) as well as the trade and economic collaboration implemented by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco). They necessitated the establishment in 1996 of a joint co-ordination office of SDC and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, which, after 2001 was reformed as a Swiss Co-operation Office in Bulgaria (BUCO).

The activities of SDC Bulgaria included a variety of programmes implemented through various projects and activities. The main programmes are:

- Citizens and Democracy
- Sustainable Natural Resources Management
- Equitable and Effective Health and Social Services
- Favourable Framework for the Private Sector
- Infrastructure Development

The Forum Programme is the most substantial project financed by SDC supporting the decentralisation process. The Forum Programme is focused on the civil initiative creating favourable environment of improved living conditions and active participation of community members in this process. The programme encourages the dialogue among various formal and informal groups and civil servants institutionalising the debate through the regular meeting sessions of a common council. The joint efforts of citizens and institutions aim to achieve a better efficiency of public expenditure and direct civil participation in the process of taking decisions concerning the local community. Limiting the democracy only to the act of elections not only deprives the authorities of an important corrective but also constrains the possibility for generation of innovative ideas.

For the period 2005—2006 the budget for technical support provided by SDC within the four main programmes amounted to CHF 12’6 million, complemented for number of years by CHF 54 million extended by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco). The first programme, Citizens and Democracy, aimed at improving the participatory policy

process. Its total budget for 2005 / 2006 was CHF 3 million. The main outcomes of the programme were:

- created opportunities for discussion between government and citizens;
- increased capacities among government and civil society for creating dialogue;
- changed policies towards citizen participation.
- The Forum Programme is the most substantial project financed by the Citizens and Democracy programme supporting the decentralisation process. The Forum Programme is a public forum with its own set of rules, regulations, and format for discussions on certain issues of specific interest for the local community. The forums are organised by municipalities or NGOs in various regions of the country and since 2005 the forum process has been used for discussions on planning documents and strategies on local, regional and national level. The main efforts of the Regional Association of Municipalities (RAM) are intended to express the regional interests of municipalities and to consolidate their efforts to provide better public services by means of common regional policies. The efforts of Balkan Assist (BA) are directed to promoting the referendums and initiatives as well as to propose new legislative norms facilitating and expanding the scope of local public opinion polls.

The second programme, Sustainable Natural Resources Management (SNMR), aims to promote the responsible and sustainable use of natural resources. Its total budget for 2005 / 2006 is CHF 2'198 million. The expected outcomes of the programme include:

- Partners' institutions - Bulgarian NGOs in particular, are able to mobilise their constituencies and to establish alliances with strategic partners;
- Lasting financial mechanisms (incentives) for sustainable management of natural resources;
- Instruments and approaches, in line with EU planning requirements, that provide for citizens involvement and control.

The third programme, Equitable and Effective Health and Social Services (EEHSS), with a total budget for 2005 / 2006 of CHF 2'010 million aims to assist the government's efforts in providing equitable and efficient health and social services of recognised standards.

The expected outcomes of the programme include:

- Selected fields in the social safety network are consolidated;
- Health/social services management and operation are improved;
- Different ways of meeting the needs of those excluded from the social security system are promoted.

  The fourth, Favourable Framework for the Private Sector (FPS), with a total budget for 2005 / 2006 of 688'000 is intended to support the development of general conditions promoting the expansion of competitive local enterprise at regional and international level. The expected outcomes of the programme include:
- Access to Bank credit for "marginally bankable" rural SMEs and Farmers (shifting from traditional to organic production)
- Capacity of Business Development Services Providers (incl. Branch Associations)
- Synergy (coordination and co-operation) with other donors' initiatives and support

  The fifth programme, Infrastructure Development (seco), supporting the waste treatment and water sectors, has the greatest budget of CHF 54 million Main results expected:
- New or upgraded infrastructure facilities;
- Increased capacity of government to manage infrastructure facilities.

Table 1. List of Projects: 2005– 2006, SDC Bulgaria

Citizens and Democracy	Community Forum and Support to Municipalities (Forum Projects) BA - Balkan Assist Association RAM - Regional Association of Municipalities
Sustainable Natural Resources Management (SNMR)	SOAP- Support to Organic Agriculture Partnership BSFP - Bulgarian – Swiss Forestry Programme BBF - Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation RIB - Rare Indigenous Breeds
Equitable and Effective Health and Social Services (EEHSS)	BSHHP - Bulgarian – Swiss Hospital Hygiene Programme CLIP – Care-leavers Integration Project Hospital Partnership "H+" HMP – Hospital Management Project NTBP - Support to the National TB Programme RAH - Regional Association of Hospitals STI –Management of Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infection TUSD - Trade Unions and Social Dialogue
Favourable Framework for the Private Sector (FPS)	FAEL Foundation CF – Collateral Facility RTA - Regional Tourist Association Establishment of Bulgarian Biological Certification Company (Balkan Biocert) Old Credits
Infrastructure Development (seco)	Hydropower Plants Batak, Peshtera, Aleko Modernisation Wastewater Treatment Plant of Plovdiv (PLOVDIV I) New Pumping Station of Plovdiv North (PLOVDIV II) Modernisation WWTP Plovdiv 2nd stage (PLOVDIV III) Hospital Waste Incinerator Plovdiv Centre for Sustainable development in Enterprises

The following partnerships with foreign donors and local NGOs working in the field of decentralisation should be mentioned:

- USAID – LGI. The United States Agency and its Local Government Initiative play a leading role supporting the decentralisation process and focusing on the legislation, the local government political framework, and the development of the capacity of local government authorities to function as efficient democratic institutions.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Improving democratic institutions and introducing procedures more receptive to the needs of the ordinary citizen are two major challenges both government and civil society are facing. A specific example for decentralisation collaboration is the local, regional and national development plans.
- World Bank. The collaboration in the field of forest management also has strong decentralisation implications for Bulgaria. It requires intensive collaboration of authorities on local, regional and national level. The aims of the reform of this sector are yet to be achieved and the collaboration is presently a topical issue.
- Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK. DFID puts an emphasis on the improved public administration and the process of reform, including civil service development, regional development and revenue collection and Improved Government and local authority capacity to manage effective and sus-

tainable regional economic development. The organisation withdrew from the country in March 2005 and discontinued its bilateral collaboration with Bulgaria.

We should note the lack of regularity, organisation and co-ordination among the donors supporting Bulgaria in the fields of good governance, decentralisation and democratisation. This is especially obvious in the period following the announcement of the date for Bulgaria's accession to the EU. This decision set the strategic objectives for development of the country and the adoption of certain legislative models as well as put off some key donors for Bulgaria such as USAID and DFID. SDC's decision for withdrawal seems entirely logical and consistent within the context of the country's full membership in the EU.

6. Strategic documents issued by SDC on decentralisation: Main issues

In the SDC context decentralisation has been discussed and defined in the Guide Paper[13]. It provides the basic terminology, objectives, positive and negative effects of decentralisation, the external support for decentralisation processes, SDC's guiding principles. The reasons for issuing the Guide were:

1. SDC operates in many countries, which necessitates unification of terminology, approaches and methods.
2. The need to facilitate both the assessment as well as the implementation of decentralisation projects.
3. The portfolio of programmes and projects in each country has some objectives common for all the other countries (poverty reduction, development and internationalisation, good governance, decentralisation) as well as country-specific objectives. This calls for synchronization of the activities for promotion of the Swiss model of „unity in diversity".
4. The collection of information about the strategic aspects of decentralisation project implementation serves as an exchange of experience and comparison of the activities of the country offices.
5. Qualification and training of country office staff as well as the staff of the partner organisations.

However, there seem to be some interpretation issues plus a misconception in the Guide paper, which may give some possible negative strategic implications for SDC, and the following problems need to be raised:

1. Is there a need to have a strong decentralisation guide, which serves the purpose of a guide for the formulation and execution of decentralisation projects and programmes?
2. The existence of a detailed Practical Guide would support the country offices not only on conceptual but also on operative level. Despite the availability of various sources of information about SDC programmes and projects in countries all over the world a selection of certain programmes and projects would facilitate the exchange of best practices.
3. How is the situation tackled when decentralisation is not seen as a transversal concept, but good governance is? There may be good governance within a relatively centralised governance system? (Sector programme problem)

13 SDC, Guide to Decentralisation, Berne, 2001.

4. If decentralisation is understood as a holistic approach to governance at sub-national levels, is this fully utilized in the Swiss programme cooperation?
5. The existence of some contradictory theories such as the view of deconcentration as a form of decentralisation may hinder the dialogue between the local and central authorities. For example the deconcentration process in some ministries and state agencies may be viewed as a process of decentralisation [14].
6. The functional decentralisation is not considered a form of decentralisation although the SDC approach incorporates the subsidiarity principle as a transversal concept in their sector programmes.

7. Main findings and conclusions

A. Relevance:

Relevance is here defined as the appropriateness of development cooperation measures, for their capacity to enhance decentralisation of public service management, better local living conditions and good governance at the local level. Relevance of the SDC supported measures is seen in relation to ***SDC policy, partner country context, and state-of-the-art discourse***. The higher degree of relevance for programmes and projects, the more development cooperation will assist the communities, local government units and other actors involved in sub-national governance to enhance the institutional arrangements and performance of social service providers (better public service delivery, better financial management, better means of participation, enhanced accountability) leading to improved social conditions in the communities.
The Forum Programme is the most substantial project financed by the Citizens and Democracy programme supporting the decentralisation process. The Forum Programme is a public forum with its own set of rules, regulations, and format for discussions on certain issues of specific interest for the local community. After the assessment conducted in 1999 SDC proposed the so-called Community Forums supporting the participatory governance approaches. The forums promote public debates and negotiations among interested groups, common decisions on common problems, and civil responsibility. From 40 to 100 citizens (the number varies according to the municipalities) participating in the forums gathered around 8 to 10 round tables to voice their opinion on various socio-economic development problems such as business, environment, education, culture, tourism, youth, etc. Within a year there were 10 forum sessions requiring a sound preparation of the participants, local authorities (peer to the other round tables), unbiased moderators and local operative teams. The main objective was to consolidate participation by the citizens, and mobilise the municipalities' own development resources and initiatives, with a view to promoting greater pluralism and strategic approach. One of the immediate and obvious effects was the fact that the Forum sessions gave rise to democratic debate, and generated various recommendations for municipal action and development projects. Moreover, the Community Forums promoted local participatory governance in Bulgaria and could change conditions for local public-private partnerships.

I. Country office

Generally, the specific portfolio pf SDC programmes and projects were intended to promote better governance. While the Community Forum focused on strengthening and support of decentralisation the rest of the project were implicitly oriented towards this goal. For example all sector programmes had a certain focus on decentralisation pursu-

14 Bulgaria's Decentralisation Strategy combines decentralisation of powers and financial decentralisation, Council of Ministers, Sofia, 2005, pp. 9-11.

ing the achievement of better governance, greater efficiency and higher level of beneficiaries' satisfaction from the services. The specific Swiss approach is grass-rooted, inclusive and unique for the bilateral agencies operating in the country. Undoubtedly, the approach may contribute to the good governance at the local level by intensifying the dialogue between the citizens and the local authorities as well as to the improvement of the local living conditions, especially in regions where the citizens actively participate in the Community Forum and the implemented demonstration projects coincide with the public opinion and preference. On the other hand the growth of the public service decentralisation is hard to achieve using the approach described above due to its indirect influence on the elite, political parties, and legislation.
Within the context of the development of the country the consecutive implementation of decentralisation may be considered as the driving force of the overall process of sustainable and balanced development.
The grass-root decentralisation activities are more tangible for the ordinary people than they are for the political elite. Such changes evoke brighter and more memorable associations with the Community Forum and demonstration projects than the adoption of a decentralisation strategy or programme by the central or the local government.
The existence of a supporting agency could be a means of dissemination of the achieved results and best practices in the region. The support provided by qualified experts, organisations, and entities for the purposes of democratisation and decentralisation in the region is undoubtedly a relevant and efficient role model for countries with similar cultural, social, and political characteristics.
Despite the progress made in the last few years the local authorities still lack sufficient expertise in the field of programme and project management. This shortage of experience can be seen in several aspects: lack of project experience, lack of sufficient information, lack of project-development funds, lack or deficiency of co-financing, shortage of qualified personnel. In this aspect the differences among the municipalities have become even more obvious. The small and medium-sized municipalities face significant difficulties to develop and implement projects because of the aforementioned shortages and the unequal socio-economic development of municipalities and regions.
The partnership principle is still not a common practice in the relations between municipalities and other local factors. The formal communication of projects to local NGOs, community groups, and businesses is a common practice. A lot more should be done for intensification of the interaction of local administrations with entrepreneurs – a factor having a direct impact for the programmes of SDC Bulgaria.

II. Programme and Project level

The evaluation of the relevance will be performed depending on the evaluation of benefits for the separate target groups. Which are the target groups and how the cooperation and development measures will contribute to their involvement in the decentralisation, good governance and democratisation processes? The two most important groups are the municipal administration and the civil society organisations. Although slightly out of the focus of the measures, there are certain positive effects of the project for the central authorities (ministries and agencies) as well as the regional authorities. The present report outlines and evaluates the positive effects of the project characterized by the following benefits:

- The implementation of the project undoubtedly creates new possibilities for dialogue between the authorities and the citizens. The reduction of the democratic process to mere elections reduces the communication between the citizens and their elected representatives – the mayors and the city councils. The essential role of the direct democracy is in the introduction of a corrective for the decisions that are crucial for the local community and require something more than the formal will of the political and administrative elite. The possibility for direct dia-

logue in the forum sessions is one of the forms of direct democracy resulting in better understanding of the activities of the local authorities by the local community and better understanding of the local community needs by the municipal administration.

- The possibilities for direct dialogue between the authorities and the citizens would be utilized in full if there were a capacity for record keeping and review of successes and failures. Among the positive effects of the project is the encouraging of a well-grounded, argument-based, and civilized open dialogue – something that is frequently missing in the new post-communist societies. The important elements of structuring, professional moderation and problem solving are promoted through the forum process as an essential base for a democratic dialogue.
- The participation of the citizens in the problem-solving process is also subjected to a positive change. Public administration's concept treating the civil participation as an interference has evolved towards a more intensive communication and consideration for the opinion of individual citizens, informal groups, groups based on interests, and NGOs.
- The relevance of SDC' programmes is confirmed by the synergetic effect of the measures related to the capacity of the civil society and the local administration to identify, discuss, and substantiate problem-solving projects with the aid of other donor programmes and projects. This results in an improved institutional capacity for provision of public services on a local level (and on more general levels for some services) by exploring the available sources of financing in order to solve a pertinent problem (improvement of the financial management).
- Another direct benefit for the target groups is the improved transparency and accountancy, as well comprehensive reporting of results before the financing institution and the public.

III. National policy and institutional context

During the years of the most active collaboration between SDC and Bulgaria certain measures were implemented to encourage on a wide scale (based on the unique Swiss approach) and support the processes of decentralisation and development of democratic institution in a country, where the totalitarian regime was recently overthrown. One of the features of the socialist totalitarian state was the marginalisation of the local government and eradication of the democratic tradition in the local communities. For the last 15 years Bulgaria's agenda was shaped by the efforts of the Bulgarian society to overthrow the totalitarian models of development and to join the other CEE countries in the process of free-market reforms and accession to the EU. That agenda directed SDC's efforts to support the processes of democratisation and decentralisation. The main focus was on the decentralisation of the public services and the improvement of the living standard and the quality of local government through collaboration and development measures. The specific approach of SDC was based on the principle of subsidiarity - a principle in social organisation, functions which subordinate or local organisations perform effectively belong more properly to them than to a dominant central organisation. Following the historical Swiss traditions in strict separation of municipal, cantonal, and federal government decentralisation is considered a grass-root phenomenon. It requires vigorous local activities - participation, development based on local resources, the needs and wants of people at the local level, cooperation with local organisations. In Bulgaria the long-standing traditions of centralised government predetermined the lack of experience and knowledge in the field of local dialogue and grass-root decentralisation. Efficient and sustainable decentralisation cannot be achieved without legislative changes and re-allocation of resources and responsibilities by the central government. Decen-

tralisation can be understood best by its beneficiaries and can be of greatest benefit for them when the Swiss approach is applied – to encourage the dialogue between the government and the citizens, and to allow civil participation in the decision-making process.

The need for decentralisation resulted not only from the democratisation process in the country during the last decade but also from the long-term policies of decentralisation of the EU member states. The European Commission's reports[15] state that "A strategic policy design, focused on local and regional administrations, needs to be developed as a matter of priority. More consideration should be given on how the implementation of the *acquis* can be fully ensured on regional and local level." One of the recommendations in the Section „Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments" is that „relations and coordination between central and regional levels need to be considerably further improved in order to ensure the effectiveness of future implementation mechanisms."

One of the major questions related to the support of decentralisation is whether after the accession Bulgaria will still need such support. Our country's needs are still great taking into account the on-going development of democratic institutions and rules, civil society, improvement and reconstruction of essential infrastructure in the utility sector (water supply, solid domestic waste, gas supply, etc.), road network, and environment. The labour and healthcare markets are unbalanced and require much more efforts and political will for reforms.

In the light of the forthcoming accession of Bulgaria to the EU and the relations between EU and Switzerland the future interaction and collaboration with Bulgaria is likely to undergo some changes (from bilateral towards block agreements). However, the fact that for the next few years Bulgaria will undoubtedly remain the EU member state with the lowest living standard and GDP per capita, will remain an argument in favour of continuing support for the country in general and its decentralisation process in particular.

One of the characteristics of Bulgaria is the absence of second local governance level. The forthcoming establishment of second-level regional bodies (directly elected regional councils) is in compliance with the recommendations of PACE[16]. The positive effects of such an act would be significant: accelerated decentralisation, more efficient implementation of the structural funds, making the citizens trust the regional authorities, synchronized efforts of the municipalities within the region (whereas now they are in competition and avoid cooperation.) The existing self-governance models in countries with similar structure of governance would be an appropriate base for legislative initiatives for creation of a second level of local governance.

B. Effectiveness

Effectiveness - the extent a programme or project objective is accomplished, producing the intended or expected result. It is important not to see effectiveness in the context of sustainability and in particular institutional sustainability. A combination of sustainability considerations with effectiveness considerations in the evaluation may provide slightly different results than relying on an assessment of each of the three main evaluation variables independently. Effectiveness may also be considered in relation to an intended, gradual move towards over-all strategic goals for cooperation on decentralisation policies.

Being the main project supporting the decentralisation process, the Public Forum Programme has clearly defined objectives:

- to consolidate participation by the citizens, to increase people's influence on government decisions;
- mobilise the municipalities' own development resources and initiatives;

15 Regular Report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession, European Commission, Brussels, 2004.

16 Resolution 1211, Art.4, VII/2000 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

- to support creation of working relations among local authorities, public and private sector;
- to strengthen the capacity of existing local institutions.

The degree of achievement of objectives is an index of the effectiveness of development measures. Observation and research have shown that as a whole the objectives have been achieved successfully. The best results were achieved for participatory decision-making objective. The obvious influence of the Public Forum on the local authorities' activities, the participation its members in the process of round table debates, the „substantiation" of the project ideas into a project, and the implementation of the project within the set schedule motivate and satisfy the participants in the forum process. Meanwhile the project cycle attracted resources external to the municipal budget – creative ideas, financial and in-kind contributions, involvement of businesses. If we consider the results of the forum and the implemented demonstrative projects we shall find out that the project funds (the contributions of SDC and the municipality) has generated a higher value of the implemented projects. The prolonged operation of the Public Forum may be considered an extravagance to a certain extent (as far as the project cycle goes) but at the same time it was a priceless advantage for the creation of working relations among local authorities, public and private sector. The periods of regular meetings of the local actors (spanning from several months to a year) resulted in an atmosphere of trust, partnership, and teamwork – results which otherwise would not have been achieved. A major factor for success however was the marked interest of all actors and the representative character (covering all types of interest groups, spheres of influence, age and ethnic groups, etc.) of the participants in the forum sessions. Another benefit from the Forum was the increase of local institutions' capacity and skills to utilize donor funds, to develop sustainable project proposals, to take into account the opinion of NGOs and civil groups, to promote the local potential and possibilities for investments and development.

The notes below concern the effectiveness of the Public Forum Programme in the various dimensions of its impact - the country office, program, the project level and national policy, and its institutional context:

I. Country office

How did the decentralisation measures supported by SDC influence the objectives supporting the decentralisation and the efficient resource allocation under the specific approach and conditions?

- A greater flexibility of utilization of the incoming resources can be allowed. The Forum Programme in Bulgaria is an example of poly-variation and flexibility. The forum process is managed consequently by a Swiss NGO, Bulgarian NGOs (the principal partners), and forum organisations. Besides being a model for flexibility this evolution of forum process management also reflects its suitability for public services decentralisation and adaptability for various other purposes.
- The specific approach of SDC puts an emphasis on the programme and project management – an approach insufficiently used in Bulgaria but with a proven efficiency. The programme-project approach allows allocation of financial resource to various expenditures – operative, capital, combined operative and capital. The absence of limitations provides flexibility of decisions for implementation of specific project activities - something that is hard to achieve with the current Bulgarian legislation related to municipal finance. For example if a project approved according to the forum rules has to be financed directly from the municipal budget it

would be very difficult to classify such a project as a current or capital expenditure.

- By means of material stimuli, pilot programmes, dissemination of best practices, technical support, etc. the programme encourages the innovations aimed to improve the efficiency. Such efficiency-ecouraging techniques are very common within the network of municipalities supported by SDC. The Forum Programe itself originated and was developed as a pilot programme and then was multiplied as a best practice. Best practices, heuristic approaches, and innovative ideas have been exchanged among the existing forums as well as from older to newer forums and thus have become available to the general public.
- An accountancy system has been established for both the beneficiaries and the financing body – a donor organisation and/or municipality. Without such a system all beautiful words and good ideas would have turned into unsuccessful or crooked projects. Without such a system no better resource utilization could be rewarded or inefficient spending reprimanded.
- The size of the programmes implemented by SDC defines to a large extent the force of their impact in the target areas. Although significant for a country the size of Bulgaria in the period 2005 - 2006 their capacity to initiate and stimulate changes declined with the growth of the price levels following the medium-term trend of convergence with the European price levels.
- Another restrictive factor was the number of programmes included in the portfolio of SDC Bulgaria. The availability of a greater number of programmes fragmented the resources and impaired their efficiency. We should also take into account the administration costs, which are a more or less permanent expenditure and hinder the target impact, too.

II. Programme and project level

- The Forum Programme demonstrates a high degree of effectiveness of achievement of its goals. Even in the cases of deviations of public forums of their principles the overall effect on the local communities was greater than the effect of other donors' programmes and projects.
- The formal application of the Forum Programme principles for constituting the forum session sometimes results in low level of participation of local community members. Representation of local businesses and young people is harder to form as it has been proved by the interviews with most of the forum participants. Excessive representation was reported for the local culture institutions (chitalishte, choirs, dance groups, libraries), sport clubs, and municipal administration.
- Frequently the forum participants are representatives of public institutions directly concerned with the discussion problems. In certain cases they assumed the role of community leaders and/or NGO representatives – a role which conceals or blurs their real interests.
- The decisions in some forums openly contradict the decisions of the local government – the Mayor and the City Council – on issues related to the municipal budget, capital projects priorities, provision of additional public services, etc. This may be considered a substitution of the vote giving certain powers to the legitimate authorities. Such phenomena do not reinforce decentralisation and the powers of the local government.
- Another extreme is the enforcement of decisions (and especially project selection decisions) taken by the local government disguised as decisions of the Forum. Such cases constitute a breach of the principles for SDC forums organisation and implementation.

- The forum discussion topics sometimes deviate substantially from the local society agenda.
- Discussions on both local problems and challenges on the one hand and possibilities for project financing on the other result in disregarding the topical and urgent issues as well as to prioritising of minor and less significant, but easier and quicker to solve problems. Such a result is achieved by the short duration of a certain municipal forum – less than a year for solution of certain problems requiring more-permanent efforts (infrastructure sites, organisation activities requiring interaction and coordination with the central government, etc.)

III. National policy and institutional context

The authorities engaged directly in the process of financing and provision of public services (in this case the local government) is usually responsible for the efficiency of resource allocation. The central government's task is to provide the stimuli in order to improve the effectiveness. In this sense the adoption of the forum-based approach is suitable not for municipalities but also for ministries, state agencies and projects requiring a high degree of coordination and balance of public and private interests.

Certain opportunities were not taken due to the lack of focus on some decentralisation components (e.g. financial decentralisation.) In comparison, LGI put a major emphasis on the financial decentralisation and thus were able to impose certain models of local finance management such as municipal crediting, long-term planning of capital expenditures, municipal property management, budgeting, local fee pricing and tax management, project application packages, etc. Although some of the proposed models are not compatible with the European legislation[17], their proposals are accepted and integrated in Bulgarian legislation. Switzerland has a rich experience, in the aforementioned areas of municipal finance management, but its expertise and capacity to support them are not used.

The economic crisis in Bulgaria (1991-1996) brought many Bulgarian citizens below the official poverty line and made them dependable on the support of the social services and healthcare sectors taking care of disabled people. Along with the economic growth, the increase of income levels and the general improvement of public welfare the motivation of the international support agencies partially decreased. Their contribution to the eradication of poverty would be more substantial and efficient in other regions of the world and we could achieve the millennium goals on our own.

The authorities engaged directly in the process of financing and provision of public services (in this case – the local government) is usually responsible for the efficiency of resource allocation. The central government's task is to provide the innovation stimuli in order to improve the effectiveness.

How do the decentralisation measures supported by SDC influence the efficient resource allocation? The efficient resource allocation may be guaranteed in several ways, for example:

- A greater flexibility of utilization of the incoming resources can be allowed. The Forum Programme in Bulgaria is an example of poly-variation and flexibility.
- The specific approach of SDC puts an emphasis on the programme and project management – an approach insufficiently used in Bulgaria but with a proven efficiency. The programme-project approach allows allocation of financial resource to various expenditures – operative, capital, combined operative and capital. The absence of limitations provides flexibility of decisions for implementation of spe-

17 For example, the Law on Municipal Debts, adopted after consultations with LGI, imposed a certain model of municipal crediting, valid for about a year. Presently the municipal debts are issued pursuant to the Law on Public Procurement, which was adopted from the European legislation.

cific project activities - something that is hard to achieve with the current Bulgarian legislation related to municipal finance. For example if a project approved according to the forum rules has to be financed directly from the municipal budget it would be very difficult to classify such a project as a current or capital expenditure.

- By means of material stimuli, pilot programmes, dissemination of best practices, technical support, etc. the programme encourages the innovations aimed to improve the efficiency. Such efficiency-encouraging techniques are very common within the network of municipalities supported by SDC. The Forum Programme itself originated and was developed as a pilot programme and then was multiplied as a best practice. Best practices, heuristic approaches, and innovative ideas have been exchanged among the existing forums as well as from older to newer forums and thus have become available to the general public.
- An accounting system has been established for both the beneficiaries and the financing body – a donor organisation and/or municipality. Without such a system all beautiful words and good ideas would have turned into unsuccessful or crooked projects. Without such a system no good resource utilization could be rewarded or inefficient spending reprimanded.

C. Sustainability

Sustainability is measured in accordance to two dimensions: Institutional sustainability and impact sustainability. Institutional sustainability is the degree to which decentralisation measures from programme and project cooperation are set in the context of legal, organisational and fiscal structures or reforms of the country of cooperation. Institutionalisation will thus contribute to a more solid basis for decentralisation measures. Impact sustainability is the extent to which results of a programme or project can be expected to be maintained in the longer perspective even after the input from the donor is discontinued. It is assumed that a high degree of sustainability represents a solid impact.
SDC Projects/Programmes across its priority sectors should be viewed in the context of developing a more pluralist vision and a multidimensional strategy, called Transversal Theme “Citizens and Democracy”. The Concept for Citizens and Democracy proposes three thrusts for interventions:

- Creation of new platforms of discussion with the local authority and the citizens;
- Development of Human and Institutional Capacities within the local authority and the civil society;
- Advocate for Citizen Participation using the experiences in SDC projects.

Three projects were implemented within the framework of the Transversal Theme “Citizens and Democracy”:

- Community Forum and Support to Municipalities (Forum Projects)
- BA - Balkan Assist Association
- RAM - Regional Association of Municipalities

The sustainability of development measures is hard to evaluate until several years have passed since their implementation. Sustainability evaluation depends on assessment of project results sustainability and/or the sustainability of the institutions established. Regarding the Institutional sustainability the evaluation will cover the establishment of new discussion platforms within the Public Forum as well as the development of human and institutional capacity of the local governments and civil societies. Regarding the Impact sustainability the evaluation will cover the support of development measures for the civil participation in the local decision-making process, the development of strategic planning at municipal, regional and national level, projects development in small and medium municipalities, sustainability of working relations among local authorities, NGOs and businesses.

In practice all the three projects of the Transversal Theme “Citizens and Democracy” are related (two of them directly) to the Community Forums. Since the beginning of the Stara Planina Community Forum Programme in 2000 the coverage and topical orientation of the forums have spread to cover the whole territory of the country aided by the new discussion platform promoted by SDC. However, this was done at the expense of the resource provided by SDC for this programme, which exceeded 20% of the whole budget for technical support for the period 2005-2006. After the first phase of the project the interest of Bulgarian municipalities in the forums grew. The forum process, which requires strict rules and methodology, was delegated to two Bulgarian NGOs: Balkan Assist and Foundation for Local Government Reform, included in the so-called Consortium Forum. The two organisations played different roles for the process. Forum Office was supported by Balkan Assist. It is responsible for the overall implementation and the quality of the forum sessions. Its main responsibilities are to provide logistic and expertise support, to maintain the established procedures and standards of the forum sessions as well as the relations with the local communities and institutions. The Projects Forum is maintained by the Foundation for Local Government Reform. Their main responsibilities are to support the development and implementation of projects, to provide expertise and specialized training. The Foundation for Local Government Reform is also responsible for the programme and financial monitoring. The support of the forum process depends on the efficiency and viability of the two organisations. Balkan Assist was established following the model of a Swiss NGO and depends on SDC financing. The financial resource related to the support of the public forums prevails in their budget. Although less so, the Foundation for Local Government Reform is also prone to such a risk since 90% of their budget incomes are derived from SDC (40%) and USAID (49,5%). Both organisations are working hard to maintain their sustainability after SDC’ withdrawal applying various strategies and looking for EU-subsidized projects and markets for their services. The third project of the Transversal Theme portfolio - RAM (Regional Association of Municipalities) also faces a similar problem. The support of the activities of regional associations is a form of institutional support for the development of human and institutional capacity within the local self-government institutions. The existence of associations as major players in the process of decentralisation strongly depends on the financial support of SDC or other international donors. Presently the regional associations are unprepared for the period of transition after the withdrawal of the bilateral cooperation agencies.

In the last stage of the Public Forum Programme the decentralisation of the forum process developed with the delegation of rights to local NGOs to organize forums. This step guaranteed the sustainability of the forum process because local NGOs are less dependent on subsidies provided by SDC or other international donors. A limiting factor in this process is the subordination of the local NGOs to the two leading NGOs in the Forum Consortium - Balkan Assist and the Foundation for Local Government Reform - that both administrate and organize the forum process.

The further implementation of the forum process by municipalities and some ministries (such as the Ministry of Culture) without SDC financing guarantees sustainable results. Presently there are several such forums and we may assume that this interest will last providing that there are organisations willing to organize and support the forum process and modify the approach in order to reduce the costs while at the same time retain the basic ideas and methods.

Some municipalities (there is information about at least 7) certain components of the Public Forum (e.g. the Project funds for civil initiatives) are being multiplied. They stimulate civil participation and initiative and are examples for sustaining the influence of “Citizens and Democracy”.

In the short term the development of new institution pose some risks for the sustainability and successful implementation of SDC's results achieved for the limited period of active measure implementation.
Another risk for the sustainability is the lack of process institutionalisation. It may be achieved by including requirements for a certain form of public debates in some laws(e.g the Law on Municipal Budgets, the Law on water-supply and sewerage utilities, the Law on Municipal Debt, the Law on Preservation of the Environment, the Law on Regional Development, etc.)
The participation of SDC in the strategic planning at municipal, regional and national level also stems positive expectation regarding sustainability. Most of the strategic plans are supported by SDC and the future capacity and prerequisites for implementation of European funds will be based on Swiss approaches. The strategic planning cycle includes constant efforts for updating the planning documents and could be a drive for further implementation of the forum approach.
It must be emphasised that the crucial factor of sustainability is the creation of the network from above mentioned national and local NGOs trained and qualified to organize forums and their persistence and will to disseminate best practices in forum process.

8. Analysis of SDC comparative advantages, strengths and weaknesses of the SDC approach

Strengths	***Weaknesses***
§ Good reputation of SDC among stakeholders § Neutrality, independence § Long-term partnerships § Good knowledge of decentralisation and local government principles § High relevance of individual projects and programmes § High effectiveness concerning impact § Flexibility in relations with partners of cooperation § Willingness to cooperate with other donors and agencies § Non-bureaucratic, flexible mode of operation § Dedication to assist the vulnerable groups § Good visibility of SDC on local level	§ Non-holistic approach to local governance (too little emphasis on management, finances and service implementation) due to limited resources § Few direct relations with local government units (to a certain extent by reason of missing second regional level of governance) § Insufficient impact because of small-scale interventions § Working on government issues through NGOs § Few activities on regulatory framework § Lack of regularity, organisation and coordination among the donors supporting Bulgaria
Opportunities	**Threats**
§ Support of central government institution by SDC forum approach § Disseminations of forum approach in Western Balkan countries and Turkey § Coordination of the various projects and programmes of SDC in Balkan countries § Using the network of Bulgarian NGO's for decentralisation support measures in neighbouring countries § Synergetic effect of the measures to identify, discuss, and substantiate problem-solving projects with the aid of other donor programmes and projects § Using partners and local government to stimulate investment and trade relations	§ Support to civil society instead of decentralisation § Low or unrepresentative of participation of local community members § Forum decisions on some forums contradict openly the decisions of the local government on budget issues § There is a risk forum discussion topics to deviate substantially from the local society agenda § Weak relations between local government and businesses

9. Cooperation with other partners and aid effectiveness

Bulgaria has been aided by Switzerland in the process of transition to democracy and free-market economy since 1992. The main aspects of the aid were the technical support implemented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC) as well as the trade and economic collaboration implemented by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco). The following partnerships with foreign donors and local NGOs working in the field of decentralisation should be mentioned:

- United States Agency for International Development and its Local Government Initiative;
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- World Bank.
- Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK.

The relations between SDC and the other bilateral donors may be characterized as smooth, conflict-free and of mutual benefit. For example the American LGI and SDC, being actively involved in the decentralisation process, managed to apply their own specific approaches for simultaneous influence both on the elite and legislative framework and on the local communities. Such synchronized approaches were applied by SDC and UNDP in the field of strategic planning on local, regional and national level. Most of the coordinated activities of SDC and international bilateral and/or multilateral donors date back from the early stages of decentralisation, prior to the evaluated period. At these stages the relevance of measures and programmes related to democratization and decentralisation is high compared to the national context of slow transition. Now we should note the lack of regularity, organisation and co-ordination among the donors supporting Bulgaria in the fields of good governance, decentralisation and democratisation after the announcement of the date for Bulgaria's accession to the EU. During this period there was no synchronization with the European Commission in the set areas of influence, either. Probably from the point of view of efficiency and effectiveness we should consider the possibility to evaluate the alternatives when providing support to separate states: to combine our efforts with the efforts of other donors or to act on our own. Considering the evaluated period the benefits for Bulgaria from the activities of SDC acting alone seem to surpass by far the benefits that would have resulted from joint activities. Regarding the alignment and harmonisation of SDC's activities with the Paris Declarationon Aid Effectivenes the progress is negligible according to the indicators of progress. This was due to the impossibility to reorganize the activities for the short time remaining after the declaration of SDC's withdrawal from Bulgaria and the withdrawal of the rest of the donors.

The relations between SDC and NGO's are a model for well-synchronized and mutually beneficial relations. Balkan Assist was created after Swiss NGOs participating in SDC's development initiatives after the first stage of the Public Forum. Balkan assist was joined by the Foundation for Local Government Reform in the framework of the Forum Consortium. During the evaluated period the forum organisation activities were further decentralised by the accession of local NGO's, among which the Regional Association of Municipalities „Trakia", The "Knowledge" Association Lovetch, КНСО – Targovishte, Business Centre – Svishtov. If we compare SDC with other donors we will undoubtedly find out that its activities managed most efficiently to mobilize and use the potential of the civil sector.

10. SDC Berne Support and relations with country office

The relation between SDC Berne and the country office is strong on conceptual issues and less so on practical issues. The latter problems may be explained by the particular

situation for Bulgaria becoming a member of the EU and the strong focus on the acquis communautaire requirements.
It would thus not be appropriate to draw some general lessons from this particular country. However, it is clear that relations have been fairly strong concerning programmatic issues, but for practical purposes Swiss and Bulgarian NGOs have had the management responsibility, and advantages and disadvantages of this system were discussed in the previous sections.

11. Recommendations

Based on the evaluation research we may draw the following conclusions:

- The Public Forum Programme is an innovative and relevant means for promoting and consolidating citizens' participation and mobilising municipal development resources.
- The programme and Bulgarian organisations' best practices and experience should be disseminated in neighbouring countries with similar problems, traditions and culture.
- In the period after the withdrawal of SDC the forum process should remain active on municipal, regional and national level by adapting the methodology of the various sector programmes and without external financial support.
- The forum process management structure should be simplified through decentralisation of forum organisation delegating it to a greater number of local NGOs. Despite the withdrawal of SDC from the country some kind of methodological support should be preserved in the future (e.g. using a distance learning approach).
- The specific influence on some decentralisation components such as the financial decentralisation may improve the relevance and efficiency of SDC's support to decentralisation. Switzerland has a rich experience, expertise and resources for support of municipal finance management, which are still unused.
- The Guide to Decentralisation should be revised and updated with new topics and functionality. The preparation and issuing of a broader Practical Guide would support the country offices not only on conceptual but also on operative level.
- SDC should harmonize to a greater extent their activities with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness regarding their support to decentralisation in order to achieve the target indicators for alignment and harmonization.
- It seems that SDC activities have to be concentrated globally as well as into certain support areas. The existence of numerous programmes in many countries results in resource fragmentation and leads to less opportunities for influence and higher administration costs.

12. Management Response of SDC Bulgaria and SDC Berne/ country desk

Observations générales concernant l'évaluation

La perception de l'évaluateur est, dans ses grandes lignes, correcte. Limitée à l'analyse des forums, l'évaluation sur la contribution suisse à la décentralisation offre des conclusions et des recommandations intéressantes pour la DDC. L'analyse qui y est développée montre clairement les défis du contexte et ceux de la réalisation du programme. L'évaluateur émet d'une manière positive des critiques qui ont depuis plusieurs années

fait l'objet de discussions intenses au sein de la DDC et/ou avec nos partenaires bulgares.
Comme le rappelle l'évaluation, la volonté de développer le programme associant citoyens et associations à des processus de définition de projet provient d'une évaluation menée en 1998. Le choix de la DDC a été de donner une ampleur à un type de démarche participative, permettant à des administrations, des citoyens, des associations et des entreprises de s'exposer individuellement ou ensemble à une pratique de développement. Nous avions durant l'année 99 tenu compte dans notre analyse :

- de la faiblesse du tissus associatif au niveau local et de la nécessité de le renforcer,
- de la forte verticalité d'un Etat centralisé,
- d'un manque de tradition dans l'implication de la société civile et des entreprises à des processus ouverts de décisions politiques,
- d'un déficit de partenariat privé - public.

Les forums ont non seulement permis de mener des processus de concertation, mais également contribuer par des recommandations et des projets à améliorer les prestations de services publics qui incombent aux municipalités (article 11 de la loi sur le gouvernement et l'administration locale). Ils ont généralement renforcé la capacité d'intervention des communes.

Le rapport ne souligne pas assez toute une série d'effets induits par les projets issus des forums. Ces projets, la plupart du temps, sont financés de manière conjointe par les municipalités, la DDC et les organisations locale impliquées. Les partenaires locaux ont eu pour la première fois l'occasion d'avoir une responsabilité directe de gestion de fonds de donateurs, de le faire en collaboration avec l'administration municipale et les entreprises locales. Il en est résulté une amélioration, au niveau local, de la compétence en formulation et en gestion de projet. Cela a une importance en particulier dans les petites municipalités qui sont également appelées à formuler et réaliser des projets complexes pouvant être financé par les fonds structurels européens. Cet aspect est mentionné par l'évaluateur.

A juste titre, l'évaluation souligne la faiblesse de l'implication des entreprises dans le "processus forum".

Bien que nourrie par la politique décentralisée pratiquée en Suisse, la DDC n'a jamais essayé de transposer, telle quelle une "culture politique". Le principe de subsidiarité est également un des modes de fonctionnement de l'Union Européenne (Traité de Maastricht, Constitution Européenne en gestation). Il est important de souligner que la pratique des forums est plutôt exceptionnelle en Suisse. Il n'y avait donc pas d'intention de transposer une approche helvétique en Bulgarie.

La DDC ne partage pas l'opinion de l'évaluateur lorsqu'il indique que les décisions du forum peuvent être, en certaine circonstance, en contradiction avec des décisions prises par les élus municipaux, mettant ainsi en péril les efforts de décentralisation, et contestant les autorités issues des urnes. Il est nécessaire de souligner à ce sujet que chaque processus de forum municipal se base sur un contrat entre la municipalité concernée et la DDC. La question de l'instrumentalisation d'un forum par un (groupe d') acteur(s) quelconque est une question inhérente à toute démocratie. Les modérateurs sont formés pour faire face à ce risque. Une contradiction entre la majorité d'un collège élu et une partie des citoyens n'est pas dramatique en soi, si cette contradiction est le fruit de processus transparents. C'est plutôt un signe de vitalité démocratique.

Une tentative a été réalisée dans le domaine de la décentralisation fiscale (Mission Stadler en été 2002 à la demande de l'Association bulgare des communes). Elle s'est révélée infructueuse. Les raisons principales provenaient de l'inadéquation de ce que pouvait offrir le système fiscal suisse (à trois niveau de budgétisation avec différents régimes de répartition des charges et de niveaux de subventionnement; cantonaux et fédéraux, ainsi qu'avec un système de contrôle administratif et politique diversifié) au système fiscal bulgare encore organisé d'une manière vertical.

L'approche forum n'a jamais eu l'ambition d'être holistique. Son point de départ est l'expression de besoins spécifiques, exprimés par les associations ou des personnes. Puis une approche pragmatique pour les couvrir. La DDC est un donateur aux ressources financières limitées. Elle se trouve dans l'obligation de concentrer ses activités sur des thèmes particuliers. D'autres donateurs étaient déjà engagés dans les débats relatifs à la législation et aux nouvelles réglementations du processus de décentralisation ou pour améliorer les compétences techniques et administratives des structures locales. Ainsi la DDC a décidé d'intervenir dans un domaine où elle percevait des faiblesses: celle de la participation citoyenne, associative et entrepreneuriale au développement communal. Cette approche complète les efforts bulgares et ceux d'autres donateurs. La DDC estime qu'il est dangereux de se limiter à l'amélioration des capacités de gestion des autorités local appelée à gérer des budgets plus importants sans que des instances d'information, de consultation et de contrôle impliquant des citoyens ne soient mis en place pour en assurer une gestion plus efficace et transparente. Les questions des implications financières des communes et/ou les organisations impliquées, à court terme (ex. investissement) comme à moyen terme (ex. frais de fonctionnement) sont généralement traitées dans les propositions de projet émanant des forums.

La DDC regrette que le temps ait manqué pour que les évaluateurs puissent tenir compte d'autres efforts réalisés dans l'effort de décentralisation. En effet la DDC a également soutenu des initiatives dans les domaines suivants : Education (projet CLIP : Intégration de jeunes provenant d'institutions, projets pilotes développés dans trois communes); Culture (Pro Helvetia); Santé (Amélioration de la gestion des hôpitaux municipaux, Association régionales des hôpitaux, Partenariats); Gestion de ressources naturelles (Planification forestière au niveau local, développement participatifs de plans de gestion de parcs nationaux et régionaux) et Tourisme (Association régionales du Tourisme de Stara Planina). Ces initiatives ne sont pas évoquées dans l'évaluation. Dans certains cas, la DDC a étroitement collaboré avec d'autres donateurs (Banque Mondiale: Planification forestière).

Observations «méthodologiques»

Les contraintes de temps n'ont pas permis à l'évaluateur d'avoir des contacts avec les personnes impliquées dans et par les forums. La plus grande partie du travail de l'expert se base sur des études de documents. Le Bureau de Coopération de Sofia regrette que cette contrainte ait généré ce déséquilibre.
Le manque d'exemples concrets pour illustrer certaines affirmations donne, parfois, l'impression que l'évaluateur défend certaines idées reçues.
La DDC aurait souhaités des recommandations plus précises en ce qui concerne ce qui pourrait être amélioré en Bulgarie comme dans d'autres pays.

Prise de position sur les recommandations de l'évaluation

Les recommandations et conclusions formulées par l'évaluation ont, en partie, déjà été discutée et des mesures ont été prises pour les mettre en pratique.

- La première recommandation est une conclusion, nous n'y reviendront donc pas.

- La dissémination de l'expérience bulgare est prévue en Macédoine où une série de trois forums municipaux sont en train d'être réalisés. Ceci avec la participation de consultants bulgares (2 pour la planification et 1 pour le suivi du processus). Une fois la première phase pilote réalisée, une dissémination dans un nombre de communes plus important pourra être envisagée. Un processus participatif est également engagé en Serbie. Un intérêt est signalé par d'autres pays de la région. Une capitalisation sous forme d'édition de matériel didactique (manuel de l'initiateur, manuel de modération de forum, manuel d'organisateur) ainsi que des manuels d'information à l'intention des donateurs ou de responsables politiques intéressé sont en voie d'édition. Un matériel audio-visuel (didactique et présentant l'instrument forum) doit accompagner ce matériel imprimé. L'ensemble de ce matériel devrait être prêt pour le second semestre 2007. Un événement final sera organisé à Sofia vers la fin de l'année à fin de diffusion de l'instrument forum. Plusieurs modérateurs et responsables d'ONG bulgares sont capables de diffuser la méthode dans le pays comme à l'étranger.
- La DDC partage l'avis de l'expert, durant cette dernière phase, la diversification des forums doit se poursuivre en accord avec les objectifs fixés. Des signes réjouissant montrent qu'une demande existe pour développer des forums "Leader"[18] à la demande de certaines municipalités. Ces dernières sont prêtes à les financer. L'évaluation souligne que certaines communes ont réalisés des forums sans appui financiers extérieurs.
- Durant la phase actuelle, un important effort de décentralisation dans l'encadrement des forums a été effectué. Comme le souligne l'évaluation, des organisations de la société civile (par ex. Mizia à Lovec, L'association des municipalités de Thrace ou le Business Centre de Svistov) ont été mobilisées pour encadrer des forums. La Bulgarie peut compter sur plus d'une centaine de modérateurs formés aux techniques de modération et un important matériel didactique qui est en train d'être édité (voir ci-dessus). Concernant la question de la simplification de la gestion peut être réalisée si une commune souhaite promouvoir un processus forum; la DDC dans des phases successive impliquant à chaque étape des moments expérimentaux (Recherche – Développement – Formation) et une redevabilité à sa propre administration ne pouvait pas se permettre l'économie d'une organisation parfois complexe. La proposition d'une formation à distance est une proposition qu'il reste à discuter.
- La question de la décentralisation fiscale a déjà été discutée plus haut. Les systèmes suisses et bulgares restent encore trop éloigné les uns des autres. Des partenariats avec des pays comme la France et l'Italie qui ont connu des forts processus de décentralisation (entre autre fiscaux) seraient à notre avis plus aptes à proposer des solutions intéressantes à la Bulgarie. Le Portugal par la grandeur de ses communes, analogues à celles de la Bulgarie, est une autre sujet intéressant. L'adéquation aux normes fiscales européennes est également importante (cf. appui d'USAID par LGI proposant des instruments ne répondant pas à ces normes).
- En ce qui concerne l'harmonisation, l'évaluation elle-même souligne la difficulté de sa réalisation dans un pays "non-CAD". Une collaboration non formelle a été réalisée avec les agences partageant les mêmes objectifs que la DDC (principalement l'USAID et le PNUD).

18 Leader (‘Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale’) est une initiative financée par les fonds structurels européens. Elle est conçue pour assister les acteurs des zones rurales pour le développement des régions rurales.

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Annex C – Case Study Report: India

Table of contents

1. Introduction 80
2. Overall Conclusions 80
3. Context of decentralization 81
4. Brief on other donors' involvement in decentralisation support 82
5. Overview of project portfolio 83
6. Strategic documents provided by SDC 84
7. Main findings and Conclusions 84
7.1 Relevance 84
7.2 Effectiveness 86
7.3 Sustainability 87
8. Analysis of SDC's approach, strengths and weakness 89
9. Cooperation with other partners and aid effectiveness 90
10. Recommendations 90
11. Management Response of SDC India and SDC Berne/country desk 90
Annex 1 List of projects, which were visited and persons met in the course of field visits/interviews 90

1. Introduction

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to ascertain the factors that are effective in SDC's decentralization projects, what makes them so, in terms of whether some factors impede or contribute to their effectiveness, and the sustainability and impact of SDC's projects.

The specific objectives of this evaluation are to determine the extent to which SDC's decentralization efforts are relevant, effective and sustainable. Essentially, this is to assess what actually works, in SDC's decentralization projects, the factors that contribute to or impede effectiveness of these projects, and what SDC should do to improve the performance of its decentralization efforts.

Does SDC have a comparative advantage, relative to other donors, and to partner countries' activities?

The immediate and practical objective is to assess the current decentralization projects, of 2005 and 2006, and not in terms of individual projects and programmes, but in the general approach (SDC's) utilization in development cooperation.

Towards meeting these objectives, several projects and programmes were visited and seen first hand. A substantial number of people were also met in the course of these visits, and with a view to getting a more comprehensive picture of the projects as they are.

2. Overall Conclusions

An important conclusion, based on the views of several people who have been working with SDC, is that SDC is not a demanding agency that imposes conditions before it financially supports any programme. This is a particularly positive approach of SDC, since it does much better in results when local conditions are taken into account, rather than bringing in extraneous factors that are not suited to any Indian situation.
There is also a degree of flexibility of management in SDC's projects that enhances the possibility of fine-tuning the projects to meet local conditions. This has been the view of NGO partners in these projects, as well as government officials.

The projects that are at different stages of functioning, from one which is just about starting to others which are shortly concluding their term, and there are no common observations that can be made on either their functioning, or impact. However, practical considerations suggest that the projects have been taken up with due diligence, and local NGOs as well as other individuals who are associated with them are working towards a successful outcome.

Women being involved in local groups (as in coastal areas of Tamil Nadu) do not immediately translate into effective power or influence over the functioning of the local group. Fishing villages have traditional panchayats, which have strongly resisted allowing women to participate in them. While the project being run in this area is trying to overcome this problem, it is going to take more time before some success is reached. The nearby gram panchayat is not involved in any meaningful way, and this has also been a setback for the project.

While poverty reduction is an important objective of these projects, whether this has been achieved is not evident. For the people of the villages the projects are a means to derive immediate benefits (or in a short while), but this may not be sufficient to have a

long term or irreversible poverty reduction, in the sense that these beneficiaries remain above the line of poverty even after the project is completed. For the moment, they are deriving some benefits.

The strong reliance on NGOs in design and implementation of projects may impact negatively on development of sustainable capacity building systems, particularly in a situation with a less prominent role of SDC. This is also a reflection of the fact that most NGOs do not have internal resources and finances to continue with the programmes after the support from donors has stopped.

There is, therefore, a need to develop strategies for sustainability without major SDC financial support.

Even in the participation in the village assemblies, i.e. gram sabhas, it is the poorer people who generally participate, with the view that they would be able to derive some direct, and economic benefits from doing so. Their involvement to meet any high principles of democracy is virtually non-existent in the places studied. This issue needs to be reflected in programme strategies.

3. Context of decentralization

Essentially, the issues that are of importance are the extent to which decentralization as a principle has been implemented in the country (India), and the extent to which local people have internalized such principles. The immediate corollary to this is that people are able and willing to participate in the programmes initiated in association with institutions of local government. While the principle of subsidiarity may have had some influence when legislations to bring about decentralization and local government in the country were formalized, what we have at the local level is the outcome of legislator's predilections as found in the different states of the country. What is also of relevance in this context is the general disinclination of legislators to devolve more powers to the institutions of local government.

Decentralization in India is not something new, and from the early 1960s, a system referred to as the Panchayati Raj has been in place. However, some political leaders of the time (India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru being a strong supporter) considered the panchayati raj as important for the development of the country, and the reduction of poverty. While the development angle has certainly taken precedence, an often-quoted principle is that it is the level of governance which incorporates people's direct participation, i.e. direct democracy, and this is certainly to be mentioned as a crucial outcome of decentralization [1]

The extent to which decentralization, in the sense of devolution of powers, and in administration, political and fiscal areas has actually taken place, differs from state to state. The situation in India is that there is no uniform, or common levels of decentralization prescribed for the entire country. Decentralization is a subject that is taken up by each state, which enacts its own legislation on decentralization, which however, has to conform to the principles, which are contained in the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. This leaves considerable scope for individual states to either devolve substantial powers to the institutions of local government (panchayats), or limit the devolution to the minimum required to meet the constitutional enactment. While the proportion of state

[1]1 See for example, George Mathew, ed., 1986. *Panchayati Raj in Karnataka Today: its National Dimensions,* Institute of Social Sciences and Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.

legislators who have not been in favour of devolving more powers to the panchayats has always been high, decentralization too has had strong supporters from time to time, who have been able to push through the legislations to promote decentralization. Further, decentralization in India has reached a point where it is unlikely to be derailed, or brought down.

An important limitation that all institutions of local government have is that they are almost entirely dependent on the state government and federal government for financial support and the ability to function.[2] Though various powers have been given to these institutions, it is the gram panchayats, i.e. the third (and lowest) tier of institutions, which can raise more funds through local taxes, and not the other (higher) institutions. This is found virtually all over the country. However, the problem that gram panchayats in some states face is that, being located at the lowest level, and within the villages, their capacity to tax their own neighbours as it were makes them unpopular to the other residents of the villages. This also restricts their ability to use any coercive measure to ensure the payment of taxes. This may not be in states such as Kerala and Karnataka, where local revenues are able to provide substantial funds (particularly in gram panchayats of Kerala) to the panchayats.[3] As institutions, which can effectively reduce poverty, the panchayats have not had any notable success.[4]

Government agencies in India tend to look at the panchayats as instruments of service delivery, and the means, by which development schemes to reduce poverty, and other development activities, are implemented. Also, panchayats have not always been seen as institutions of governance and democracy, *per se,* providing scope for people to participate in decision-making, or in local planning. In fact, for most people of villages, it appears that panchayats are only institutions of service delivery, and nothing to do with 'democracy'. Thus, an unfortunate outcome is that gram sabhas (people's assembly, in villages) often do not have even the 10 per cent of the local population required as a quorum. In a general sense, people tend to attend the gram sabhas only when they see an individual benefit coming to them through the panchayats. In an overall sense, decentralization in most parts of India would conform to the statement that, "At present, India's decentralization to rural and urban governments is a patchwork of deconcentration, delegation and devolution," (Sethi, 2004: 3).

4. Other donors' involvement in decentralisation support

Several donors have been involved in supporting decentralization activities in India. Among them have been Ford Foundation, that has been active in supporting decentralization and development for many years; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA); Department of International Development (DFID), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and others. At the outset, there appears to have been made a substantial focus and concentration on activist/applied programmes, where grass-roots work has been designed to have an immediate effect and outcome, even if they were often taken up on a relatively small scale. The latter factor is inevitable, since the geographical sizes of most states is large, and have very large popula-

2 For instance, most of the administrative staff of the panchayats is from the line departments of each state, who are deputed to work in the panchayats for a period of time.

3 Sethi, Geeta, ed., 2004. *Fiscal decentralization to rural governments in India,* The World Bank, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

4 See M. Govinda Rao, 2002. "Fiscal decentralization in Indian federalism," in Ehtisham Admad and Vito Tanzi, eds., *Managing Fiscal Decentralization,* Routledge, London. Rao, M. Govinda 2002. "Poverty alleviation under fiscal decentralization," in M. Govinda Rao, ed., *Development, Poverty, and Fiscal Policy: Decentralization of Institutions,* Oxford University Press, Delhi.

tions. Therefore, funding agencies take up relatively smaller programmes, which may later be “up-scaled” to cover larger areas.

In the context of donors who have been associated with India, there is a general principle followed by the government of India that there should not be any concentration of donors in one state, but a more spread out focus in different states. Hence, competition as such is hardly likely in the context in which the donors function within the country. However, there appears to have been some duplication of effort on the ground, where different funding agencies have taken to financing the same activities in the same state. Development activities have been emphasized due to the large number of people who are still poor, and face severe deprivation. All these agencies have tried to support programmes that raise the level of existence, in terms of meeting their basic needs. Decentralization has been projected as an important means by which service delivery can be enhanced, and the people of India (in rural and urban) can participate in governance through more inclusive measures (bring into governance those who had been mostly excluded), and also increase transparency and accountability in the functioning of institutions of local government.

Funding of donors has sometimes taken on the manner of cooperating with each other, in supporting the activities of agencies such as PRIA, The Hunger Project, which are recipients of funds from diverse sources, and also have more flexibility in framing their own programmes in using these funds. SDC has done this in the case of both PRIA and The Hunger Project, where funds have been given without the specific and programme related component, but has allowed for a more loosely organized fund-usage pattern.

Other agencies (other than SDC) have often functioned with the view that the funds, which they bring also justify the conditions that they impose. The conditions have often been counter-productive, and have resulted in programmes being dropped. Too strongly leaning towards any particular form of functioning or in managing the programme has been seen to be less than useful if the ideas were either developed in the abstract, or in countries far different from India. Thus, to impose these ideas in India, especially if they were completely different from what people in India think are not appropriate, is the problem that has come up from time to time even with agencies such as the World Bank.

5. Overview of project portfolio

The projects are spread over several states of India, in both the northern states as well as the south. There is a broad confluence of purpose, in the sense that decentralization is the guiding principle in their choice of projects, as well as the objectives in outcome. Capacity building forms a crucial objective in most areas. This is of particular significance since most people who enter the panchayats are either new to politics, or new to holding elective positions, and need training in how they should function in the panchayats. Even the projects, which were initiated as a reaction to the tsunami of December 2004, have included issues of governance, participation and women’s empowerment in these programmes.

Initiation of the project in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu following the tsunami was through the work carried out by the Swaminathan Foundation, which had already been working on soil erosion, mangrove planting, etc., and which could also move to the tsunami affected areas with a similar programme. Local groups were meant to be involved

in this programme, through joint management of mangroves, maintaining canals, and also in income generating activities through Self Help Groups.
Another programme in the coastal area of Tamil Nadu was with the aim of not only providing relief, but also more of a long-term benefit through income generating work, and particularly for women. This was through the Hunger Project, and has been in place since the tsunami. However, it should be stated that the SDC involvement in Tamil Nadu following the tsunami was related to the disaster itself, and the need for relief. It has linked the disaster relief programme with decentralisation, but SDC does not have a regular presence in Tamil Nadu, and once the on-going programme in Tamil Nadu gets over, it may withdraw from the state.

Rajasthan
PRIA's project based near Jaipur, and includes the setting up of panchayat resource centres, and building up capacity of panchayat representatives.

Kerala
CapDeck, programmes in Karavolam gram panchayat, near Trivandrum; Alleppey district platforms; KILA, capacity building; Pallakkad district, Maithri (NGO); Eruthempathy gram panchayat (Palakkad district).

Tamil Nadu
The Hunger Project's programme in Nagapattinam and Velankanni (after tsunami, December 2004); THP's training of trainers in Trichy prior to panchayat elections. Kuthambakkam gram panchayat, panchayat academy, Mr. Elango. M.S. Swaminathan Foundation, Cuddalore.

Karnataka
Bonthi gram panchayat, Bidar district.

6. Strategic documents provided by SDC

SDC sent documents related to the country programme, which lists its objectives, and the manner in which it expects to approach the issues related to decentralisation. In addition, detailed transcripts of the credit proposals (i.e. the grant documents) were also provided, which indicated the specific projects, and the budgets that are associated with them. PRIA and The Hunger Project did not have specific projects financially supported by SDC, but SDC's support was broader based, in terms of budgetary support for their entire programmes. Time frames, and the expected outcomes of these programmes and projects were also included in these credit proposals. Other than these, we were provided with evaluation reports of SDCs projects, and programmes carried out by various individuals. Minutes of civil society meetings, and donor meetings were also given.

7. Main findings and Conclusions

7.1 Relevance

I) Country office: Keeping in view the objectives of SDC, the choices of programmes and projects were evidently in line. There were indications of support for civil society partners, and their activities were considered carefully in keeping with the achievement of these objectives, as well as their probability of successfully meeting these objectives. The relevance is also considered in terms of whether these partners were chosen on their already established track record of working in decentralisation related activities and

their involvement in local government or local issues of development. A problem that is visible in the work in different states is, however, due to the local conditions, which vary widely, and thus, the form and contents of programmes have to be careful gauged. This appears to have been done by SDC, which has led to their relative success in different places.

II) Programme and project level: The projects are substantially relevant, to the efforts of decentralization as well as the needs of the development of the institutions of decentralization. However, the links with state governments in question also need to be emphasized. For the most part the projects that have been taken up through SDC support is that they are on a relatively small scale, and deliberately so, it appears. Thus, the NGOs which are implementing them are not only expected to devise and design measures to increase the human capital found in the local institutions (through training programmes of the elected representatives, for example) they are also more in the form of models, which can and should be expanded to cover the entire state, perhaps at a later date, and with more funds. This latter aspect is meant to be a government programme, whether from the state in which it is implemented, or the central government.

In terms of purpose, and a sense of relevance of the projects to the people who are the intended beneficiaries, we could confirm that such relevance exists. However, the objectives are necessarily different, in the different contexts, and development which was meant to be effected, and the desired outcomes. For instance, the projects in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, the impetus for the initiation of those projects was provided by the tsunami of December 2004.

While there is every reason to suggest that the immediate support and enthusiastic involvement of people is their eagerness to get out of the difficulties caused by the tsunami, the principle of having the involvement of people in panchayat related activities, and income earning programmes, may encourage them to remain in these activities long after the effects of the tsunami on the land has been overcome. The important factor here is their perception of the benefits that they derive, or expect to derive.

Building up fairly small but effective means of increasing people's income can be carried out as Mr. Elango has done in the neighbourhood of Chennai. While the results cannot be spectacular considering the scale of activities, the fact that they can be seen to work means that they can be duplicated and implemented elsewhere, to the benefit of many, particularly women.

The need for capacity building is obviously of considerable importance, in the context of panchayat representatives. A majority of panchayat members, in all three panchayat categories, and in all the states considered, are usually new to the panchayats, and many of them also new to politics. With limited experience and knowledge of how to function in the panchayats, and with even greater applicability to women, a concerted and widespread programme of capacity building is required in all the states. Whether this can be carried out by state agencies alone has been conclusively shown to be difficult, if not impossible, due to the large number of representatives, particularly in the gram panchayats. Hence, a more decentralised system of capacity building is necessary. NGOs, and other institutions, even set up by the state governments would go a long way in meeting some part of the capacity building requirements. CapDeck is an important initiative in this direction, in Kerala. With its programmes being carried out by local partners and NGOs, it has a wider reach in terms of formulating programmes, which can later be implemented by others in the state. KILA too has taken a leadership role in this matter. So too have The Hunger Project, and PRIA, in different states. Trying

out a programme on a smaller scale and then implementing it over the whole state is a sound principle.

One has to mention here that while the programme in Bonthi Gram Panchayat has lots of promise, there are no means of assessing what actually will materialize, since it has yet to effectively start. During discussions with several people of the villages in Bonthi, including women panchayat representatives and other women, the understanding is that they are all sufficiently motivated to get the project moving. Obviously, watershed is an area that is of considerable interest to them, and water supply means a lot in an area that is prone to drought and water shortages.

III) National Policy and institutional context: In the Indian context, there is a well-organized framework for decentralisation. While decentralisation that was put in place in the 1960s was not particularly effective in terms of outcomes, it should be stated that for the past nearly 50 years some form of institutions of decentralisation have been in existence. However, the present system of decentralisation owes its form to the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, and the legislations enacted by state governments. The SDC projects and programmes are implemented in the context of these already existing institutions, and policies regarding the interactions with international donors. Having said this, the problems associated with decentralisation in India are also the differences between states in terms of how much of effective power has actually been devolved to the institutions of local government.

7.2 Effectiveness

I) Country office: While the choices that are made are effected after considerable deliberation and care (and therefore sometimes take a long time), one must also state that most of their programmes have met with considerable degree of success.

II) The effectiveness of all these projects is not completely established, insofar as they have not been in existence for a uniform length of time. Some have been functioning for several years, and some for a few, while a few have just been started. To this extent, to suggest that all of them are effective would not be based on any substantive evidence.

In an overall sense, the involvement of people, participation, and the explicit comments that they had made, suggest in very general terms the effectiveness of these programmes. The involvement of people needs to be assessed not only in direct participation, but also the benefits that they get, and their willingness to continue in the activities initiated in the project, even after it has been concluded. As a beginning, it may be noted that the involvement of people has to be related more to their income levels than other factors. For instance, even in the participation in the village assemblies, i.e. gram sabhas, it is the poorer people who generally participate, with the view that they would be able to derive some direct, and economic benefits from doing so. Their involvement to meet any high principles of democracy is virtually non-existent in the places, which I studied. For instance, in Kerala, it has been frequently noted that people of the middle and upper classes do not participate in gram sabhas. This is not peculiar to Kerala, but is found in other states too. Insofar as the panchayats have been projected in terms of working towards poverty reduction, and service delivery, the economically higher groups do not usually see much benefit in attending gram sabhas. Kerala usually has a higher participation of women from kudumbashree groups, which essentially comprise poorer people.

To the extent that disadvantaged groups are elected representatives and also attend gram sabhas, it would appear that they are at least nominally in the panchayats. Since it

is also seen that in many places, these groups do not wield much power, and are usually under the influence if not control of elites and dominant groups in the villages, it would also appear that there is still some distance to go in making the panchayats a fully participatory system. In this context, the platforms that have been organized in Kerala may be instrumental in making the people take greater interest in the functioning of the panchayats, and play a more significant role that as passive bystanders.

Transparency and accountability have always been a problem area in the functioning of the panchayats. There have been efforts in various ways, to insist that panchayats should inform people, and that representatives are accountable to the people. This has been weak in most places. In Kerala, as one of the interviewees said, most gram panchayat representatives are not inclined to convene gram sabhas and face the people, because these people may attack them for not doing what they had promised to do. Kerala has included several measures to meet such needs of transparency and accountability, audits of various kinds, and publication of panchayat information. Nevertheless, the outcome even with these measures is that in most places, the levels of corruption have not been significantly reduced.

Whether these projects of the SDC have made an impact on the above areas is not the way to approach the question of SDC's involvement. Insofar as the projects, for the most part, are in a manner of trying out new methods, measures and programmes, which can later be up-scaled and introduced around the state, it is somewhat inappropriate to make any evaluative statement about the extent to which they have had an impact. In a general sense, the projects that I have seen may have been seen to work, and therefore, they have met their project objectives. However, the local conditions in different places are not the same. For instance, the mangrove programme, as well as social engineering in their earlier project areas, which appear to have had some success where Swaminathan Foundation introduced them, has now (in the SDC project) met with difficulties due to the local conditions and the cultural practices of the local people.

III) National policy and institutional context: In India, decentralisation has been a major political issue for several decades. However, the conditions and the political culture vary considerably from one state to another. In a few states, conditions are not helpful to projects aiming at supporting effective decentralisation.

One further constraint concerning the policy context is the Federal Government decision to reduce bilateral cooperation between governmental institutions. This constraint has been resolved through reliance on national NGOs, which, however, may have other repercussions.

That there are several problems of functioning of sub-state organisations in different states is well known. It is also known that decentralisation in the country, for all its long existence, has always had strong detractors and those who would like to quietly bury all efforts of decentralisation.

7.3 Sustainability

I) One has to distinguish the project outcomes and the activities that were taken up through SDC support, and the contexts in which they have functioned. In certain kinds of activities, advocacy for example, and in close interaction with the community, there is a possibility that the projects may be sustained even after SDC's withdrawal of financial support, but there is a strong risk that this may not happen. At present the strategy for a gradual phasing-out needs to be developed.

II) Programme and project level: Sustainability of these programmes depends on the financial support that they can get from any source, whether state or other agencies. To the extent that the state government, for example, is able or willing to take up the financial support of such programmes, or that the local panchayats themselves are able to find the resources to manage such activities, the programme and projects may be sustained and even strengthened. In this respect it would be advisable to focus efforts on a few or one single state, where the political conditions for decentralisation programmes are positive instead of spreading resources over many places through national NGOs. While in principle this may be a practical solution to bringing out the most successful outcomes with the available resources, it is also to be emphasized that the states where decentralisation is not encouraged by the state government are in greater need of support for decentralisation from outside agencies.

As the programmes are now being designed and managed, they are clearly expected to be duplicated and introduced elsewhere too, once the broad features of a workable programme has been confirmed. However, there is the risk that some of the projects and programmes being supported by SDC may run out of steam once SDC withdraws. One should also note in passing that activities such as those carried out by Mr. Elango, may have had much to do with his own initiatives (and also his background as an engineer, having worked in a Government of India research laboratory etc.) and sustained efforts that he has expended. Whether other places and individuals can, or will, take their cue from him, and carry on with similar efforts and programmes is difficult to say. But without such sustained efforts from individuals who are panchayat representatives or others, these programmes will not have a successful outcome, or continue in existence for any length of time.

III) National policy context: In any programme, or association that has an international donor, there is always the need to keep in mind the policies that are devised from time to time by the Government of India. This is also in the context of two features, one of them being that international donors are generally not encouraged to be concentrated in any particular state. And secondly, the optimum use of the available funds to sponsor and take up programmes that are of immediate need in the state. Thus, it is also inevitable that over a period of time the national policies may also change, and the donor agency may not, therefore, consider it viable to continue in the work that it has been doing hitherto.

There is also the need to consider the economic factor, that in recent years the size and growth of the Indian economy has been on a scale much higher than in the years before liberalisation of economic policies (early 1990s). This has also made the Government of India to look again at the programmes that are being supported by donors, considering that in certain areas, the Indian government can perhaps take up the financial support of the work, rather than depend on international donors.

In the immediate context of policies related to decentralisation, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments have been the single major change in recent years, which has made it mandatory for state governments to enact legislations on decentralisation and devolution of powers. However, after the changes that were required by the Constitutional Amendments, there have not been significant changes in decentralisation policies of state governments.

Two other changes can be mentioned here, though they are not immediately changes in the policies of decentralisation. One of them is the enactment of the Disaster Management Act 2005, which took on greater significance after the tsunami of 2004. The other

are the rules regarding Coastal Regulation Zone and Regulating Activities in the CRZ (as amended to 3 October 2001), which was in existence for some time, but has been more rigorously implemented after the tsunami. In some way or the other, both of them impinge on institutions of local government, though the Disaster Management Act does not seem to find the local institutions sufficiently important in reacting to disasters.

8. Analysis of SDC's approach, strengths and weakness

8.1 Strengths

An important strength of SDC's approach is the manner in which it carries out its programmes, through consultation with officials and NGOs before it initiates any project on the ground. Such consultation not only gets a participatory angle addressed, but also ensures that conditions that are peculiar to specific areas and places are also considered. This also gives a better prospect for a successful outcome.

SDC has supported efforts which are more by way of "experiments" and small scale programmes, which can be tried out, modified, and worked out, and later either implemented across the states, or even in other states. Models, as such, are useful, and SDC has been instrumental in such a method that takes consideration its own limited resources (in the context of a country with the needs such as India), and the possibility of building up a programme, which is viable in many places. An enhanced dissemination strategy would be required.

In some states the activities that SDC sponsors, benefit from exchanging views, knowledge and information, and a spread of new ideas at the grass roots level. Kerala appears to have benefited form such activities, and this appears to be an extraordinarily viable approach, in meeting the objectives of SDC.

A particularly important issue is the manner in which SDC interacts with the several actors in any development programme in which it is involved. In India, the government, both the central government and state governments are often involved in some way or the other. In such interactions, SDC has a long record of being able to interact with government officials, and manage their programme in a manner that is cooperative. Officials, even now remark that SDCs way of functioning has been one of the crucial reasons why programmes have been successfully carried out, without conflicting projections hindering the programmes.

8.2 Some possible weaknesses

The uncertainty regarding the future of decentralization support in India necessarily brings with it some concern in certain circles, about how long their work would be continued. While no one expects that any donor would indefinitely stay in a programme, a more clearly spelt out programme in terms of the future would also allay the expectations of local people.

A problem or problems, rather than a weakness may be suggested here. The objective of helping in poverty reduction in the country is one that is both laudable as well as difficult to achieve. The resources required to address this problem, and just the very large number of people that it needs to focus on, all suggest that the problem is very large indeed. Likewise, the problem of women's situation, or that of the Scheduled Caste people, require concerted efforts, resources, as well as time to succeed (we are aware that since Indian independence over fifty years ago, these problems have only been partially solved). This is not to say that no impact has been felt over all these years, but only that

the policies, resources and efforts that have been expended on these problems have not brought them down to a reasonably low level. It seems that a better effect would be achieved with a narrower geographical focus of projects.

9. Cooperation with other partners and aid effectiveness

SDC does have the practice of cooperation with other donors and partners in India. The area of decentralisation is also one such activity which SDC has carried out with others. For instance, PRIA has been supported by SDC as well as SIDA in decentralisation activities. At times, a consortium of donors support activities of certain institutions (again, PRIA comes to mind, and The Hunger Project as well). Donors could be the large international donors, smaller international NGOs that finance projects in India on a smaller scale or jointly with other donors, and as with The Hunger Project, there are thousands of small individual donors who contribute smaller amounts, all of which go towards supporting The Hunger Project's activities in India. Their effectiveness varies from case to case, and could also be related to their scale of activities. A small project would have a very localised impact, while the larger programmes would have a much more significant impact (the recent disaster relief activities on the tsunami affected areas of Tamil Nadu are an example of a much larger scale of funds and activities supported by various agencies).

10. Recommendations

There are strong reasons for SDC to remain in the area of decentralisation in India.
An agency with the known support for decentralisation can carry forward activities, in whatever scale, towards increasing the spread and impact of decentralisation in the country. An agency that is committed to such ideals would be a decided benefit in working in India. Evidently, there is need to keep in mind the relation between service delivery at the local level and the need to encourage more participatory governance in the country. And perhaps, it may be here that Switzerland's political ethos can encourage a feeling that local government can work in a democratic, decentralised, efficient and effective way.

11. Management Response of SDC India and SDC Berne/ country desk

General Comments

The report is appreciative of the constraints faced in supporting decentralisation in India. Despite the short time available the team has made an attempt to visit a number of programmes supported by SDC. The evaluation has quite comprehended the aim of the efforts being supported by SDC in India.

The report undertakes a good contextual analysis of the situation, yet falls short of:
(i) making an incisive assessment of weaknesses and areas where efforts were lacking or could have been strengthened further; (ii) making an assessment of specific elements related to SDC's approach (eg. upscaling; policy impact; impact of training of leaders; impact on local economic development); and (iii) including more incisive and specific recommendations for the future.

Specific Comments

The report gives an overview of systemic constraints faced in supporting decentralisation/local governance in India (states keeping an uneven pace in devolution, centre having little say in implementation of state legislations, space for civil society limited to supporting pilots owing to financial constraints etc). However the report does not adequately reflect the constraint relating to foreign donor organisations being unable to fund Panchayats (local governance councils) directly. This necessarily spells out the role and importance of civil society organisations for donors supporting decentralisation efforts. In view of these constraints, the report could have provided a number of options/recommendations as to how best address the problem of the choice of an adequate partner for a decentralisation programme.

Related to this first point is the constraint related to the fact that centrally assisted as well as (multi lateral) donor assisted programmes promote specific grassroots institutions which are parallel to Panchayati Raj Institutions (the legitimate, elected village councils). We recognise that this is widespread in scale and poses a high risk to the present efforts in devolution. It is identified as an important area for advocacy and change even by the Central ministry of Panchayati Raj. It is in this overall context that SDC was one of the earliest donors in India to commit itself to supporting: (i) capacity enhancement of PRIs (see Capdeck) and (ii) advocacy for a stronger role for PRIs. The evaluation could have (i) acknowledged the risk that SDC took and (ii) made an assessment of whether this headstart translated to a comparative advantage for SDC in India.

The report may have needed to reflect further on “no direct link between poverty reduction and decentralisation/Panchayat institutions” (eg. chapters 2 and 3). Even if very direct evidence may not have been available in the short visits made, the programmes/interventions being supported have shown benefits in the form of greater awareness of marginalized communities towards their (i) rights (ii) duties and (iii) legitimate spaces for participation etc. This raised level of awareness is expected to have translated into more informed participation in village council meetings, better engagement in local developmental planning, access to poverty alleviation programmes by the marginalised communities and better availing of opportunities provided through the affirmative policy of reservations in elected councils. Also, improved local governance relates to more informed and adequate policies and choices made by elected people. While this might not have a direct impact on poverty (by bringing people from one to another above the poverty line), better local governance and policies tend to have an effect on people's lives in the medium term. The assessment could have reflected on what accompanying conditions help in decentralisation contributing to poverty reduction. A few case studies in the programmes visited may have provided insights on the issue.

The statement “There is no democratic thinking, just individual interest” obliquely refers to the need for a changed mindset of rural populations. Does this imply more emphasis on attitudinal change in capacity enhancement programmes being supported by donors like SDC? Given that the report acknowledges that most of the donor support is towards capacity building efforts, a feedback on the related implications for SDC and on the content, pedagogy, outreach of the programmes visited and best practices that need to be included would have been useful.

Sustainability of efforts supported by SDC in India has been delved into, but little is shared in terms of what more/differently can be done by SDC. The entire strategy of supporting pilots to demonstrate documenting and participating in platforms to share and advocate for mainstreaming is geared towards enhancing the sustainability of the initia-

tives supported. The strategy to pool resources with other donors and co-fund national NGOs in the decentralisation arena is aimed at strengthening the autonomy of such organisations and encouraging them to anchor their vision in the context they aim to act upon in order for their efforts to be more sustainable. Precisely, the report could have assessed the *validity, feasibility and results* of SDC's dual approach: 1) to support small scale interventions/models for replication and upscaling (does upscaling take place?; is "going small" a right approach?); 2) to engage via national partners/NGOs in policy dialogue/advocacy.

The reference to the inability of decentralisation mechanisms to reduce corruption needs to also be qualified with the possibilities that the Right to Information Act is opening up for Panchayati Raj Institutions and the work that Capdeck is supporting in relation to this act.
In the overall contextual analysis, the constraints are well treated but recent opportunities (role of Panchayats in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme and Right to Information Act, the setting up of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj at the centre which allows for more focus at devolution at the central level) are not given adequate mention. These opportunities are influencing the trajectory of interventions by civil society in the future (in terms of areas for capacity enhancement, supporting pilots, heightened advocacy etc).

The evaluation recommends SDC India to concentrate its interventions in one or two States where there is a strong commitment from the State level instead of financing national programmes. The strategy of SDC has been to support two to three states (Kerala, Rajasthan (for some time) and Sikkim) specifically, and at the same time support national level organisations which can assist in advocacy, mainstreaming lessons from pilots supported in states, influence policy at the state and centre and outreach large numbers through a couple of windows (The Hunger Project and PRIA). In making the recommendation to limit interventions to a few states, no comment has been made on this strategy. In fact, concentrating efforts in a couple of states burdens us with another set of risks relating to complete reversal of pace and strategy when regimes not supportive of devolution get elected into the states. Related to the issue of the support to selected States, the evaluation could have commented on the appropriateness/relevance to support decentralisation processes in States with favourable conditions compared to States with more difficult conditions (more specifically on the choice of SDC to support in a first stage Kerala, and more recently Chattisgarh via PRIA).

The report makes no assessment (even no reference) of the efforts of SDC to mainstream decentralisation in sectoral programmes (rural housing, watershed etc). In fact, the post Tsunami rehabilitation programme in Tamil Nadu visited by the evaluator was an effort in promoting the role of panchayats in post disaster relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation – building capacities, piloting it and making a case for it through advocacy. It would have been valuable that the evaluation provides an assessment of the validity/successes/pitfalls of mainstreaming.

The assessment needed to have made a more firm assessment of SDC’s comparative advantage in supporting decentralisation in India.

An incisive assessment and sharper comment on the partner mix and the basket of interventions supported in India could have provided more useful insights to SDC.

The list of projects visited and their key characteristics (chapter 5) could have been done more explicitly and clearly.

No factual errors were noticed in the report.

Annex 1: List of projects, which were visited and persons met in the course of field visits/interviews

Delhi
Ms. Rita Sarin, Country Director, The Hunger Project
Mr. Maalan, National Media Advisor, The Hunger Project
Ms. Meenu.

PRIA
Dr. Rajesh Tandon, President, PRIA
Mr. Chandan Datta.

Solutions Exchange
Mr. Alok Srivastava
Ms. Mohini
Ms. Happy Pant

Rajasthan
Ms. Anju Dwivedi, and others (2), of the PRIA project office, Jaipur
Govindgarh Block (Panchayat Samiti)
(18 participants)

Dhodsar Gram Panchayat
(12 participants)

Panchayat Resource Centre

Kerala
Mr. S.M. Vijayanand, Principal Secretary, Department of Local Government, Government of Kerala

Dr. Joy Elamon, CapDeck, Trivandrum
Ms. Nirmala, CapDeck, Trivandrum

REMDEM (Responsive administration: a management development mechanism), Karavolam gram panchayat's advisory body, discussion with about 10 members who were present, including former Karavolam GP president.

Dr. Jos Chathukulam (Director, Centre for Rural Management)

Dr. P.P. Baalan, Director, Kerala Institute of Local Administration, Thrissur. Also five faculty members of KILA.

Panchayat platform, local volunteers, discussion with about 11 people, including former gram panchayat president Ms. Sasikala.

Mr. Vinod (Maithri/NGO), Palakkad.

Mr. Gopalswami Gounder, President, Eruthempathy Gram Panchayat. Approximately 20 women, gram panchayat members, volunteers, and SHG members.

Tamil Nadu
Professor Palanithurai (Gandhigram University)
The Hunger Project, Nagapattinam, Velankanni (post tsunami activities, farmer's information centre, micro-industry); discussion with representatives with local NGOs working with THP project in Nagapattinam and Velankanni; Tiruchirapalli, training of trainers on panchayats (shortly before panchayat elections).

Mr. Elango, President, Kuthambakkam Gram Panchayat (tenure has now been completed). Kuthambakkam panchayat academy.

Dr. V. Selvam, M.S. Swaminathan Foundation, Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu.

Dr. V. Vijayalakshmi (Oxfam, Chennai)

Annex D – Étude de cas: Mali

Table des matières

1. Introduction: objectif, objet, sujets et organisation de l'évaluation
2. Conclusions générales
3. Contexte de la décentralisation au Mali et documents de référence
4. Implication d'autres agences de coopération dans le processus de décentralisation au Mali et les modes d'opération
5. Investissement de la coopération Suisse dans le processus de décentralisation et la coopération avec d'autres Partenaires Techniques et Financiers (PTF) et des ONG internationales
6. Documents stratégiques de la DDC sur la décentralisation: principaux sujets abordés
7. Résultats obtenus et conclusions
8. Analyse de l'avantage comparatif de la SDC : forces et faiblesses de l'approche de la SDC
9. Coopération avec d'autres partenaires et effectivité de l'aide
10. Appui de la SDC Berne et relations avec le BUCO Mali
11. Recommandations

1. Introduction: objectif, objet, sujets et organisation de l'évaluation

Le présent document constitue le rapport d'évaluation de l'appui de la DDC à la décentralisation au Mali. Les objectifs de l'évaluation sont:

- Analyser la pertinence, l'efficacité et la durabilité des approches, projets et programmes de décentralisation de la DDC dans le cadre de la coopération bilatérale.
- Faire ressortir les avantages comparatifs en matière de décentralisation que la DDC a par rapport à d'autres services de coopération.
- Formuler des recommandations pour améliorer la performance de la DDC en matière d'appui aux projets et approches de décentralisation dans la coopération bilatérale.

Sur le plan méthodologique, quatre (4) étapes majeures ont marqué cette évaluation:

Etape 1: Clarification des résultats attendus de l'évaluation: cette étape a permis au consultant national d'échanger avec un membre de l'équipe de coordination de l'évaluation et d'affiner les attendus. Elle a aussi permis de faire une programmation de la mission et de déterminer les échéances en fonction de l'élaboration du rapport.

Etape 2: Recherche document et briefing au BUCO: une réunion de travail a ensuite été organisée avec le responsable chargé de la gouvernance au BUCO et le Directeur du BUCO ensuite. Ces rencontres ont permis de collecter les informations de base et de faire le choix des partenaires à visiter. Une documentation de base a été fournie pour exploitation par le consultant local.

Etape 3: Visites de terrain: Deux visites de terrain ont été organisées pour rencontrer les partenaires du BUCO dans trois régions du Mali (Sikasso, Ségou et Koulikoro). A chaque étape, des réunions de travail ont été organisées et le consultant national a effectué des visites de réalisations à chaque fois que cela était possible. D'autres échanges ont été organisés avec des représentants de l'administration publique et d'autres agences de coopération à Bamako et dans les régions visitées.

Etape 4: La rédaction du rapport provisoire et sa soumission à l'appréciation de l'équipe de coordination de l'évaluation. Cette étape conduit à la rédaction de la version finale du rapport qui sera intégrée dans le rapport de synthèse.

Le consultant national en charge de l'évaluation du Mali (Mamadou GOÏTA) a pu rencontrer une vingtaine de personnes directement impliquées dans les actions d'accompagnement de la décentralisation par le BUCO au Mali et une dizaine de personnes ressources travaillant sur la problématique de la décentralisation et/ou d'autres sujets au Mali.

2. Conclusions générales

L'évaluation permet de tirer les conclusions suivantes:

Pertinence – l'appui de la DDC au Mali est très pertinent car est en parfaite cohérence avec les réformes administratives actuelles en cours au Mali. Il contribue à la consolidation de la gouvernance locale et est en adéquation avec les programmes nationaux d'appui à la décentralisation dans le pays. Les différentes actions entreprises dans le

cadre de cette intervention ont contribué à une meilleure responsabilisation des communautés locales dans la prise en charge des services sociaux de base. Elles ont en outre aidé à une meilleure visibilité de certaines collectivités décentralisées dans la gestion des ressources des programmes sectoriels nationaux.

Efficacité – l'appui de la DDC au Mali est efficace car toutes les évaluations menées ont montré que les résultats attendus ont été atteints aussi bien dans les appuis directs qu'à travers les programmes en régie. Les premières générations de projets et programmes d'appui à la décentralisation de la DDC au Mali ont contribué à une meilleure compréhension des reformes par les élus locaux. Les programmes en cours sont en train de développer des initiatives d'accompagnement de la maîtrise d'ouvrage du dispositif technique par les collectivités territoriales, un enjeu majeur de la décentralisation au Mali. Quelques résultats inattendus ont été obtenus et à titre d'exemple, les appuis de la DDC au Mali sont en train d'inspirer d'autres services de coopération à changer leur démarche d'appui au processus de décentralisation au Mali.

Viabilité – L'appui de la DDC au processus de décentralisation au Mali est viable sur le plan institutionnel car s'inscrivant dans un cadre légal et organisationnel conforme à l'architecture de la décentralisation dans le pays. En s'intéressant à tous les niveaux de la décentralisation au Mali, la DDC s'est positionnée comme la toute première coopération à chercher à mettre en cohérence les échelles du processus.

Sur le plan impact, la viabilité reste à construire car pour le moment, il y a plusieurs effets visibles de l'intervention mais les impacts doivent être recherchés dans l'avenir. La nouvelle orientation prise par cet appui n'a donc pas pour le moment (compte tenu de sa nouveauté) produit des impacts correspondant aux changements sociaux profonds escomptés.

Avantage comparatif – de la DDC par rapport aux autres bailleurs externes au Mali: L'approche développée par la DDC au Mali pour accompagner la décentralisation a un avantage comparatif très significatif par rapport aux autres services de coopération dans le pays. Elle a permis de tester une démarche de gestion d'une partie des fonds d'un programme sectoriel national (santé) par les collectivités territoriales. Un autre avantage comparatif assez important de la DDC par rapport à d'autres intervenants sur la décentralisation est relatif à l'appui direct apporté aux différents conseils (élus locaux) pour mieux assurer une maîtrise d'ouvrage de l'appui technique. Les programmes aussi bien sectoriels que multisectoriels sont désormais co-construits dans différentes collectivités territoriales.

En plus, la DDC a très largement innové dans l'appui au processus de décentralisation au Mali en mettant un accent particulier sur le développement des filières porteuses (sur le plan financier) comme levier d'un développement communal, de cercle et régional durable.

3. Contexte de la décentralisation au Mali et documents de référence

Le Mali a opté depuis 1992 pour une décentralisation active et intégrale. En effet, la nouvelle constitution du 25 février 2002 reconnaît le pluralisme politique et le rôle des partis politiques comme des animateurs de la vie politique. Cette constitution consacre le principe de la libre administration de la population par leurs organes de gestion élus.

En plus de ce texte fondamental qu'est la constitution, plusieurs documents juridiques ont été élaborés pour contribuer à l'enracinement de la démocratie au niveau local. Il s'agit notamment des textes qui ont consacré la mise en œuvre effective de la décentralisation au Mali. On peut citer entre autres:

- **F** La Loi 93-008 sur les principes de la libre administration;
- **F** La Loi 95-059 portant sur le code des collectivités territoriales;
- **F** La Loi 96-059 portant création des communes.

C'est ainsi qu'en 1999 les premières élections ont eu lieu permettant aux 703 communes d'avoir des conseils communaux dont tous les membres sont élus pour un mandat de cinq (5) ans. Une deuxième mandature a commencé pour les nouveaux élus en 2004 consacrant l'irréversibilité relative de ce processus de gestion du pouvoir.

Certains transferts de compétences ont eu lieu entre l'Etat central et les Collectivités territoriales même si dans plusieurs cas l'exercice du pouvoir lié à ces compétences reste relativement faible. Certaines ressources ont aussi été transférées mais l'incivisme fiscal caractérisant le pays bien avant la mise en place des communes reste un facteur très limitant dans beaucoup de collectivités. Un outil financier consacré au financement des communes a été mis en place (Agence Nationale pour l'Investissement des Collectivités Territoriales (ANICT). Elle constitue le guichet auquel les communes peuvent directement accéder pour certains investissements de base. Les capacités de financement restent cependant assez faibles par rapport aux besoins actuels des collectivités.

En plus de cet outil financier, un outil technique d'accompagnement des communes (CCC) a été mis en place avec des opérateurs en charge d'appuyer les initiatives communales.

Les défis que pose la décentralisation au Mali se situent au niveau du renforcement de la démocratie représentative et participative, du renforcement des capacités pour mieux mobiliser et gérer les ressources (locales notamment mais aussi extérieures) et d'une plus grande participation de la population aux activités politiques, économiques et sociales. La démocratie et le développement local reposent en effet sur une participation active des populations à la gestion des affaires publiques. La décentralisation permet également de créer un cadre institutionnel au niveau local qui accroît l'impact des politiques nationales. Elle peut aider à l'émergence d'une autre forme de prise en charge des Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement (OMD) au niveau local et contribuer à améliorer la conception, la mise en œuvre, le suivi et l'évaluation participative du Cadre Stratégique de Lutte contre la Pauvreté "imposé" comme un cadre de référence dans le pays et dont la révision est en cours.

En plus de ces défis majeurs, d'autres questions fondamentales doivent être prises en compte dans le cadre de l'accompagnement de la décentralisation au Mali au stade actuel. Il s'agit notamment de :

- La difficulté de sortir d'un système de gouvernance étatique qui a toujours jusque là diffusé des formes d'autorité discrétionnaire, pour passer à un nouveau mode de gouvernance laissant une place aux populations (élus, associations….) permettant le débat et la négociation multi acteurs.
- La nécessité d'une révision complète des méthodes d'animation et de communication qui dépolitisent les enjeux et qui les réduisent à leur seule dimension technique; et de manière plus générale, une mise en garde à l'endroit d'une gouvernance décentralisée qui réduit le champ du politique à un espace de ges-

tion des ressources au lieu de l'entrevoir comme un processus de gestion collective en vue de l'élaboration d'un projet de société.
- L'attention à porter sur la question de fiscalité locale pour mieux l'articuler avec le développement local.
- La prise de conscience que la décentralisation ne saurait être, d'aucune manière la résultante d'une "dichotomie entre l'Etat et la société civile". En effet, le transfert par l'Etat de certaines de ses compétences aux collectivités locales ne doit pas être interprété comme un abandon de son pouvoir. Il implique tout simplement un repositionnement de son dispositif avec pour corollaire, le renforcement de ses compétences pour assurer le suivi de la réforme, la cohérence de la décentralisation avec les politiques sectorielles et l'aménagement du territoire, le respect des réglementations et le contrôle des collectivités locales.
- La nécessité d'articuler décentralisation et développement local.

Les réformes institutionnelles sont donc récentes au Mali. La décentralisation est à ses débuts et les conseils communaux sont seulement à leur deuxième mandat. C'est un processus d'apprentissage pour l'ensemble des acteurs. Les leçons apprises doivent permettre de renforcer les compétences des élus locaux pour améliorer leurs capacités à fournir des services qui répondent aux besoins et aux intérêts des populations.

Avec cette analyse de l'évolution du processus de décentralisation, le contexte est marqué par une série de spécificités:

- la difficulté d'avoir une cohérence entre les programmes sectoriels mis en œuvre dans le pays et les Programmes de Développement Social et Economique (PDSEC) des différentes communes mises en place
- un contraste entre une dynamique forte de la société civile et l'existence très versatile de nombreuses organisations, dotées malheureusement de faibles capacités
- la présence d'une expertise très disparate qui a du mal à se mutualiser
- un dispositif d'appui aux collectivités locales développé, construction d'un capital humain capable de porter le développement co-construit.

C'est dans ce contexte que la DDC appuie la décentralisation au Mali depuis 1993 à différents niveaux de structuration.

4. Implication d'autres agences de coopération dans le processus de décentralisation au Mali et les modes d'opération

Sur la dizaine de coopérations bilatérales intervenant au Mali (USA, France, Canada, Allemagne, Pays bas, Suède, Danemark, Suisse, Belgique, Espagne), la grande majorité intervient sur la question de la décentralisation dans des régions spécifiques. En plus, certains bureaux de coopération multilatérale ont des contributions au processus en cours. Des espaces de concertation existent entre les Partenaires Techniques et Financiers (PTF) qui sont répartis entre les différentes régions du Mali. Cette approche de répartition géographique assez controversée quelques fois car assimilée à tord ou à raison à un "partage" du pays permet d'avoir une comparaison entre les différentes pratiques en matière d'accompagnement de la décentralisation au Mali.

La grande majorité des interventions est exclusivement en mode "régie" avec des appuis indirects aux collectivités territoriales. L'aide budgétaire constitue pour la grande majorité des intervenants la voie indiquée pour soutenir la décentralisation et les programmes nationaux qui ont du mal à trouver la cohérence avec les programmes communaux.

L'approche du BUCO au Mali s'est démarquée de cette tendance car elle met l'accent sur le mode direct d'appui aux collectivités (à travers les responsables de programmes au sein de l'équipe) et le mode en "régie", notamment avec l'ONG Suisse HELVETAS qui a géré et continue à gérer des programmes de consolidation de la décentralisation.

Un autre aspect important des appuis des agences de coopération à la décentralisation au Mali concerne les niveaux d'appui (national, régional, cercle, communal…). En effet, la plupart des agences focalisent leurs interventions à un seul niveau (notamment le niveau communal et quelques fois l'intercommunalité) tandis que le BUCO intervient sur l'ensemble des niveaux de l'échelle dans la région de Sikasso qui est sa région de concentration même si des ouvertures sont faites actuellement sur d'autres régions (notamment les régions de Koulikoro, de Mopti et de Tombouctou).

5. Investissement de la coopération Suisse dans le processus de décentralisation et la coopération avec d'autres Partenaires Techniques et Financiers (PTF) et des ONG internationales

La Coopération Suisse intervient dans l'accompagnement de la décentralisation depuis le début du processus en 1993. Elle a apporté son soutien aussi bien au Ministère en charge de la décentralisation qu'à la structure en charge d'élaborer les différents textes réglementaires (Mission de la décentralisation au Mali).

La BUCO a contribué au financement des deux outils stratégiques du processus de décentralisation au Mali. Il s'agit de l'ANICT qui est l'outil financier dans le cadre de l'investissement dans les collectivités territoriales et des CCC qui constituent des outils techniques d'accompagnement des acteurs.

Les contributions du BUCO au Mali ont été faites sous deux formes:

- La forme directe qui a consiste à financer directement un niveau de collectivité territoriale (région, cercle, commune) ou les structures d'accompagnement au niveau national;
- La forme indirecte qui permet à la Coopération Suisse de soutenir les actions d'une ONG ou d'un opérateur privé pour accompagner un ou plusieurs niveaux.

Le BUCO a aussi largement contribué à différents programmes sectoriels nationaux qui ont mis en place des infrastructures dans certaines communes du pays.

De nombreux programmes d'appui à la décentralisation ont ainsi été mis en œuvre depuis 1993. Les appuis se sont réalisés à travers le Programme de Développement Rural et Décentralisation (PDRD) dans un premier temps et depuis 1997, le Programme d'Appui à la Décentralisation (PAD) et le Programme d'Appui aux Acteurs de la Décentralisation (PAAD) ont été mis en œuvre par HELVETAS en régie. D'autres actions ont

été soutenues à travers les programmes sectoriels directement mis en œuvre par le BUCO ou réalisés en régie par "Jèkasi" dans la région de Sikasso.

De nos jours, le thème sur la "gouvernance" qui prend en compte la décentralisation est transversal à l'ensemble des questions abordées au sein de l'équipe du BUCO. Ainsi, la coopération Suisse consacre annuellement environ 10.000.000 -CH au soutien à différentes actions contribuant à l'accompagnement du processus de décentralisation et du développement local au Mali. De manière spécifique, le BUCO au Mali contribue avec un montant d'environ 3.000.000 –CH à l'appui à la gouvernance et décentralisation au Mali dans le cadre de son programme 2005-2008. Cette contribution se fait à travers les programmes actuels suivants:

- Programme d'appui aux acteurs de la décentralisation sur les 3 cercles de Bougouni, Kolondiéba et Yanfolila, 3ème Région (PAAD.
- Appui à la maîtrise d'ouvrage des Collectivités sur le secteur de l'eau dans les cercles de Bougouni, Koutiala, Youwarou et Niono/Kita (AM-EAU).
- Développement social urbain à Koutiala, 3ème Région
- Partenariats pour une Gouvernance appropriées (Assemblée Régionale de Sikasso, Cercle de Koutiala, Association des Maires du Mali (AMM), Réseau Réussir la Décentralisation (REDL), Association CRI 2002, Communes de Tienfala et Niamega

6. Documents stratégiques de la DDC sur la décentralisation: principaux sujets abordés

Dans le cadre de ses activités d'appui à la décentralisation dans différents pays, la DDC a élaboré un document d'orientation pour mieux appréhender les interventions prenant en compte les contextes nationaux. Ce document qui constitue un guide fait ressortir des analyses sur le contexte de la décentralisation en lien avec les tendances internationales, les différents types de décentralisations qui existent, les objectifs d'un véritable processus de décentralisation, les principes d'action pour la DDC concernant l'accompagnement des processus de décentralisation et les points fondamentaux pour mettre en œuvre la stratégie.

La décentralisation est perçue comme un mode opératoire et une option politique qui permet d'assurer un repositionnement de l'Etat central pour mieux jouer son rôle régalien. Elle doit aussi permettre:

- De trouver des alternatives aux structures ayant le "pouvoir absolu" dans les pays et favoriser une gestion démocratique des institutions nationales;
- D'assurer une meilleure participation des populations avec la mise en place des organes démocratiques;
- Aux populations de mieux se reconnaître dans les actions de l'Etat;
- De protéger les groupes défavorisés et/ou marginalisés;
- La prise en compte des besoins réels des populations locales dans les politiques nationales;
- D'assurer une meilleure utilisation des ressources du pays;
- De lutter contre la pauvreté
- Etc.

Ainsi, trois types de décentralisation ont été identifiés:

- La décentralisation politique
- La décentralisation administrative renvoyant à la déconcentration et à la délégation
- La décentralisation fiscale

Le document stratégique a aussi défini les principes de base définis par la DDC pour prendre en charge la question de la décentralisation dans les différents pays. Il s'agit entre autres de:

- La prise en compte du contexte spécifique de chaque pays;
- Partir des expériences de chaque pays en fonction de son histoire;
- Réunir les conditions idoines pour que la décentralisation puisse être une véritable dynamique de développement dans les pays;
- Prendre conscience que la décentralisation est un processus qui crée des jeux de pouvoir et qu'il est nécessaire de gérer ces jeux pour favoriser un développement harmonieux;
- Prendre conscience que le processus prend du temps à se construire et qu'il a besoin de ressources nécessaires pour se mettre en place et se consolider;
- Prendre conscience qu'il ne peut pas avoir une véritable décentralisation sans une société civile forte et bien informée.

Ces principes doivent guider les actions des bureaux nationaux en matière d'accompagnement de la décentralisation dans différents pays.

7. Résultats obtenus et conclusions

Le constat général qui se dégage est celui d'un double paradoxe:

- paradoxe entre une expérience très enrichissante, qui rassemble suffisamment d'éléments positifs pour démontrer l'intérêt de la démarche, mais qui reste peu connue et parfois incomprise par certains acteurs qui ont pris l'habitude de gérer les ressources du développement à la place des populations.
- paradoxe entre une volonté d'élargissement de la base des interventions directes (par rapport à la mode en régie) avec un personnel assez limité en nombre pour assurer un suivi régulier des dynamiques intéressantes et qui évoluent très vite.

a. Pertinence

i. Bureau pays

Constats principaux:
Les projets et les programmes initiés par le BUCO au Mali concernant l'accompagnement de la décentralisation et la gouvernance locale sont sans doute les premiers, à notre connaissance, à résolument s'attaquer concrètement au problème de recherche de cohérence entre les programmes sectoriels nationaux et les plans de développement communaux, des cercles ou des régions.

Cette option est portée par un certain nombre de principes dont il convient également d'apprécier la pertinence :

- Le renforcement de la maîtrise d'ouvrage des collectivités territoriales,

- La participation effective de l'ensemble des familles d'acteurs aux dynamiques en cours pour assurer la co-construction des politiques et des pratiques,
- L'accompagnement des dynamiques en cours permettant la création de richesse pour une meilleure prise en charge du développement local.

Ces principes apparaissent très pertinents dans le contexte actuel du Mali. Ce sont les collectivités territoriales qui définissent leurs besoins dans différents domaines pour bénéficier de l'accompagnement. En cas de besoin d'expertise, elles contractualisent avec l'expert avec le BUCO qui est le Tiers exigent.

La participation large des acteurs de la décentralisation au niveau local prônée par le BUCO contribue à assurer actuellement plus grande responsabilisation des familles d'acteurs. Ce début de résultat qui est obtenu est en train de créer les conditions favorables pour la co-construction des politiques et pratiques au niveau régional (les différentes conventions élaborées ainsi que les plans de développement de filières conçus sont des illustrations à ce niveau).

Dans la pratique, les actions soutenues par le BUCO se sont inscrites dans les principes énumérés. Elles ont permis entre autres aux collectivités territoriales à différents niveaux de:

- Mieux cerner leurs rôles d'actrices centrales de la planification, de la mise en œuvre, du suivi et de l'évaluation des actions de développement dans l'espace de la région, du cercle, de la commune et/ou du village;
- Mieux définir leurs besoins en terme de renforcement pour agir et interagir au nom des populations;
- Mieux formuler leurs demandes en matière de partenariat avec les agences de coopération et de mieux négocier la prise en compte de leurs demandes;
- Assurer une participation effective des autres acteurs aux actions de développement initiées. Dans cette ligne, certains acteurs qui commençaient à perdre leur légitimé trouvent aujourd'hui de l'espace de valorisation de leurs pratiques à différents niveaux.

Au Mali, l'équipe du BUCO est compose de treize (13) personnes reparties comme suit:

- 3 membres de l'équipe de Direction;
- 4 chargés de programmes nationaux;
- 6 membres de l'équipe d'appui (administratif et financier)

Une personne a en charge la thématique transversale relative à la décentralisation. Cette personne travaille avec les autres chargés de programme nationaux pour mieux intégrer cette dynamique dans les interventions sectorielles.

La configuration de l'équipe actuelle est en très cohérente avec les orientations thématiques prises actuellement par la DDC au Mali à travers le BUCO. La présence d'une personne en charge de la question de la gouvernance à plein temps permet d'assurer le lien entre les différents programmes sectoriels de la Coopération Suisse au Mali. Cependant, la faiblesse relative du nombre de personne (une seule personne) en charge de l'ensemble de la question de la décentralisation au sein du BUCO peut être une limite objective en terme de suivi des actions sur le terrain.

En inscrivant la gouvernance locale et la décentralisation comme une thématique transversale de l'intervention du BUCO au Mali, l'agence de coopération s'est inscrite dans la dynamique actuelle du développement politique et socio-économique et culturelle du Mali. En effet, la décentralisation constitue aujourd'hui la réforme fondamentale menée

depuis l'élaboration et le vote de la nouvelle constitution du Mali votée en 1992. Le BUCO est donc en phase avec cette reforme et ses interventions sont très appréciées par les partenaires nationaux et les autres agences de coopération et ONG internationales intervenant à différents niveaux.

Conclusion:
L'option générale prise par le BUCO de renforcer les collectivités territoriales à différents niveaux particulièrement dans la région de Sikasso, à travers la mise en place de dispositifs locaux facilitant un appui rapproché et élargi aux besoins pratiques, organisationnels et institutionnels des collectivités, apparaît globalement très pertinent.

Particulièrement dans un contexte où, si l'on reconnaît l'importance des collectivités - dans un cadre plus général de réhabilitation des pouvoirs publics à travers une "gouvernance décentralisée"- on en reconnaît de plus en plus les carences et les difficultés à se donner et à remplir des objectifs d'intérêt collectif.

ii. Niveau du programme ou du projet

Constats principaux:
Bien qu'un certain nombre de partenaires techniques et financiers s'intéressent à l'accompagnement de la décentralisation, la tendance reste encore à soutenir un seul niveau de l'architecture de cette décentralisation. En plus de cette tendance, beaucoup d'agences de coopération interviennent selon une approche "projet" et dans une logique d'appui en régie exclusivement. Les modes opératoires de financement s'articulent généralement autour de l'ANICT (Agence Nationale de l'Investissement dans les Collectivités Territoriales) comme dispositif de financement des collectivités. Cette situation, avec une forme administrative souvent inopérante constitue une des difficultés majeures de la mobilisation des ressources extérieures des communes. Le BUCO, en développant une approche d'appui direct aux collectivités a largement innové par rapport à d'autres interventions.

En prenant aussi l'option d'intervenir sur l'ensemble des niveaux de l'architecture de la décentralisation et cela sous forme d'appui direct (par le BUCO lui-même) et d'appui en régie (à travers les ONG Suisse), la coopération Suisse a pu développer une complémentarité assez évidente avec ce qui se finance actuellement au Mali en matière décentralisation.

Dans le domaine de l'appui à la décentralisation, en dehors des appuis en formation à l'administration du dispositif, des diagnostics communaux et des identifications de plans de développement communal qui se financent relativement bien, il y a un large besoin de recherche-action sur la mobilisation des ressources financières et en renforcement des capacités des collectivités locales à offrir des services stables, continus, accessibles au plus grand nombre. La maîtrise d'ouvrage des services techniques est un enjeu majeur et les différents projets et programmes financés par le BUCO au Mali contribuent à assurer cette maîtrise d'ouvrage technique à différents niveaux (région, cercle, commune, village, quartier…).

Les exigences en développement des Objectifs du Millénaire risquent de charger les collectivités locales d'une série d'infrastructures (dispensaires, routes, écoles, systèmes d'adduction et d'assainissement,…) dont elles n'ont ni la capacité de gestion ni les possibilités matérielles d'entretien. La participation des populations peut être, dans ce cadre, un vecteur de "décharge" tentant pour les pouvoirs publics déconcentrés ou décentralisés. Avec pour conséquence une déresponsabilisation du politique: déjà dans cer-

taines communes les logiques de participation financière des populations aux infrastructures du "développement"entrent en concurrence avec le paiement de l'impôt. Comment articuler les initiatives et "logiques" du développement avec celles des collectivités locales devient une question centrale pour l'avenir. Elle nécessite une expertise nouvelle, en accompagnement des autorités locales et des autres acteurs. Une expertise qui manque encore cruellement et justifie pleinement des expériences telles celles développées par le BUCO au Mali. L'exemple de Koutiala avec l'initiative "Siguida kura" est très illustratif à ce niveau.

Cela nécessite toutefois aussi de mieux distinguer le développement institutionnel du développement organisationnel et d'accorder au premier toute son importance.

Conclusion:
Les différents projets et programmes initiés par le BUCO au Mali sont pertinents car ils sont tous en adéquation avec les programmes nationaux d'appui à la décentralisation. Ils répondent à des besoins exprimés par les acteurs de la décentralisation pour les permettre de mieux jouer leur rôle dans la maîtrise du développement local. Ainsi, les services sociaux de base sont de plus en plus maîtrisés par les élus locaux.

iii. Politique nationale et contexte institutionnel

Constats principaux:
Les interventions de la coopération Suisse au Mali dans le cadre de l'accompagnement de la décentralisation au niveau des collectivités décentralisées concernent entre autres:
- L'appui à la maîtrise d'ouvrage du dispositif technique interne des collectivités territoriales et de celui des services déconcentrés de l'Etat;
- La mobilisation des ressources internes;
- L'appui aux diagnostics participatifs (permettant effectivement le rapprochement entre acteurs);
- L'appui au développement des filières économiques;
- L'appui à l'organisation interne des services communaux pou une meilleure intégration des programmes sectoriels nationaux au niveau local;
- Etc.

Ceci est à mettre en relation avec les appuis apportés à d'autres acteurs notamment les structures d'accompagnement de la décentralisation au niveau central et au niveau régional. La recherche de collaboration entre les catégories d'acteurs a été considérée comme une priorité. Ceci est en cohérence avec le dispositif institutionnel et législatif mis en place pour gérer la décentralisation.

Par rapport aux attentes des collectivités territoriales notamment celles de la région de Sikasso soutenues par le BUCO, notamment en termes de mobilisation des ressources, le résultat est en adéquation avec les besoins actuels. Le travail fondamental d'appui à l'identification des ressources et à l'élaboration de stratégies pour les mobiliser est une dimension essentielle à la pérennisation de tout le processus de décentralisation. Les expertises menées à ce niveau notamment à Koutiala doivent être capitalisées pour en faciliter la diffusion auprès d'autres collectivités.

Conclusion:

Les interventions du BUCO au Mali sont inscrites dans la logique du dispositif de l'architecture de la décentralisation telle que perçue par les autorités nationales. Ces interventions sont donc pertinentes, c'est-à-dire en adéquation avec le cadre institution-

nel et législatif du pays. La pertinence est aussi élevée sur la nécessité d'un tel dispositif et d'une telle intervention dans le contexte malien.

b. Efficacité

i. Bureau pays

Constats principaux:
Dans le cadre de ses interventions, la coopération s'est basée sur les structures déjà existantes au niveau es collectivités. Dans certains cas, elle a contribué à renforcer les équipes et à consolider les acquis. Les moyens mobilisés ont permis d'atteindre les résultats escomptés. Les ressources humaines mises à la disposition des différents niveaux de collectivités territoriales ont largement contribué à atteindre les résultats.

Tous les acteurs rencontrés aussi bien au niveau national qu'au niveau local reconnaissent que le BUCO a développé de très bonnes relations avec les différents niveaux de la décentration. Cette situation a permis d'établir des liens durables entre ces niveaux notamment dans la région de Sikasso. Ceci constitue de nos jours un enjeu important de la décentralisation au Mali.

Le dispositif mis en place au sein de l'équipe du BUCO, à travers ses activités de suivi a permis de renforcer les structures mises en place dans différentes collectivités territoriales. Par exemple, l'Assemblée Régionale (AR) de Sikasso dispose aujourd'hui d'une équipe d'appui performante qui contribue à la prise en charge des enjeux majeurs auxquels elle est confrontée.

Dans le contexte du Mali il y a un enjeu à mieux traiter de la capacité des collectivités à intégrer des démarches multi acteurs de développement local, communal ou intercommunal. Certaines expériences témoignent des potentialités dans ce domaine, mais ne semblent pas avoir bénéficié de tout l'intérêt pour mieux les faire connaître.

Conclusion:
Le dispositif mis en place au sein du BUCO et des ONG Suisse ayant exécuté les différents programmes et projets en régie a permis d'atteindre les résultats escomptés. Les différentes évaluations de programmes réalisées ont toutes montré l'efficacité de ce dispositif dans le passé. Cependant, un effort important doit être fait pour permettre au dispositif actuel de s'élargir pour mieux assurer le suivi des actions pertinentes en cours de réalisation. Les ambitions en termes de résultats s'agrandissant, le dispositif doit permettre de les prendre en charge aussi bien au niveau des collectivités décentralisées qu'au niveau du BUCO lui-même.

ii. Niveau programme et niveau projet

Constats principaux:
Les différents projets et programmes réalisés ont largement contribué à ouvrir le débat politique sur les programmes sectoriels dans la région de Sikasso. Les actions menées sont en lien direct avec la mise en œuvre concrète de la décentralisation au Mali. La coopération Suisse a conçu tout son accompagnement autour des enjeux pratiques liés à la décentralisation au Mali. La plus grande réussite est relative au lien qu'elle a pu créer dans certaines collectivités entre les programmes sectoriels (notamment l'éducation et la santé) et les plans de développement des collectivités territoriales. Par exemple à Sikasso, la création de liens entre le conseil de cercle de Sikasso et la direction de la santé de la région de Sikasso a permis de mobiliser certaines ressources du programme sectoriel de la santé pour une gestion directe par les élus locaux.

En plus de cette dimension très importante, la coopération Suisse a contribué à faire le lien entre l'Assemblée Régionale, le Conseil de cercle et certaines communes de la région. Cette mise en lien a permis d'avoir un véritable espace de dialogue ente les différents niveaux. Qui nécessite d'être consolidé. Les préjugés commencent à disparaître entre les différentes échelles de l'architecture de la décentralisation dans la région de Sikasso.

Les appuis de la coopération Suisse ont aussi permis de renforcer l'Assemblée Régionale de Sikasso qui devient une référence au niveau national en matière de prise en charge des actions de développement.

La tutelle a été impliquée dans les actions entreprises créant ainsi une très forte adhésion des ministères concernés par les problèmes abordés. C'est ainsi que les négociations entreprises par certaines collectivités territoriales pour bénéficier des moyens additionnels de mise en œuvre de leur programme de développement ont eu des réactions positives de la part des autorités nationales.

Ainsi, les acteurs au niveau national, régional, communal sont unanimes pour reconnaître que les interventions de la coopération Suisse ont permis de décloisonner le débat sur la recherche de cohérence entre les programmes sectoriels nationaux et les plans communaux de développement.

La contribution à la disponibilité des ressources humaines bien formées pour travailler avec les collectivités territoriales est l'un des résultats attendus des interventions du BUCO au Mali.

Par rapport au programme réalisés en régie, la coopération Suisse a permis d'élaborer des outils adaptés et pertinents sur la décentralisation et qui sont très largement utilisés par différents acteurs de la décentralisation. Certains des outils ont été conçus en partenariat avec d'autres acteurs. Il s'agit notamment des outils de sensibilisation et d'éducation mais aussi des outils de programmation au niveau communal et au niveau intercommunal.

Par rapport aux résultats inattendus, les interventions du BUCO dans certaines collectivités ont permis de revaloriser certains acteurs qui commençaient à perdre leur pouvoir dans l'espace social des communes. Il s'agit notamment des chefs de quartiers dans la commune de Koutiala mais aussi des associations de quartiers qui ont été largement impliqués dans l'initiative "Siguida Kura". Cette initiative a permis de mobiliser l'ensemble des énergies pour le développement de la commune.

La grande faiblesse réside dans le fait que la coopération Suisse ne dispose pas de suffisamment de moyens pour développer cette dynamique au niveau de l'ensemble des collectivités territoriales de la région de Sikasso. Un tel appui élargi à toute la région aurait permis d'assurer la cohérence d'ensemble dans les interventions. Il pourra aussi créer les conditions idoines pour la négociation de la prise en compte des acquis dans les orientations nationales.

Conclusion:
L'efficacité des programmes et projets est assez élevée en termes relatifs, c'est-à-dire, si on la compare aux premiers programmes d'appui à la décentralisation en mode régie qui se sont plus focalisé sur le niveau communal et qui ont eu du mal à créer un véritable dialogue entre les différents niveaux de l'architecture de la décentralisation

iii. Politique nationale et contexte institutionnel

Constats principaux:
Les différents projets et programmes de la coopération Suisse se sont inscrits dans la ligne de la politique nationale en matière de décentralisation. En soutenant certains CC et surtout le pool de techniciens au niveau de l'assemblée régionale de Sikasso, la coopération Suisse a largement aidé à consolider le processus de décentralisation dans cette région. Les résultats actuels obtenus avec les membres des équipes techniques en terme d'appui à la planification et à la mise en œuvre des actions de développement dans les communes sont plus importants que les moyens investis. Tous les acteurs sont unanimes sur le fait que le fait d'accompagner tous les niveaux de la décentralisation contribue à avoir une efficience dans la mise en œuvre de la décentralisation mais aussi de l'efficacité dans la réalisation des objectifs de développement.

La transversalité de la gouvernance au niveau du BUCO constitue un atout important pour insérer l'ensemble des programmes sectoriels dans l'espace communal. Cette option a déjà contribué à renforcer la légitimité de l'Assemblée régionale mais aussi les conseils de cercles et les communes soutenus. Il sera important de vulgariser cette approche à partir d'une analyse systématique. Des outils doivent être développés pour assurer cette capitalisation.

Conclusion:
Les actions menées par la DDC au Mali dans le cadre de la décentralisation ont permis d'obtenir les différents résultats attendus en termes de consolidation du cadre institutionnel national. Les initiatives d'accompagnement de l'ensemble des niveaux de ce processus de décentralisation ont contribué à avoir un appui efficace à plusieurs niveaux.

c. Viabilité

i. Bureau pays

Constats principaux:
La dépendance du Mali de l'extérieur se manifeste en plus d'autres domaines dans son processus de décentralisation très largement soutenu de l'extérieur, avec d'énormes difficultés dans ce contexte à appuyer les collectivités territoriales pour mobiliser des ressources locales (et notamment, lever les impôts).

Dans ce contexte de dépendance, les interventions du BUCO apparaissent extrêmement importantes pour:

- Renforcer les collectivités territoriales dans leurs capacités à s'investir dans les nouveaux enjeux de la gouvernance décentralisée;
- Renforcer les services techniques déconcentrés de l'Etat et les services techniques internes des collectivités dans leurs capacités à répondre aux besoins organisationnels et institutionnels des collectivités;
- Mobiliser les ressources publiques au niveau local servant à financer les programmes sectoriels nationaux (rechercher les fonds publics). Il s'agit de s'inscrire dans des politiques sectorielles (effectuer des diagnostics sectoriels, participer à la mise en œuvre, suivre et évaluer de telles politiques).
- Développer des activités créatrices de richesses pour la mobilisation des ressources internes;

Comme indiqué ci-dessus, les interventions de la DDC au Mali se sont largement inscrites dans la logique de la décentralisation au Mali. Le dispositif d'accompagnement mis en place a permis de mettre l'accent sur les ressources humaines nationales au niveau des collectivités afin d'assurer la pérennité de l'intervention.

Cette orientation du bureau de la coopération au Mali, soutenue par la DDC répondait au souci de ne pas créer des cadres institutionnels qui ne pourraient pas survivre après l'appui de la coopération Suisse.

La démarche ECOLOC conçue et mise en œuvre à Koutiala dans la région de Sikasso a démontré toute la pertinence d'une telle approche basée sur les ressources humaines locales capables de réactiver les réseaux sociaux locaux à même de porter le développement. Les expertises sollicitées pour accompagnées les différentes actions sont aussi ancrées dans les dynamiques sociales internes.

Sur le plan institutionnel, le BUCO, en développant les bonnes relations politiques avec les institutions et les services étatiques en charge de la décentralisation a beaucoup contribué à la démonstration de la pertinence d'intégrer dans les dynamiques locales les fonds mobilisés pour le financement des programmes sectoriels nationaux.

Conclusion:
La durabilité des actions entreprises par le BUCO au Mali est sur le point d'être assurée et certaines actions doivent être entreprises pour consolider les acquis actuels.

Niveau programme et niveau projet

Constats principaux:

Beaucoup d'effets réels sur la pérennisation des collectivités territoriales accompagnées sont aujourd'hui visibles grâce à l'amélioration de la visibilité de leurs pratiques et de leurs engagements (notamment en matière de collaboration entre les acteurs de la décentralisation et la planification). C'est ainsi que l'Assemblée Régionale (AR) de Sikasso a pu prendre plusieurs initiatives pour définir les orientations stratégiques et pratiques de divers secteurs de l'économie locale. Des conventions locales ont été élaborées, des plans de développement de certaines filières agricoles ont été conçus et le schéma d'aménagement du territoire national a été réalisé.

Au niveau du Conseil de Cercle (CC) de Sikasso, de la commune de Koutiala et bien d'autres communes, plusieurs actions ont été menées par les instances élues en collaboration avec les autres acteurs du développement contribuant à créer de véritables espaces de confiance entre les familles d'acteurs. L'ensemble des actions menées s'inscrit dans le cadre institutionnel existant défini par la décentralisation au Mali. Ceci contribue à une durabilité des acquis qui ne sont pas en dehors de la dynamique existante.

Selon les différentes personnes rencontrées, les interventions du BUCO au Mali ont eu comme effets entre autres:

- Instauration / restauration de la communication interne au sein des collectivités territoriales. Un véritable dialogue a pu être instauré entre les différents acteurs de la décentralisation.
- Nouveaux comportements en terme de dialogue et de concertation induits par l'intervention du BUCO notamment entre les collectivités et les services déconcentrés de l'Etat;

- Meilleure cohésion des équipes des collectivités territoriales;
- Augmentation de la motivation des acteurs de la décentralisation à travers leur responsabilisation dans les actions.
- Acquisition d'une certaine assurance, notamment par l'AR de Sikasso et le Conseil de Cercle à travers les négociations et les différents contacts (bailleurs de fonds, experts, d'autres collectivités dans d'autres pays…); le fait de recevoir et de gérer un financement semble donner de l'assurance et conférer davantage de maturité.
- Amélioration de la visibilité et de l'image de certaines collectivités (transparence de la gestion,…); dans différents cas, les interventions du BUCO et les résultats obtenus ont constitué une sorte de "visa" pour l'accès à d'autres financements;
- Transformations institutionnelles induites par les interventions à différents niveaux.
- Enrichissement des savoirs et des méthodes de travail des collectivités territoriales.

Malgré les nombreux acquis, il reste cependant à savoir comment toutes les réalisations actuelles en matière de planification vont se traduire concrètement dans les pratiques, au-delà d'une meilleure "représentation" à la construction des documents de base du développement. A cet égard le suivi des collectivités accompagnées par le BUCO et les ONG Suisse avec leurs partenaires sera déterminant dans l'avenir.

Conclusion:
La viabilité institutionnelle de l'appui de la DDC à la décentralisation au Mali est élevée car les actions entreprises sont en adéquation avec le cadre légal de l'architecture de la décentralisation. Des acquis importants ont été obtenus en termes d'ancrage de la décentralisation dans les pratiques des populations dans les collectivités soutenues. Cependant, la viabilité financière reste à consolider avec un meilleur accompagnement des mesures relatives à la mobilisation des ressources internes notamment fiscales des communes mais aussi de la région.

Politique nationale et contexte institutionnel

Constats principaux:
Sur le plan politique, le BUCO et l'ensemble des ONG intervenant en régie entretiennent de très bonnes relations avec les différents acteurs nationaux du dispositif mis en place pour accompagner la décentralisation. La stratégie d'accompagner l'ensemble des niveaux de l'architecture de la décentralisation au Mali constitue de nos jours un élément fondamental de la pérennité des acquis obtenus ou qui seront obtenus.

Les efforts de définition des politiques régionales sectorielles et des politiques communales ainsi que la création d'une véritable dynamique de coopération décentralisée au niveau de l'ensemble des communes et des conseils de cercle soutenus permettent aujourd'hui d'assurer une très grande viabilité sociale, politique et institutionnelle des actions entreprises.

La viabilité financière reste cependant non pleinement assurée tant que le niveau de mobilisation des ressources internes restera relativement faible. Un effort important doit être fait à cet égard pour aider les collectivités à mieux développer les stratégies et les pratiques de mobilisation de toutes les potentialités en matière de ressources internes. Des actions sont déjà en cours mais elles n'ont pas eu tous les effets escomptés de nos jours.

Le constat général qui se dégage est celui d'une expérience intéressante et riche d'enseignements de collectivités qui commencent à s'affirmer et à engranger des résultats, mais dont la survie institutionnelle et financière semble quelque peu faible à cause de la difficulté à mobiliser les ressources internes nécessaires pour éviter de dépendre presque exclusivement vers les financements extérieurs.

Les exigences du partenariat ont été portées par une démarche de gestion de processus à travers des options et des visions politiques d'inscription dans des enjeux de société.

- Chaque projet et chaque programme réalisé ou en cours de réalisation a pu apporter sa contribution à la consolidation de l'approche, qu'il soit en régie ou en appui direct. Les appuis du BUCO avec des visions stratégiques beaucoup plus marquées sur ce que le lien entre les programmes sectoriels nationaux et les plans locaux de développement pourrait apporter aux principaux enjeux de la décentralisation et articulées avec les dynamiques locales (réseaux, maîtrise d'ouvrage de l'appui technique,…).

Les principaux enjeux actuels résident dans la capacité à s'affranchir des normes de gestion de gestion des programmes sectoriels nationaux tout en construisant des formes de partenariat avec ceux-ci à travers les ministères concernés.

Pour une coopération qui se veut ouverte à la demande, il semble également avoir manqué de moyens pour mieux capitaliser sur les conditions d'une viabilisation avec la mise en œuvre de toutes les dimensions et actions identifiées lors des diagnostics

Au-delà des résultats en terme de mise en place de dispositifs, beaucoup d'enseignements sont à tirer de cette expérience enrichissante sur les modalités de mise en œuvre de la décentralisation. Son apport au renforcement de compétences collectives entre différentes catégories d'acteurs, voire tout simplement dans la capacité à réellement améliorer les capacités organisationnelle et institutionnelle des collectivités est très apprécié par les différents acteurs.

Conclusion:

Les interventions de la DDC au Mali ont eu des effets importants à l'échelle des collectivités et au niveau national. Ces effets ont été obtenus en partie grâce à la capacité de l'équipe du BUCO et grâce à certains responsables de collectivités territoriales qui se sont engagés avec l'équipe de la coopération et des techniciens recrutés au sein de collectivités concernées. D'autres PTF sont en train de s'associer à la démarche en cours qui a permis de faire des liens importants entre les programmes sectoriels et les programmes des collectivités territoriales.

8. Analyse de l'avantage comparatif de la SDC: forces et faiblesses de l'approche de la SDC

Constats principaux:
L'ensemble des acteurs rencontrés est unanime pour reconnaître les avantages comparatifs suivants des interventions de la DDC par rapport à d'autres intervenants:

- La souplesse de la coopération suisse dans le dispositif de financement contrairement aux procédures jugées compliquées du dispositif national par lequel les autres agences de coopération intervient. En effet, le BUCO appuie directement

la collectivité contrairement à d'autres coopérations qui passent par l'Etat ou d'autres ONGs. Cet appui direct a très largement contribué à éviter des pertes de ressources avec la multiplication des niveaux de gestion.

- La capacité d'adaptation à différentes situations en prenant en compte au fur et à mesure les préoccupations des collectivités territoriales;
- Le pragmatisme de la coopération suisse avec la mise en œuvre d'actions concrètes de développement des filières porteuses contrairement à la très grande majorité des agences de coopération qui mettent l'accent sur les services sociaux de base.
- La prise en compte de tous les niveaux de l'architecture de la décentralisation dans la région de Sikasso et cela dans une logique holistique prenant en compte la multifonctionnalité du développement communal.
- L'initiative des appuis budgétaires décentralisés est à l'actif du BUCO dans le pays. Cette option peut constituer dans l'avenir un enjeu important dans l'accompagnement des collectivités territoriales.
- Le rôle d'éducation des Partenaires Techniques et Financiers (PTF) de la décentralisation à travers la recherche de cohérence entre les intervenant dans le pays.

Les interventions de la DDC au Mali sur la décentralisation ont pu obtenir les acquis suivants (en terme de forces):

- Le développement d'une démarche de construction de partenariat moins compliquée par rapport à d'autres coopérations;
- Le respect construit à partir des initiatives de recherche de cohérence dans les interventions des PTF intervenant sur la décentralisation. Beaucoup de partenaires se sont inscrits dans la logique appuis directs aux collectivités et souhaitent concrètement intervenir dans ce sens très bientôt;
- L'établissement de liens entre tous les autres niveaux de collectivités;
- La contribution du BUCO à la visibilité de l'AR de Sikasso dans l'espace du développement régional. De nos jours, l'ensemble des services techniques déconcentrés de la région de Sikasso envoient leurs rapports à l'AR qui donne son avis et oriente le contenu de ces rapports. On peut aujourd'hui affirmer que l'AR de Sikasso a acquis une notoriété à cause du transfert des ressources et des compétences de la part du BUCO. Le processus est engagé et l'AR devient un levier important dans la région.
- La flexibilité de la coopération Suisse qui est très appréciée par les acteurs locaux;
- La mise en œuvre d'une dynamique d'accompagnement basée sur une logique de recherche action;
- Le développement de l'appui direct qui évite des gaspillages de ressources.
- La capacité du BUCO à s'associer à d'autres agences de coopération pour travailler dans les collectivités. AFD et UE qui sont en train d'intégrer des éléments tels que le financement direct des collectivités territoriales (la gestion décentralisée des programmes sectoriels), le développement d'une véritable coopération décentralisée au niveau local (la mise en synergie des différents acteurs du développement) et la responsabilisation des élus locaux dans la co-construction des programmes d'appuis aux filières porteuses à leur approche.
- La constance dans l'intervention du BUCO
- L'inscription des actions dans les initiatives locales
- L'autonomie dans les interventions avec les collectivités territoriales

- Les résultats concrets obtenus qui pourront permettre à la tutelle de modifier les logiques d'intervention. Par exemple il y a actuellement un transfert d'une partie des fonds de santé aux collectivités territoriales. Ce transfert a été fait grâce aux négociations faites avec le Ministère de tutelle. C'est le fruit d'une volonté politique des ministères qui a coïncidé avec le programme qui était en cours. Les autorités sanitaires nationales et régionales se sont rendues compte du sérieux de la coopération suisse au fil du temps (dans les cercles de Siksasso et Kadiolo) notamment en matière de santé et ceci a été déterminant dans l'acceptation de cette approche. Une réflexion est en cours pour prendre en charge les questions de santé au niveau de la région. Ceci est une première au Mali dans le cadre des tentatives de mise en lien entre les programmes sectoriels de développement et les PDSEC (Programmes de Développement Social et Economique des communes)
- Les interventions sont en cohérence avec toutes les politiques nationales de décentralisation et il y a une recherche/action permanente pour enrichir le processus.
- Le suivi des activités sur le terrain qui répond à une logique de recherche-action et permet de réorienter les actions en cours.
- Le modèle de suivi mis en place est jugé très pertinent par les acteurs rencontrés lors de la mission d'évaluation.
- La dimension transversale de la décentralisation dans le dispositif d'appui du BUCO au Mali constitue une force de ses interventions. Cette option a permis à l'ensemble des programmes de développer des initiatives tangibles pour prendre en charge différents aspects de la décentralisation dans les processus de programmation.
- Malgré les nombreuses forces de l'appui de la DDC aux actions de la décentralisation au Mali, quelques faiblesses existent. Il s'agit entre autres de:
- La faiblesse des ressources financières permettant de prendre en charge l'ensemble des problématiques identifiées afin de les utiliser comme levier pour changer les approches (politiques et pratiques) au niveau national;
- La difficulté d'un suivi régulier des actions en cours due en partie à la faiblesse (sur le plan quantitatif) des ressources humaines en charge des dossiers sur la gouvernance. L'ampleur de la tâche nécessite un plus grand nombre de personnes pour assurer un suivi adéquat de l'ensemble des éléments des dynamiques sociales en cours.
- La faible visibilité de la démarche pour mieux contribuer au changement à l'échelle nationale. A cet effet, un travail de capitalisation est nécessaire pour mieux mettre en exergue les pratiques et les politiques des collectivités soutenues.

Ces faiblesses doivent être prises en compte pour favoriser l'émergence des impacts de l'intervention de la coopération Suisse au Mali. Il s'agit des changements profonds durables pouvant contribuer à des changements positifs de pratiques et de politiques de décentralisation.

Conclusion:
Les appuis apportés par la DDC à la décentralisation au Mali ont permis d'avoir des avantages comparatifs importants par rapport à d'autres interventions sur le même processus dans le pays. Ces avantages comparatifs doivent être consolidés pour transformer les effets actuels en véritables impacts (changements sociaux durables) sur les pratiques et les politiques en matière de décentralisation au Mali.

9. Coopération avec d'autres partenaires et effectivité de l'aide

Constats principaux:

Au Mali, les interventions des agences de coopération en matière de décentralisation sont réparties entre les différentes régions et le District de Bamako. Cette répartition même si elle est considérée par certains comme une division du pays a le mérite de créer une certaine visibilité des démarches individuelles.

La dynamique actuelle permet d'avoir une complémentarité entre les agences de coopération et les ONG internationales dans l'accompagnement de la décentralisation.

Malgré la répartition géographique, le BUCO participe à toutes les initiatives de concertation entre les PTF intervenant sur la décentralisation au Mali. Les espaces créés permettent de partager les expériences et de nouer des alliances pour avoir une plus grande efficacité de l'aide. C'est à travers ces espaces d'échanges que le BUCO est en train de développer avec l'Union Européenne (UE) et l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD) (et éventuellement la Banque Mondiale (BM), une initiative commune d'appui direct aux collectivités territoriales de la région de Sikasso. Cette initiative salutaire pourra constituer un élément fondamental du processus de co-construction et de coresponsabilité des appuis directs d'accompagnement de la décentralisation au Mali.

En plus des appuis directs de la BUCO à la décentralisation, les ONG Suisses notamment HELVETAS travaillant en régie sur la décentralisation collaborent avec d'autres ONG internationales dans la mise en œuvre des activités. C'est ainsi que HELVETAS a élaboré plusieurs outils de sensibilisation sur les fondements de la décentralisation et sur la gestion communale en partenariat avec la GTZ (Allemagne), la SNV (Organisation Néerlandaise pour le Développement et d'autres organisations).

Les appuis concertés ont permis d'avoir des économies d'échelle en matière de production des outils de travail pour soutenir la décentralisation au Mali.

Conclusion:
Les espaces de concertation et de coopération auxquels participe le BUCO au Mali dans le cadre de son appui à la décentralisation et à la gouvernance ont permis d'avoir une influence sur d'autres intervenants ayant beaucoup plus de ressources. Les résultats actuels obtenus sont très significatifs et ils pourront permettre dans l'avenir à créer une véritable dynamique de co-construction, de co-suivi et de co-évaluation de la décentralisation au Mali.

10. Appui de la SDC Berne et relations avec le BUCO Mali

Les relations entre la DDC Berne et le BUCO concernant la thématique de la décentralisation sont assez timides selon les acteurs rencontrés. Il y a très peu de visites entre les deux niveaux de l'échelle même si des échanges existent par courrier. Les documents élaborés par la DDC Berne servent de référence aux interventions du BUCO au Mali. Il est dès lors très important de rectifier cette situation en mettant l'accent sur les contacts fréquents entre le bureau de Berne et le BUCO à Bamako pour assurer une meilleure lisibilité des actions d'appui à la décentralisation au Mali.

11. Recommandations

La DDC à travers le BUCO à Bamako a eu des acquis importants en matière d'appui à la décentralisation au Mali. Ces acquis sont bien reconnus aussi bien par les acteurs directs des collectivités territoriales que par les autorités du pays. Il est donc important de consolider ces acquis et de prendre en charge les faiblesses constatées.

Pour consolider les acquis actuels et prendre en charge ces acquis, nous recommandons:

- L'élargissement des activités d'appui à d'autres régions du Mali en partenariat avec d'autres agences de coopération afin de faciliter la prise en compte de la démarche développée par le BUCO dans les orientations politiques nationales. Cet élargissement "stratégique" permettra de bâtir des alliances avec des coopérations qui ont plus de moyens et qui peuvent très vite s'engager dans l'accompagnement d'une réforme importante dans le cadre de la recherche de cohérence entre les programmes sectoriels et les PDSEC.
- La mise en place d'une équipe plus élargie au niveau du BUCO pour prendre en charge les actions relatives à l'appui à la décentralisation. Ceci est extrêmement important car il permettra d'assurer un meilleur suivi (et plus fréquent) pour assurer une visibilité aux programmes développés par les partenaires des collectivités territoriales.
- L'approfondissement de la dimension d'appui aux filières économiques créatrices de richesse: l'une des grandes innovations du BUCO dans les actions d'appui à la décentralisation concerne cet appui au développement des filières maîtrisées et maîtrisables par les AR. Il est dès lors opportun de mieux approfondir les réflexions autour des différentes filières pour faire le lien entre les dimensions pratiques et les questions politiques (liées aux filières). Les actions actuelles menées en la matière sont pour le moment axées sur des dimensions techniques. Il convient de mieux rendre visible les aspects politiques pour bâtir une véritable stratégie de plaidoyer des collectivités territoriales.
- Sur le plan méthodologique, il est recommandé d'enclencher un véritable processus de capitalisation de certaines expériences afin de les partager avec d'autres PTF et d'autres collectivités. Les initiatives entreprises sont très pertinentes et riches en leçons et elles mériteraient d'être mieux visibles et documentés afin d'amener d'autres intervenants à mieux agir en synergie. Le renforcement des capacités serait donc un levier important pour faciliter une participation plus élargie des collectivités de base au partage et à la diffusion de l'information sur les expériences pour assurer une dynamique nationale. A ce titre, l'expérience de l'accompagnement de la commune de Koutiala à partir de la démarche ECOLOC pourra être pertinente à développer. La production d'un outil audio-visuel par exemple pourra aider à mieux valoriser les acquis obtenus.
- L'approfondissement e la dimension mobilisation des ressources internes des communes avec la mise en place d'un véritable dispositif de prise en charge des résultats des réflexions menées dans différentes communes.
- La poursuite des initiatives de mise à la disposition des collectivités territoriales les ressources humaines compétentes capables d'accompagner les élus locaux dans leurs prises de décisions. L'exemple de l'AR de Sikasso pourra aider à mieux bâtir la stratégie de développement d'une telle initiative ailleurs.

Annex E: – Étude de cas: Rwanda

Table des matières

1. Introduction générale
2. Conclusions et Recommandations générales
3. Brève aperçu du contexte de la gouvernance locale du Processus de décentralisation au Rwanda
4. Implication des différents bailleurs de fonds dans le processus de décentralisation au Rwanda et leurs d'interventions
5. Brève aperçue du portefeuille des projets/programmes de la DDC et sa coopération avec ses autres partenaires
6. Principaux documents stratégiques de la DDC en matière d'intervention dans la de centralisation
7. Principaux résultants sur l'analyse de la pertinence, efficacité et durabilité des intervensions de la DDC dans le processus de décentralisation au Rwanda
8. Analyse des forces, faiblesse et avantages comparatives de l'approche d'intervention de la DDC dans l'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda
9. Collaboration entre la DDC et ses autres partenaires dans la gestion de l'aide
10. Relation entre le BUCCO/Kigali et le bureau de la DDC à Berne
11. Recommandations générales
12. Prise de position de la DDC Rwanda et DDC Berne

Annexes

1. Introduction générale

Pour pouvoir améliorer ses performances dans ses interventions dans le cadre de l'appui à la décentralisation, la Direction Suisse du Développement et de la Coopération (DDC) a initié un processus d'évaluation indépendante de son appui à la décentralisation dans cinq pays (Rwanda, Mali, Pérou, Inde et Bulgarie).

Au Rwanda, pour atteindre sa mission, l'équipe indépendante d'évaluateurs[1] a d'abord procédé à l'analyse du contexte de la décentralisation et de la gouvernance locale au Rwanda, celle de l'implication des différents bailleurs de fonds du domaine et leurs modes d'interventions, celle du portefeuille des projets/programmes de la DDC dans l'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda ainsi que le niveau de coopération entre la DDC et les autres bailleurs de fonds, les ONG locales et internationales intervenant dans l'appui à ce processus. Cette équipe a en suite procédé à l'analyse des principaux documents stratégiques de la coopération suisse en matière de décentralisation.
Dans toutes ces analyses, l'équipe d'évaluateurs s'est beaucoup penchées sur les aspects de pertinence, d'efficacité et de durabilité des interventions de la DDC dans le processus de décentralisation au Rwanda, aussi bien au niveau de son bureau de coordination à Kigali[2] (BUCO), au niveau de ses projets/programmes, qu'au niveau du contexte politique et institutionnel du pays et a essayée d'identifier les forces, les faiblesses, les avantages comparatifs de l'approche d'intervention de la DDC dans ce domaine, le niveau de coopération entre la DDC et ses autres partenaires dans la gestion de l'aide, l'appui apporté par le bureau de la DDC de Berne au bureau de coordination de Kigali ainsi que les relations entre les deux instances dans tout ce processus.

Ce travail d'évaluation a par ailleurs été réalisé à différents niveaux administratifs, à savoir: (i) l'administration centrale, où l'équipe a procédé à la consultation de différents documents relatifs à la mission et a mené des entretiens semi-structurés auprès des différents partenaires intervenant dans le processus de décentralisation au Rwanda [spécialement les représentants du Ministère de tutelle de la décentralisation au Rwanda qui est le MINALOC (Ministère de l'Administration Locale, de la Bonne Gouvernance, du Développement Communautaire et des Affaires Sociales)], (ii) le niveau local dont les autorités des districts, celles des secteurs administratifs, les représentants des Programmes de décentralisation sous financement de la DDC [le Programme d'appui à la décentralisation (PED) et le Programme d'appui au système de santé (PSP) dans les districts de Karongi et Rustiro dans la Province de l'Ouest][3] et (iii) le niveau des bailleurs de fonds (dont les membres du Bureau de la Coopération Suisse à Kigali et les autres organisations d'envergure nationale impliqués dans ce processus de décentralisation au Rwanda).

1 Il s'agit de l'évaluateur international et le point focal national, respectivement Monsieur Søren Villadsen (Evaluateur international et responsable de l'équipe d'évaluation) et Monsieur Alexis DUKUNDANE (point focal national de l'équipe d'évaluation).

2 Kigali est la capitale du Rwanda.

3 Au Rwanda, depuis fin 2005, l'administration du territoire est sous forme pyramidale de sorte que le pays est subdivisé en 4 provinces et la Ville de Kigali (qui a le statut d'une province tout en étant un gouvernement local), en 30 districts (réparties dans les 4 provinces et la Ville de Kigali et ayant chacun le statut de gouvernement local). Ces districts sont à leurs tours composés de 416 secteurs administratifs, subdivisés en 2150 Cellules et 14953 Imidugudu (entité de 50 à 150 ménages) (les responsabilités de chaque niveau son données dans le tableau de l'annexe 1 à la page 30).

2. Conclusions et Recommandations générales

Les interventions de la DDC à l'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda présente pas mal de forces et d'avantage comparatif par rapport aux autres intervenant dans le domaine dont notamment:

- Son expérience et connaissance dans la décentralisation du pouvoir de prise de décisions dans différents domaines de développement de la vie socioéconomique du citoyen,
- Son indépendance et flexibilité par rapport aux autres intervenants dans le domaine ou dans la zone (comme par exemple sa prédisposition à prendre des risques pour de nouvelles initiatives même là où les autres ont hésité, comme l'appui au CDF[4]),
- Sa flexibilité dans les procédures administratives et financières,
- Son niveau de coordination géographique entre ses différents programmes (le programme santé et le programme Paix et Décentralisation dans les districts de Karongi et Rutsiro);
- La bonne collaboration se trouvant entre son Bureau de Coordination à Kigali et ses agences d'exécution, *mais aussi et surtout*
- *Son approche d'intervention de proximité qui lui permet d'être plus proche des populations cibles tout en s'intéressant aux politiques normatifs et aux aspects tactiques (participation aux débats nationaux, provinciaux et ceux des districts)*.

Toutefois quelques points faibles sont bien perceptible et ont besoin d'être améliorés, notamment:

- Sa faible relation avec le niveau national surtout les ministères techniques et le RALGA (Rwanda Association of Local Gouvernement Authority),
- Sa programmation sur de courtes périodes avec des financements estimés faibles par rapport aux autres intervenants du domaine et aux besoins des districts appuyés ainsi que son approche d'intervention d'appui par projet (approche classique), ainsi que
- Son approche de gouvernance locale plus focalisée beaucoup plus aux activités de participation, mobilisation, élections, renforcement des capacités des autorités locales, gestion financière et exécution qu'à celles relatives aux systèmes de régulation et de prestation des services, qui sont pourtant susceptibles d'assurer la durabilité institutionnelle des Gouvernements Locaux.

Eu égard à ce qui vient d'être ci haut mentionné, les recommandations générales suivantes sont proposées à la DDC en vu d'améliorer ses performances dans le domaine:

1. Renforcer là où elle a des avantages comparatifs dans le domaine de la décentralisation quitte à servir de leçon et de bonnes pratiques aux autres intervenants du domaine;
2. En même temps, savoir faire des alliances en renforçant les relations avec les autres intervenants et ainsi pouvoir travailler et exister avec les autres à tous les niveaux administratifs. Par exemple pour s'assurer de l'intégration des interventions dans les stratégies nationales, il faudra qu'elle puisse entretenir et renforcer ses re-

4 Le CDF ou Fonds Commun de Développement a été mise en place en octobre 2002 a trois principaux objectifs à savoir: (i) Financer les projets de développement, répartir entre les Districts et la Ville de Kigali les fonds alloués à ces projets et assurer la péréquation entre ces entités; (ii)Assurer le suivi de l'utilisation des fonds alloués aux projets de développement des entités décentralisées et (iii) Servir d'intermédiaire entre ces entités et les bailleurs de fonds.

lations avec le niveau national et ainsi contribuer à l'amélioration des liens entre le niveau central (les ministères techniques, la RALGA, le CDF, etc.) et le niveau local;

3. Actualiser le niveau et le volume de son financement en fonction du contexte local, national et international pour pouvoir beaucoup plus intéresser ceux avec qui elle travail;
4. Passer progressivement d'un appui par projet à l'appui programme (appui budgétaire) tout en dissociant les aspects de renforcement des capacités à l'appui financier;
5. Prévoir des perspectives de retrait progressif avec des indicateurs SMART permettant d'atteindre une durabilité institutionnelle des Gouvernements Locaux.
6. Prévoir une programmation à horizon suffisamment clair et assez longue pour permettre une vision à long terme (5 ans ou plus) et développer un système efficace et effectif de suivi et évaluation pouvant mesurer l'impact de ses programmes dans la mise en œuvre des stratégies et orientations nationales;
7. Prévoir, lors des futures négociations, des ouvertures, des disponibilités et des flexibilités du pays partenaire à pouvoir accueillir facilement les expériences dynamiques et positives, tout en adoptant des approches holistiques et systématiques avec respect d'un certain nombre d'engagement de la part des deux parties (négociations faites soigneusement de sorte que les rôles et responsabilités de chaque partie soient bien clarifiés et respectés).

3. Brève aperçu du contexte de la gouvernance locale du Processus de décentralisation au Rwanda

Le système de gouvernance au Rwanda[5] avant, pendant et après la colonisation a surtout été caractérisé par une forte centralisation du pouvoir qui a fait obstacle à la participation du citoyen au processus de prise de décisions surtout dans la planification des actions de son propre développement. Ceci a eu comme conséquence la guerre et le génocide accompagné par des destructions des biens publics et privés ainsi que plus de 3.5 millions de réfugiés à l'extérieur du pays et presque le même nombre de déplacés à l'intérieur du pays en 1994.

Après ces tristes et déplorables événements que le Rwanda a traversé, le Gouvernement du Rwanda s'est efforcé de chercher et d'adopter des stratégies pouvant aider le pays à sortir définitivement de cette situation aussi désastreuse que complexe qui a surtout été marquée par des tendances séparatistes au sein de la population, la pauvreté et beaucoup d'autres problèmes y relatifs.

C'est dans ce cadre que certaines stratégies ont été adoptées, notamment:

- La mise en place des instances administratives bien coordonnées, efficaces et efficientes;
- La consolidation de l'unité nationale et le renforcement de la sécurité du pays;
- Le fait d'être préoccupé, sans cesse, par le bien être de la population;
- Le renforcement d'une collaboration étroite avec les opérateurs privés et la société civile en vue de faciliter et d'accélérer le processus de développement;
- La promotion et l'adoption des stratégies pouvant favoriser une gestion seine et transparente de la chose publique.

C'est, par ailleurs, en 1996—1997, après la rentrée massive des réfugiés rwandais de 1994, que des consultations sur la Gouvernance au Rwanda se focalisant sur les cau-

5 Stratégie Nationale de Renforcement de la Bonne Gouvernance pour la Réduction de la Pauvreté, 2001, MINALOC

ses de la désunion entre les Rwandais eurent lieu au niveau des Communautés, suivi de ceux au niveau National en 1998–1999.

Les conclusions de ces consultations ont donné comme recommandations la mise en place du processus de Décentralisation et de Démocratisation pour promouvoir la participation de la population dans tout le processus de prise de décisions aussi bien dans l'identification, l'élaboration, la mise en œuvre, le suivi, l'évaluation et le contrôle, que dans la gestion des acquis de tous les programmes de réduction de la pauvreté, de développement communautaire et sociopolitiques durables.

En effet, en 1998, environ 70 % des Rwandais vivaient en dessous du seuil de la pauvreté et la plupart (près de 90%) étaient en zones rurales. Il fallait donc que les politiques en faveur des pauvres soient mises en place de façon à ce que les ressources soient dirigées vers les zones où vivent les pauvres et vers des programmes qui impliquent une plus grande participation de la majorité des Rwandais à la résolution des problèmes quotidiens auxquels ils étaient confrontés.

En mai 2000, le Conseil des Ministres du Rwanda a adopté le document de politique et les stratégies de mise en oeuvre de la politique de décentralisation au Rwanda[6], qui repose sur la loi fondamentale du pays et sur ses dispositions politiques et administratives stipulant que tout pouvoir émane du peuple et que la souveraineté nationale appartient au peuple rwandais. Cette politique de décentralisation a comme objectif global d'assurer l'habilitation politique, économique, sociale, administrative et technique de la population locale à lutter contre la pauvreté en participant pleinement dans la planification et dans la gestion de son processus de développement (voir plus de détail en annexe 1).

En Janvier 2001, un programme triennal de mise en oeuvre de la décentralisation est initié comme première phase[7] de la mise en œuvre de cette politique dont la tâche principale était la mise en place des institutions de décentralisation et le renforcement de leurs capacités de coordination et de maîtrise d'ouvrage pour pouvoir assurer les services de proximité dont a besoin le citoyen[8].

Différentes études, évaluations[9] et analyses[10] de ce processus de décentralisation qui ont été faites ont montré que malgré l'enregistrement de réalisations positives, les contraintes et défis majeurs suivant subsistaient encore:

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6 La Politique National de la Décentralisation et ses stratégies de mise en œuvre, mai 2000, MINALOC.

7 Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de la politique de décentralisation au Rwanda trois phases successives avaient été prévues (Voir annexe 1)

8 Le domaine de la législation est l'une des réalisations la plus remarquable de cette première phase qui comprend: la révision de la constitution nationale pour y intégrer les principes du processus de décentralisation au Rwanda (2000 et 2003); les lois portant organisation et fonctionnement de la Commission Electorale Nationale (2000, 2002, 2003 et 2004); les lois portant organisation des élections des autorités au niveau des instances de base (2000, 2002 et 2005); les lois portant organisation et fonctionnement des provinces (2000, 2002 et 2004); les lois portant création, organisation et fonctionnement des districts et villes au Rwanda (2001, 2002 et 2005); les lois portant création, organisation et fonctionnement de la Ville de Kigali (2001, 2003 et 2005); la lois portant finances des district et villes et régissant leurs utilisation (2002 et 2003) et la loi portant création, organisation et fonctionnement du Fonds communs de développement des districts, villes et la Ville de Kigali (2002).

9 L'évaluation externe de la première phase du Processus de décentralisation au Rwanda a été réalisé par l'organisation VNG International entre le 18 juin 2003 et le 20 septembre 2003 sur le compte du MINALOC et sous le financement de l'Ambassade du Royaume des Pays Bas au Rwanda qui était, alors, le lead donor du cluster de la décentralisation.

10 Les plus importantes de ces études, évaluations et analyses sont: Une analyse sur la décentralisation en vue de vérifier comment cette politique a été perçue et comment elle était traduite en action à travers le pays (2002); L'enquête d'opinion organisée par la commission nationale de l'Unité et de la Réconciliation en vue de vérifier si le programme de la décentralisation commençait à s'implanter, à prendre racines, à être bien comprise et apprécié par la population (2003); L'évaluation concernant la capacité financière des Districts et villes de se prendre en charge, qui a révélé la vrai image des Districts et villes du Rwanda (2004); En 2005, des parlementaires (députés et Sénateurs), les Services de l'OMBUSMAN et autres hautes autorités ont effectué des voyages dans certaines provinces en vue

- Capacités non appropriées et très peu de compétences à différents niveaux administratifs;
- Equipements et infrastructures économiques inadéquates dans les unités décentralisées;
- Financement limité et imprévisible surtout au niveau décentralisé;
- Faible coordination institutionnelle à différents niveaux administratifs;
- Appréciation inadéquate des principes et valeurs de la décentralisation entre les dirigeants élus et les autres acteurs.

C'est pour faire face à ces contraintes et défis qu'une deuxième phase (2004—2008) de la décentralisation a été initiée pour mettre l'emphase sur la mobilisation des ressources et au renforcement des capacités afin de transformer les attentes en réalités.

Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de cette deuxième phase quelques mesures ont été prises depuis la fin de l'année 2005[11], comme entre autres:

- La révision des politiques de décentralisation, du développement communautaire et celle de la décentralisation fiscale, ainsi que la revue du cadre légal et réglementaire y relatif;
- La réforme administrative incluant la restructuration administrative du pays [de 106 districts à 30, de 1956 secteurs à 416, de 9165 cellules à près de 2150 ainsi que la création de près de 15000 entités appelées Imidugudu (50 à 150 ménages)]; et
- La mise en place de nouveaux organes de gestion des ces structures ayant des capacités intellectuelles et techniques supposées suffisantes pour répondre aux besoins de réduction de la pauvreté et de développement économique de la communauté.

4. Implication des différents bailleurs de fonds dans le processus de décentralisation au Rwanda et leurs d'interventions

Dans le cadre de l'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda plus d'une trentaine de programmes/projets ont été mise en œuvre ou sont mise en œuvre pour appuyer le processus de décentralisation au Rwanda pour un budget avoisinant 200 milliards de francs rwandais [équivalent à près de 400 Millions de dollars américain (voir détail annexe 2)].

Les principaux bailleurs de fonds (près d'une quinzaine) sont: la Banque Mondiale (à travers le crédit/don IDA), l'Union Européenne (par les fonds FED), le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement (UNDP), le Fonds d'Equipement des Nations Unies (FENU), le Fonds International pour le Développement de l'Agriculture (FIDA/IFAD), la Banque Africaine de Développement (BAD/ADB), l'Organisation des Pays Exportateurs du Pétrole (OPEP/OPEC), les Organisations Non Gouvernementales (ONG), la Coopération Canadienne (à travers l'Agence Canadienne de Développement

d'échanger avec la population pour connaître comment les services leur étaient fournis par les instances habilitées, en conformité avec les politiques et programmes du Gouvernement; L'étude faite en 2005 dont le but était d'analyser les le fonctionnement et les interactions entre les diverses instances (MINALOC, les Autres Ministères techniques, la Mairie de la Ville de Kigali, les Districts, les Villes et les Secteurs) et leurs performances dans la mise en oeuvre du programme de la «Décentralisation au Rwanda» ainsi que l'étude sur la coordination des interventions et l'Harmonisation des approches dans la mise en œuvre de la Décentralisation, réalisée en 2005.

11 La 2ème phase du processus de décentralisation au Rwanda a subit pas mal de changement par rapport ce qui était prévu ce qui a été à l'origine de beaucoup de perturbations dans la mise en œuvre des programmes/projets des partenaires de cette politique.

Internationale: ACDI), la Direction du Développement et de la Coopération Suisse (DDC), le Royaume des Pays Bas (Netherlands), la Coopération Suédoise (à travers l'Agence Suédoise de Développement Internationale: SIDA), les Etats Unies d'Amérique (à travers l'USAID), la Coopération Belge (à travers le fonds Belge de Survie: FBS), la Coopération Allemande (à travers le KFW, le GTZ et/ou le DED), la contribution du Gouvernement du Rwanda (à travers surtout les fonds de contre partie) ainsi que les différentes contributions des communautés bénéficiaires (en nature ou en espèce);

On ne passerait pas non plus sous silence le fait que ces interventions sont inégalement réparties sur le territoire national avec des modes et approches d'interventions très diversifiés, comme entre autres:

- Celles gérées directement par les structures des institutions nationales ou locales en place,
- Celles gérées par des structures ad hoc composées de techniciens recrutés par le Gouvernement du Rwanda en collaboration avec le bailleur de fonds, souvent au grand risque de constituer des structures parallèles aux structures nationales ou locales en place, et même
- Celles gérées, soit directement par le bailleur de fonds, soit à travers des structures de la coopération ou à travers des agences d'exécutions externes (sociétés ou ONG souvent de nationalité du bailleur de fonds) sous la responsabilité directe du bailleur et recrutées soit unilatéralement par le bailleur de fonds ou en collaboration avec le Gouvernement du Rwanda.

Dans tous ces différents cas les fonds passent, soit par le CDF ou sont directement gérés par la structure d'exécution en appui par projet ou en appui budgétaire au PTBA (Plan de Travail et Budget Annuel) du Gouvernement Local concerné après signature d'un "Mémorandum of Understanding" ou d'un contrat entre les deux parties concernées, pour l'appui budgétaire au PTBA du Gouvernement Local.

5. Brève aperçue du portefeuille des projets/programmes de la DDC et sa coopération avec ses autres partenaires

Dans l'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda, les principales interventions de la DDC sont au nombre de trois programmes à savoir (i) le Programme d'appui à la décentralisation dans les districts de Karongi et Rutsiro, (ii) le Programme d'appui au Fond Commun de Développement et (iii) le Programme d'appui au système de santé dans les districts de Karongi et Rustiro. Leurs budgets respectifs pour la période 2005/2006 sont 2.910.000 CHF pour le premier programme, 600.000 CHF pour le second et 2.500.000 CHF pour le dernier.

Les deux premiers programmes qui sont les plus liés à la mise en oeuvre du processus de décentralisation sont la continuité de l'ancien Programme Paix et Décentralisation (PED) qui couvrait toute l'ancienne Province de Kibuye (six anciens districts) depuis 2003, dont la première phase s'est achevé en décembre 2004 et devait être suivie d'une période de transition de 2005 devant permettre d'élaborer les documents de la seconde phase qui était prévue de 2006 à 2008.

Toutefois, suite aux récentes réformes administratives et restructuration du territoire dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de la deuxième phase de la décentralisation au Rwanda, cette phase de transition a été prolongée à l'année 2006 pour permettre au programme de s'ajuster aux réformes et restructurations susmentionnées. Il est pour le moment en préparation de la planification de la deuxième phase (mars 2007—mars 2010) des deux premiers programmes susmentionnés.

L'objectif global de ces deux programmes est de contribuer à la démocratisation, à la lutte contre la pauvreté et à la promotion de la paix en appuyant la décentralisation dans les districts de Karongi et de Rutsiro de la Province de l'Ouest à travers le renforcement des capacités de ces districts au processus de planification-budgétisation participative, système de rapportage (des activités et de l'exécution du budget) et de maîtrise d'ouvrage pour le premier programme et à travers l'appui financier au deux districts à travers le CDF pour le second programme.

Quant au troisième programme, son objectif global est de réduire durablement, dans les Districts de Kibuye et Rutsiro, la morbidité et la mortalité due aux maladies évitables et/ou facilement traitables, et ainsi contribuer à la lutte contre la pauvreté. Plus particulièrement, l'objectif général du programme est de renforcer durablement et de façon efficiente, les performances et l'accessibilité du système de santé et améliorer les pratiques de la population en matière de santé dans les Districts de Kibuye et Rutsiro.

Le premier programme est mise en œuvre par le Bailleur à travers l'organisation privée Suisse "TULUM", dont la direction du programme a son siège à Berne et est en étroite collaboration avec son bureau de coordination de cinq experts [un expatrié coordinateur du programme et quatre experts nationaux (deux chargés de programme, un comptable - logisticien et une secrétaire - caissier)] qui a son siège au niveau de la province de l'Ouest, et par une ONG nationale (ACDB) à travers les techniciens du programme qui sont affectés au niveau des deux districts et dans leurs secteurs respectifs sous l'administration de TULUM.

Le deuxième programme est mise en œuvre par le CDF à travers lequel passent les fonds destinés aux activités prévues dans les Plans d'Action Annuel des deux districts et sont utilisés suivant les mécanismes du CDF.

Quant au troisième programme (appui au système de santé), il est mise en œuvre par le Bailleur à travers l'organisation privée Suisse "Institut Tropical Suisse", dont le bureau de coordination a son siège au niveau de la province de l'Ouest avec un personnel technique de trois experts [un expatrié Coordinateur du Programme et deux experts nationaux (un administrateur-comptable et une assistante technique]. Pour des raisons de pérennités des acquis, le programme collabore avec les structures en place pour les districts et les institutions sanitaires.

En cas de nécessité, pour les trois programmes, des interventions spécifiques sont fournies par des experts nationaux ou internationaux.

6. Principaux documents stratégiques de la DDC en matière d'intervention dans la décentralisation

En plus du Document de projet "Paix et décentralisation dans la Province de Kibuye, Rwanda" 22.02.2003–-31.12.2004, le bureau de la DDC à Berne a également développé un document guide dans le cadre de l'élaboration et l'exécution des projets/programmes de décentralisation et même la division de la DDC en charge de l'Afrique Australe et Orientale a développé un document qui donne des éclaircissements sur des aspects de la décentralisation et du renforcement de la démocratie.

Le premier document donne la position du Gouvernement suisse en ce qui concerne sa coopération avec le Rwanda, quelques informations sur les orientations du Gouvernement rwandais en matière de décentralisation et diverses indications sur les expériences en matière de décentralisation, en particulier celles de la DDC et ce sont ces différents éléments qui ont été à la base des choix qui ont guidé la conception du Programme de la DDC d'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda.

Pour le deuxième document qui donne des orientations dans le cadre de l'élaboration et l'exécution des projets de décentralisation, il ne se limite qu'aux principes généraux en expliquant les différents aspects de la décentralisation. Les principes et stratégies contenus dans ce document sont prise en compte dans l'élaboration et définition des nouvelles phases des programmes relatif au processus de décentralisation mais il ne peut pas jouer un grand rôle comme document de référence à consulter régulièrement dans la gestion quotidienne des programmes/projets de décentralisation.

Quant au document guide régional, il ne s'intéressent qu'au contexte de la décentralisation et du renforcement de la démocratie et ne donne que des principes généraux et des approches qui ne peuvent être pris en compte que seulement dans le processus de planification de nouvelles phases car il est trop général pour jouer un rôle important et servir de document de référence pouvant guider le processus de mise en œuvre et de gestion quotidienne des projets/programmes.

7. Principaux résultants sur l'analyse de la pertinence, efficacité et durabilité des interventions de la DDC dans le processus de décentralisation au Rwanda

7.1. Pertinence

7.1.1. Au niveau du bureau de coordination de la DDC à Kigali

Le bureau de coordination de la DDC à Kigali dans le cadre de l'appui de la Coopération Suisse au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda a un grand rôle à jouer surtout dans:

- Le maintien et le renforcement des relations entre le bureau de la DDC à Berne et le BUCO/Kigali, comme point focal de toutes les interventions suisses au Rwanda et dans la région, en général, et celles relatives à la promotion de la bonne gouvernance au Rwanda et dans la région ainsi que dans l'appui à la mise en œuvre du processus de décentralisation au Rwanda en particulier;
- La coordination des interventions du domaine de la décentralisation, mise en oeuvre par des agences d'exécution externes, comme le programme d'appui à la décentralisation aux districts de Karongi et Rutsiro mise en œuvre par "TULUM" et le Programme d'appui au système de santé dans ces mêmes districts exécuté par "l'Institut Tropical Suisse", dont les bureaux de coordination sont installés dans la province de l'Ouest alors que leurs directions sont à Berne;
- Le suivi et la coordination des interventions suisses du domaine qui sont directement exécutées par le bureau de la DDC à Kigali, comme l'appui au CDF et même d'autres appuis ponctuels relatifs à ce domaine;
- La participation dans différents fora du niveau régional, national, provincial et local relatifs à la promotion de la bonne gouvernance et/ou à la mise en œuvre du processus de décentralisation tel que le cluster de décentralisation, les séminaires et réunions de planification et autres, afin de contribuer au dialogue politique régional, national et provincial dans le cadre de la promotion de la bonne gouvernance, en général et dans la mise en œuvre du processus de décentralisation au Rwanda en particulier.

Ces différentes attributions prouvent combien il était important et très approprié que le bureau de coordination puisse avoir une unité chargée de la gouvernance, en général et de la décentralisation en particulier pour renforcer la coopération dans le cadre de l'appui à la gouvernance locale et à l'amélioration des conditions de vie des citoyens de la zone appuyée.

7.1.2. Au niveau des projets/programmes de la DDC dans l'appui à la décentralisation au Rwanda

Les expériences acquises dans différents contextes ont permis (cf. document DDC "Décentralisation") de mettre en évidence les principales raisons de renforcer les gouvernements locaux, à savoir:

- **Favoriser la mise en place d'une administration efficace et responsable** par l'effet combiné des éléments suivants :
    - § un organisme décentralisé – en comparaison avec un gouvernement national – est plus accessible, plus compréhensif et plus attentif à répondre aux besoins locaux, qu'il connaît mieux;
    - § les relations étroites entre citoyens et gouvernement favorisent une responsabilisation, de part et d'autre, elles contribuent à réduire les risques d'abus de pouvoir et de corruption (beaucoup plus difficile à cacher);
    - § la combinaison de ces deux éléments favorise une utilisation plus judicieuse des ressources disponibles et, très souvent, une réduction des coûts.
- **Permettre un meilleur développement local**, car
    - § la décentralisation élimine ou réduit bien des obstacles à l'initiative personnelle et favorise des approches originales;
    - § les projets de développement économique et social mobilisent plus facilement les ressources locales si ce sont des instances et acteurs locaux qui décident et réalisent ces projets;
    - § les autorités peuvent impliquer et responsabiliser les bénéficiaires futurs d'un projet qui deviendra peu à peu "le leur".
- **Renforcer la démocratie et promouvoir la protection des libertés**

Si par "démocratie" on entend la possibilité d'agir sur les décisions qui influencent l'existence de chacun et les libertés individuelles, la décentralisation apparaît comme une contribution essentielle. Comme le dit le document de la DDC sur la Décentralisation, "l'idée que l'autogestion locale soit propice à la démocratie et aux libertés est profondément enracinée dans quantité de pays décentralisés. Le droit du citoyen de participer aux processus de décision à l'échelle locale constitue un facteur de démocratie authentique".

Il ajoute que "la répartition du pouvoir à différents niveaux et la concurrence entre ces niveaux favorise la mise en place d'un système de contrôles réciproques qui peut tenir le gouvernement central en échec si celui-ci tente d'outrepasser ses pouvoirs ou d'en abuser". De plus, la décentralisation permet certaines formes de partage du pouvoir qui sont également un facteur de stabilité.

- **Améliorer la protection des minorités,** car "la décentralisation offre la possibilité de combiner les idéaux démocratiques à des garanties en faveur des minorités".

D'où pour la DDC, une bonne gestion des affaires publiques fait partie des conditions de base d'un développement. Dans cette perspective, elle attend des projets de décentralisation:

- La promotion ciblée d'une bonne gestion des affaires publiques, donc une contribution au renforcement des processus démocratiques;
- Des prestations adaptées aux conditions locales et répondant aux besoins de larges couches de population;

- Une affectation parcimonieuse et judicieuse des ressources limitées dont on dis pose;
- La possibilité de rendre les pays partenaires et leurs populations démunies plus aptes à affronter les défis de la mondialisation"

Le document "Décentralisation", de la DDC ajoute :

"Les programmes de décentralisation réussissent si les gouvernements des pays partenaires donnent clairement la preuve qu'ils entendent procéder à une redistribution du pouvoir politique et administratif. Ils se fondent sur la responsabilisation à tous les niveaux des politiciens et des fonctionnaires, tenus ainsi de répondre personnellement et publiquement de leurs actes".

Ainsi, sur la base des expériences vécues, de diverses études scientifiques et de l'analyse de la situation qui prévalait au Rwanda surtout en matière de promotion de la bonne gouvernance en général et de la mise en œuvre du processus de décentralisation, dans la préparation de ses programmes d'appui à la décentralisation au Rwanda, la DDC (à travers ses agences d'exécution) a du s'inspirer de quelques-unes des conditions de réussite d'un processus de décentralisation[12] déjà identifiées, à savoir:

1. **Existence assurée**. Un gouvernement local doit pouvoir disposer d'une certaine sécurité : il ne pourra être destitué que pour des raisons précises – et définies à l'avance – selon une procédure exigeante.
2. **Ressources et autonomie**. Le succès dépend grandement des ressources effectivement disponibles et de la possibilité de les utiliser de façon autonome. Cela implique pour les autorités locales :
   - § le droit de percevoir des taxes et impôts locaux et d'obtenir du gouvernement central les fonds nécessaires pour accomplir les tâches déléguées ou dévolues;
   - § le droit de dépenser cet argent sans trop de contrôles préalables;
   - § le droit de prendre des décisions relatives aux activités locales (projets / plans de développement) sans intervention intempestive de l'administration centrale;
   - § une dotation suffisante en personnel qualifié et le droit, pour les autorités locales, d'engager et de licencier ce personnel;
   - § l'assistance technique et les conseils des services centraux.
3. **Responsabilité et transparence**. Deux dimensions fondamentales sont considérées:
   - § les autorités locales sont responsables devant le peuple; celui-ci peut élire les personnes qui le dirigent et évaluer leurs prestations au moment des nouvelles élections. Le corollaire de ce point est l'obligation de transparence et d'accès aux informations (budgets, comptes, plans, etc). L'assurance que tout responsable ayant violé la loi sera puni fait partie intégrante de cette responsabilité.
   - § les autorités locales sont également responsables devant les échelons supérieurs, selon des règles prédéterminées basées sur la transparence mutuelle, la sécurité, une connaissance des critères utilisés, y compris en matière financière. Les autorités centrales doivent exercer un contrôle détaillé, mais a posteriori, débouchant, le cas échéant, sur des sanctions.

12 Document de projet "Paix et décentralisation dans la Province de Kibuye, Rwanda" 22.02.2003 – 31.12.2004, Janvier, 2004, TULUM SA

4. **Volonté politique et partenariat.** La réussite des processus de décentralisation dépend d'une part d'une perception claire des rôles, fonctions et responsabilités des autorités locales par elles-mêmes, et d'autre part d'une volonté politique affirmée de mise en œuvre par les autorités centrales.

   Cela implique un partenariat dense et solide entre les différents niveaux, marqué par une attitude constructive favorisant les initiatives locales et les consultations préalables de la part des autorités régionales et centrales; à ce climat positif doit répondre une dynamique responsable et autonome des autorités locales ainsi que des groupes d'intérêt et de la population.

   L'existence de plate-forme de dialogue et de concertation entre ces différents niveaux joue un rôle essentiel de même que la possibilité pour les élus locaux et leurs responsables de se regrouper en associations spécifiques susceptibles de devenir de véritables interlocuteurs du gouvernement central.

Tant la DDC que différentes autres agences bi- et multinationales ayant soutenu et soutiennent des programmes de décentralisation dans de nombreux contextes.

Quelques enseignements ont été retirés de ces expériences :

- Importance stratégique d'une formation intensive destinée aux autorités locales et à leurs employés, les bailleurs doivent appuyer techniquement et financièrement cet effort;
- Rôle décisif des associations d'élus locaux pour la réussite de processus de décentralisation et pour contrecarrer les inévitables résistances du niveau central à transférer certains pouvoirs et responsabilités. Les bailleurs peuvent favoriser l'émergence de telles associations et leur apporter un certain soutien;
- Apport financier additionnel, ou complément de budgets souvent insuffisants, dans la phase de transition.
- Insister également sur diverses dimensions du complexe processus de décentralisation, généralement insuffisamment prises en compte, dont:
  - la recherche;
  - le partage des connaissances et la mise à disposition des expériences, méthodes et outils;
  - certaines formes de conseil politique;
  - un accompagnement professionnel et une assistance pratique;
  - la création d'instruments financiers appropriés susceptibles de satisfaire des demandes issues du terrain, souvent caractérisées par des besoins financiers très modestes, et de s'adapter à une gestion décentralisée. De tels "Fonds de développement local" - ou d'investissement à la demande -, constituent un puissant levier pour donner à la décentralisation un caractère utile et concret pour les populations concernées.

Pour répondre à toutes ces différentes interrogations la DDC devait développer des programmes/projets devant contribuer au renforcement des capacités de ces districts au processus de planification-budgétisation participative, au système de rapportage (des activités et de l'exécution du budget) pour renforcer la transparence et la culture de rendre compte, au capacités de maîtrise d'ouvrage ainsi qu'à l'appui financière des deux districts à travers le CDF.

Il a, pour ce faire, mis à profit son modèle d'intervention intégré et a fait participer les différents partenaires surtout au niveau local, que ce soit dans le processus de planification-budgétisation, de mise en œuvre et de suivi et évaluation et même dans le développement et l'utilisation des outils de gestion permettant d'instaurer et renforcer la

culture de transparence au niveau local, tout en se basant sur des méthodes qui ont déjà fait leurs preuves.

A titre d'exemple, sa deuxième phase d'intervention (2007-2010) en préparation, pour contribuer à la résolution des problèmes identifiés par les différents partenaires surtout locaux, il va surtout se focaliser sur trois principaux thèmes à savoir: (i) les études stratégiques [l'urbanisme et pôle de développement pour dégorger l'agriculture afin de contribuer à la réduction de la pauvreté et au développement économique, l'hydraulique, l'ICT, la gestion forestière, la gestion des déchets, etc.] au niveau des gouvernements locaux couverts, (ii) l'analyse des bonnes pratiques dans la gestion budgétaire et (iii) le "cash for work" ciblé sur la durabilité et sur les métiers avec des activités durables (pépinières, terrassement radicales, aménagement et entretient des pistes, etc.).

Eu égard à ce qui vient d'être susdit, les projets/programmes de la coopération Suisse d'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda, étaient bien appropriés pour répondre aux problèmes de renforcement de la gouvernance locale et de l'amélioration des conditions de vie des citoyens dans les districts de Karongi et de Rutsiro de la Province de l'Ouest, en particulier et au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda, en général.

7.1.3. Au niveau du contexte politique et institutionnel du Rwanda

Les programmes d'appui à la décentralisation de la DDC au Rwanda ont été élaborés sur base des stratégies globales des Objectifs de Développement du Millénaire, de la Vision du Rwanda à l'horizon 2020, des Stratégies de Réduction de la Pauvreté contenues dans son PRSP, des politiques de promotion de la Bonne Gouvernance ainsi que de la politique de Décentralisation et sa Stratégie de mise en œuvre et même de la politique et du plan stratégique du secteur concerné.

7.2. Efficacité

7.2.1. Au niveau du bureau de coordination de la DDC à Kigali (BUCO)

Le personnel du bureau de coordination de la DDC à Kigali est composé de:

- Au niveau technico-opérationnel par: 1 Directeur, 1 Directeur Adjoint et chargé des programmes du domaine de la Santé, 1 Chargée des programmes de gouvernance, 2 Experts Nationaux (1 chargé des aspect du secteur santé et l'autre chargé du domaine de la décentralisation) et 1 Secrétaire de direction.
- Pour des aspects administratifs par: 1 chef de l'administration et des finances, 1 assistant administratif, 1 archiviste, 1 logisticien, 2 chauffeurs, 2 nettoyeurs et des gardiens.

L'analyse de la composition du personnel (surtout les chargés des programmes) montre que son effectif n'est pas suffisant, pour pouvoir assumer leurs responsabilités, tel qu'elles sont répertoriées au point 7.1.1., (notamment la responsabilité relative à la participation efficace et effective dans différents fora du niveau régional, national, provincial et local relatifs à la promotion de la bonne gouvernance et/ou à la mise en œuvre du processus de décentralisation tel que le cluster de la décentralisation, les séminaires et réunions de planification et autres pour contribuer au dialogue politique régional, national et même provincial dans le cadre de la promotion de la bonne gouvernance, en général et de la mise en œuvre du processus de décentralisation en particulier).

Toutefois, on ne passerait pas sous silence le climat de bonne collaboration et de complémentarité entre le personnel du BUCO et celui des agences d'exécution des pro-

grammes sur terrain et entre les structures de mise en œuvre des programmes au niveau du terrain ainsi que la flexibilité aussi bien des procédures que dans le partenariat avec les autres intervenants dans le domaine qui facilité l'atteinte de ses objectifs.

7.2.2. Au niveau des projets/programmes de la DDC dans l'appui à la décentralisation au Rwanda

Pour s'assurer de l'efficacité de ses interventions, les programmes sous financement de la DDC (pendant sa première phase) ont aider ses partenaires locaux à mener des analyses institutionnelles du système en place pour déceler les éventuels goulots d'étranglement dans le système de communication entre les différents acteurs ainsi que celui du suivi et évaluation de la mise en œuvre des actions programmées.

En outre, les actions de la DDC dans les deux districts susmentionnés, se sont beaucoup focalisées sur les interventions liées au renforcement de la culture de transparence et celle de rendre compte à qui de droits à travers l'élaboration des rapports réguliers.

C'est dans ce contexte que, par exemple, un processus d'autoévaluation de la mise en œuvre du Plan d'Action Annuel 2004 dans les six anciens Districts et Ville de l'ancienne Province de Kibuye[13] a été organisé par le PED en mi 2004.

De même, le PSP, partant du système d'information sanitaire en place et de la rigueur exigée par le métier, il a proposé des outils complémentaires et a entrepris des activités de renforcement des capacités de ses partenaires pour pouvoir arriver à mieux mesurer l'impact des activités menées sur le niveau de santé de la population des districts de Karongi et Rustiro.

Toutefois il faudrait que la phase suivante des interventions de la DDC dans le domaine en question, puisse mettre en place, en collaboration avec ses différents partenaires à différents niveau administratifs, une liste d'indicateurs d'impact objectivement vérifiables pouvant permettre de mesurer les effets/impacts du programme (sur l'évolution de la vie socio-économique de la population bénéficiaire et sur l'amélioration des capacités de maîtrise d'ouvrages des structures de gestion au niveau local) dans ses différents volets d'intervention. Il faudra, en plus, partir d'une situation de départ, qu'il faudra également évaluer avant le début de la phase en question, et ceci en concordance avec les indicateurs du niveau national voir même ceux disponible au niveau international.

7.2.3. Au niveau du contexte politique et institutionnel du Rwanda

A ce niveau, une analyse des modalités, effets et conséquences de la nouvelle réforme de la décentralisation sur les autorités locales, la population et le programme a été menée par les techniciens du programme et les autorités locales sous forme de fiches techniques en Juillet 2006[14].

Il faudrait, toutefois, que ce genre d'analyse puisse être menée régulièrement (au moins une fois l'année) pour mesurer le pas franchis par le programme et les districts appuyés dans la mise en œuvre des politiques et stratégies sectorielles.

13 Synthèse de l'autoévaluation de la mise en œuvre des PAA 2004 dans les six Districts et Ville de la Province de Kibuye, KIBUYE, Juillet 2004

14 Modalités, effets et conséquences de la nouvelle réforme de la décentralisation sur les autorités locales, la population et le PED, Karongi, juillet 2006, TULLUM SA

7.3. Durabilité

7.3.1. Au niveau du bureau de coordination de la DDC à Kigali (BUCO)

Pour s'assurer de la durabilité de ses interventions, la DDC devrait essayer de revoir la situation du personnel du BUCO, tel que décrite au point 7.2.1., de façon à lui permettre de faire profiter régulièrement à ses différents partenaires à différents niveaux administratifs, de bonnes pratiques du terrain issues des son expérience d'intervention de proximité. Ceci permettra également aux programmes de la DDC d'être régulièrement informée des changements survenus au niveau des politiques et normes nationales/sectorielles et ainsi pouvoir les intégrer dans ses interventions, surtout que le processus de décentralisation au Rwanda est basé sur l'approche d'apprentissage par action (learning by doing) et connaît donc beaucoup de changement au courant de sa mise en œuvre.

Ainsi, il faudrait penser à renforcer des alliances et relations avec les autres acteurs, surtout ceux du niveau national, et donc pouvoir travailler et exister avec les autres pour plus de complémentarité et de synergies dans les interventions et également pouvoir servir de leçon et de bonnes pratiques aux autres intervenant dans le domaine.

7.3.2. Au niveau des projets/programmes de la DDC dans l'appui à la décentralisation au Rwanda

Pour plus de durabilité la plupart des interventions de la DDC se font à travers le système et les structures existantes et non de façon verticale. Ceci lui permet donc de s'assurer de la participation/responsabilisation/appropriation des différents acteurs locaux qui devront garantir la pérennité des acquis. C'est pour cette raison que l'élaboration des ses différents programmes a privilégié la participation et l'implication des différents partenaires surtout au niveau local, aussi bien dans le processus de planification-budgétisation, de mise en œuvre et de suivi et évaluation et même dans le développement et l'utilisation des outils de gestion.

Néanmoins, il est à remarquer que ses interventions sont beaucoup plus focalisées sur les activités relatives à la participation, mobilisation, élections, renforcement des capacités des autorités locaux et quelques activités relatives aux transferts financiers et recettes locales qui sont des fonctions d'input, avec peu ou pas d'activités sur les systèmes de régulation et quelques activités relatives à la prestation des services et à la gestion financière qui, pourtant, sont des fonctions d'output pouvant assurer la durabilité institutionnelle des Gouvernements Locaux.

Il faudrait donc que dans la phase en préparation on puisse mettre en place une stratégie claire de retrait progressif du personnel technique du projet en faveur du renforcement des capacités institutionnelles locales et parvenir à montrer comment passer progressivement d'un "appui par projet" à l'"appui programme (appui budgétaire)" tout en dissociant les aspects holistiques de renforcement des capacités des structures locaux à l'appui financier au PTBA des districts appuyés.

Pour ce faire, le niveau et le volume de financement ainsi que la période de programmation de cette phase devraient être actualisés pour aider les districts à atteindre leurs objectifs. Ceci demande que la DDC dans ses futures interventions puisse prévoir une programmation à horizon suffisamment clair et assez longue pour lui permettre une vision à long terme (5 ans ou plus).

Evidemment, tout ceci nécessite que lors des négociations on puisse également penser à prévoir des ouvertures, des disponibilités et des flexibilités des pays partenaires à pouvoir accueillir facilement les expériences dynamiques et positives, tout en adoptant

des approches holistiques et systématiques avec respect d'un certain nombre d'engagement de la part des deux parties (négociations faites soigneusement de sorte que les rôles et responsabilités de chaque partie soient bien clarifiés et respectés).

7.2.3. Au niveau du contexte politique et institutionnel du Rwanda

Dans la prochaine phase du programme, il faudra développer un système efficace et effectif de suivi et évaluation pouvant permettre aux deux districts appuyés de mesurer l'impact du programme dans la mise en œuvre des stratégies globales des Objectifs de Développement du Millénaire, de la Vision du Rwanda à l'horizon 2020, des Stratégies de Réduction de la Pauvreté, des politiques de promotion de la Bonne Gouvernance, de la politique de Décentralisation et sa Stratégie de mise en œuvre et même de la politique et du plan stratégique du secteur santé (en ce qui concerne le PSP).

8. Analyse des forces, faiblesse et avantages comparatifes de l'approche d'intervention de la DDC dans l'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda

8.1. Forces de la DDC dans l'appui à la décentralisation

- Partenaire du Rwanda depuis bien longtemps;
- Bonne connaissance et grande expérience du processus de décentralisation;
- Coordination géographique entre ses programmes (programme Santé et programme Paix et Décentralisation);
- Très bonne collaboration entre le BUCO/Kigali et les agences d'exécution;
- Forte pertinence des projets/programmes individuels par rapport aux besoins locales;
- Indépendance et flexibilités par rapport aux autres intervenants dans le domaine ou dans la zone (prédisposition à prendre des risques pour de nouvelles initiatives même là où les autres ont hésité comme son appui au CDF);
- Bonne volonté de collaboration avec les autres bailleurs et autres agences (participation active dans le cluster décentralisation, les joint actions et les comités de pilotages);
- Procédures administratives et financières suffisamment souples et flexibles;
- Approche d'intervention de proximité;
- Prédisposition à l'appui aux groupes les plus vulnérables; etc.

8.2. Faiblesses de la DDC dans l'appui à la décentralisation

- Faibles relations avec le niveau national (par exemple les ministères techniques et le RALGA);
- Une approche de gouvernance locale plus focalisée sur les activités de participation, mobilisation, élections, renforcement des capacités des autorités locaux, gestion financière et exécution que sur les activités relatives aux systèmes de régulation et de prestation des services, pourtant susceptibles d'assurer la durabilité institutionnelle des Gouvernements Locaux;
- Programmation sur de courtes périodes;
- Manque de stratégies de retrait progressif (phasing-out stapes);
- Financement faible par rapport aux autres intervenants du domaine et aux besoins des districts.

8.3. Avantages comparatives de l'approche d'intervention de la DDC dans l'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda

En plus de son expérience et connaissance dans la décentralisation du pouvoir de prise de décisions dans tous les domaines de développement de la vie socioéconomique du citoyen, de son indépendance historique face aux différents bailleurs de fonds et de la flexibilité de ses procédures, la Coopération Suisse a sur son compte un important avantage comparatif par rapport aux autres bailleurs de fonds, qui est l'approche d'intervention de proximité qu'on ne trouve pas facilement chez les aux autres intervenant dans la décentralisation.

En effet, l'approche des programmes de la DDC d'être plus proche des populations cibles tout en s'intéressant aux politiques normatifs et aux aspects tactiques (participation aux débats nationaux, provinciaux et ceux des districts) lui procure un avantage comparatif d'être plus opérationnel et collé à la structure et donc pouvoir contribuer humblement et efficacement à la résolution des réels problèmes de cette population cible, sans nécessairement viser la grande visibilité.

Toutefois, pour s'assurer de l'intégration de ses interventions dans les stratégies nationales, il faudra qu'il puisse entretenir et renforcer ses relations avec le niveau national et ainsi contribuer à l'amélioration des liens, surtout sectoriels, entre le niveau central et le niveau local, qui sont pour le moment très faibles.

9. Collaboration entre la DDC et ses autres partenaires dans la gestion de l'aide

Comme mentionné ci haut la collaboration entre la DDC et ses autres partenaires dans l'appui au processus de décentralisation au Rwanda est suffisamment forte au niveau local (avec les autorités administratives et les membres des conseils) et au niveau régional (avec les autorités de la province). Elle est toutefois très faible avec l'Association des Gouvernements Locaux (RALGA) et très modérée avec les agences du Gouvernement Central.

Même si on rencontre beaucoup de groupes communautaires au Rwanda, la DDC collabore avec très peu d'entre eux qui sont actifs [comme l'IRDP (Institut de Recherche et de Dialogue pour la Paix), Haguruka (Association pour la Défence des droits de la femme et de l'enfant), …], et sont cela qui ont reçus son appui.

Quant aux ONG, dont celles d'origine Suisse, la collaboration avec la DDC/Bureau de Kigali est très faible car on n'en trouve pas beaucoup qui sont actives dans le domaine de la décentralisation. Ainsi la DDC est seulement en étroite collaboration avec son agence d'exécution du programme de décentralisation, TULLUM, qui travail avec une ONG locale, l'ACDB, ayant reçu le mandat d'assurer l'assistance technique aux districts couverts par les interventions de la DDC dans le cadre de son programme Paix et Décentralisation.

Par contre la collaboration entre la DDC et les autres bailleurs bilatéraux ou multilatéraux est plus ou moins forte car le BUCO/Kigali est membre du cluster décentralisation et participe dans d'autres groupes de travail sur le secteur de la décentralisation. Ces groupes de travail qui deviennent de plus en plus très actifs pourront permettre d'assurer une meilleure harmonisation et coordination des interventions et des activités du domaine de la décentralisation.

Egalement des rencontres avec le Ministère en charge de la décentralisation (le MINAlOC) ou avec les autres partenaires de développement sont souvent organisées chaque

fois que de besoin. A cela s'ajoutent des rencontres mensuelles informelles des bailleurs de fonds impliqués dans la gouvernance qui sont organisées sous forme de dîner.

De façon spécifique la DDC est en contact régulier avec le MINALOC (Ministère en charge de la gouvernance locale) dans le cadre du cluster de décentralisation et dans les groupes de travail sectoriels et leurs relations sont surtout basées sur les discutions et échanges sur les aspects stratégiques, la vision du gouvernement et même sur des questions relatives aux expériences du terrain qui ont besoin d'être partagées. La DDC a, par ailleurs des relations très étroites avec les gouvernements locaux dans les districts couverts, où les programmes de la DDC appuient les deux districts et la province dans leurs activités quotidiennes leurs permettant de remplir leurs responsabilités.

Même si la DDC n'a pas de relations spécifiques avec l'Association des Gouvernements Locaux (RALGA), elle essai de travailler étroitement avec les autres agences gouvernementales impliquées dans la réforme de la gouvernance, comme le RIAM (Rwanda Institute of Administration and Management), qui est par exemple responsable des activités de renforcement des capacités du personnel administratif et des nouveaux élus au niveau des districts partenaire de la DDC et avec le CDF qui est l'institution mise en place par le Gouvernement du Rwanda pour canaliser les fonds de développement des districts.

10. Relation entre le BUCCO/Kigali et le bureau de la DDC à Berne

Il est à remarquer que pendant les 12 mois passés il y a eu seulement deux contacts entre le BUCO/Kigali et le département thématique de la DDC à Berne sur les problèmes relatifs à l'appui au processus de décentralisation. Il n'y a eu, par contre, aucune visite venant de Berne sur ces aspects de décentralisation et seulement un déplacement d'un membre du BUCO/Kigali a été effectué exclusivement pour des aspects de la décentralisation.

Toutefois le département thématique de la DDC à Berne a créé un important réseau entre ses différents acteurs travaillant sur le thème de la décentralisation. Ceci a permis d'avoir une bonne compréhension des différentes approches déjà développées dans l'appui au processus de décentralisation. L'atelier sur la décentralisation et la participation locale qui a été organisé, a également était une importante opportunité d'échanger des expériences du terrain et un bon exercice ayant permis l'amélioration des stratégies et de la qualité de l'appui de la DDC au processus de décentralisation.

Il y a donc besoin de suffisamment de contact et de collaboration entre le département thématique de la DDC à Berne en charge de la décentralisation et le BUCO/Kigali (pour le cas du Rwanda ils n'ont été impliqués que seulement dans la première phase quand le programme était en élaboration), pour qu'il puisse avoir une bonne connaissance de la réalité et du contexte du terrain et pouvoir les exploiter dans ses interventions et ne pas se fier aux seuls évaluations externes.

11. Recommandations générales

1. Renforcer là où la DDC a des avantages comparatifs dans le domaine de la décentralisation [comme par exemple son approche d'intervention de proximité qui lui permet d'être plus proche des populations cibles tout en s'intéressant aux politiques normatifs et aux aspects tactiques (participation aux débats nationaux, provinciaux

et ceux des districts)] quitte à servir de leçon et de bonnes pratiques aux autres intervenants dans le domaine;

2. En même temps, savoir faire des alliances en renforçant ses relations avec les autres intervenants et pouvoir travailler et exister avec les autres à tous les niveaux administratifs. Par exemple pour s'assurer de l'intégration des interventions dans les stratégies nationales, il faudra entretenir et renforcer ses relations avec le niveau national et ainsi contribuer à l'amélioration des liens, entre le niveau central (les ministères techniques, la RALGA, le CDF, etc.) et le niveau local qui sont encore faibles;
3. Actualiser le niveau et le volume de son financement en fonction du contexte local, national et international pour pouvoir beaucoup plus intéresser ceux avec qui elle travail;
4. Passer progressivement d'un appui par projet à l'appui programme (appui budgétaire) tout en dissociant les aspects de renforcement des capacités à l'appui financier;
5. Prévoir des perspectives de retrait progressif avec des indicateurs SMART permettant d'atteindre une durabilité institutionnelle des Gouvernements Locaux.
6. Prévoir une programmation à horizon suffisamment clair et assez longue pour permettre une vision à long terme (5 ans ou plus) et développer un système efficace et effectif de suivi et évaluation pouvant mesurer l'impact de ses programmes dans la mise en œuvre des stratégies et orientations nationales;
7. Prévoir, lors des futures négociations, des ouvertures, des disponibilités et des flexibilités du pays partenaire à pouvoir accueillir facilement les expériences dynamiques et positives, tout en adoptant des approches holistiques et systématiques avec respect d'un certain nombre d'engagement de la part des deux parties (négociations faites soigneusement de sorte que les rôles et responsabilités de chaque partie soient bien clarifiés et respectés).

12. Prise de position de la DDC Rwanda et DDC Berne

Rwanda

Commentaires généraux

- La qualité inégale de la rédaction en français rend parfois la compréhension du document difficile.
- L'analyse du processus de décentralisation rwandais et de son contexte social et politique manque singulièrement de recul critique et d'indépendance. Ceci rend difficile l'analyse de la pertinence des appuis développés par la DDC.

Conclusions générales

- *Programmation sur de courtes périodes et financement faible*: l'étude ne mentionne pas que le programme Rwanda est un programme spécial, par définition de courte durée et d'un budget limité. Mais malgré cela la DDC s'engage pour trois ans comme dans des programmes prioritaires. Les années 2005 et 2006 sont des exceptions, liées à la prise de décision sur la poursuite de la coopération avec le Rwanda (2005) et à la réforme territoriale engagée par les autorités rwandaises (2006) qui a fait disparaître nos partenaires habituels.

- Par ailleurs la DDC n'est pas un bailleur de fonds au sens propre du terme, l'appui financier à la décentralisation ne fait du sens que considéré dans une perspective d'alimentation de processus de gouvernance locale permettant l'apprentissage et le renforcement de capacités. Au Rwanda les gros bailleurs comme DFID et l'UE ont mis de gros moyens financiers à la disposition du Common Development Fund

(CDF) pour le financement des investissements des districts, sommes que le CDF a été et reste incapable de décaisser.

§ Nous ne comprenons pas la phrase: «les activités relatives aux systèmes de régulation et de prestation des services susceptibles d'assurer la durabilité institutionnelle des Gouvernements Locaux».

Recommandations

§ *Approche de proximité, liens avec les autres intervenants, effets sur le système* : la DDC peut effectivement mieux faire dans ce domaine mais avoir de l'influence sur les systèmes nationaux est particulièrement difficile au Rwanda. Du fait de la difficulté à mener un dialogue politique sectoriel efficace avec les autorités rwandaises, notamment le Minaloc en charge de la décentralisation qui a vu ses capacités fortement réduites suite à la réforme administrative. Du fait aussi de la difficulté à créer des alliances durables et cohérentes avec d'autres bailleurs, chaque bailleur ayant des «hidden agenda» et une gestion politique des dossiers techniques.

§ *Passer de l'appui projet à l'appui programme*: dans le domaine de la décentralisation il faut être prudent avec la mise en place d'approches programme et s'assurer que les collectivités locales gardent leur autonomie et restent capables de déterminer leurs besoins d'appui. Une approche programme peut avoir pour effet de bloquer l'autonomisation des collectivités territoriales et leur érection en contre-pouvoirs de l'état central. Dans le contexte très autoritaire du Rwanda il existe un risque très important de «recentralisation de la décentralisation» avec une telle approche.

§ *Appuis budgétaires*: la DDC a été pionnier dans l'appui à la mise en place d'un fonds national d'investissement des districts, le CDF, qui est une modalité d'appuis budgétaire. Mais elle a butté sur le manque évident de volonté politique du gouvernement rwandais à donner les moyens nécessaires au CDF pour réellement fonctionner. Une nouvelle tentative d'appui au CDF est en cours de construction avec le lead de la coopération canadienne. Pour ce qui est de l'appui technique et comme relevé dans l'étude, la fine connaissance du terrain et des enjeux de développement est une force de la DDC qui devrait mieux l'utiliser dans son dialogue sectoriel national.

§ *Phasing out strategy:* La phase d'appui 2007—2009 en cours de préparation prévoit un désengagement progressif de l'accompagnement de proximité et une concentration sur la thématique de la formation, avec l'objectif de contribuer à la conception d'un système national pouvant faire l'objet d'un appui programme.

Annexes

Annexe 1: aperçue du processus de Décentralisation au Rwanda

La politique de décentralisation au Rwanda[15], qui repose sur la loi fondamentale du pays et sur ses dispositions politiques et administratives stipulant que tout pouvoir émane du peuple et que la souveraineté nationale appartient au peuple rwandais, a été élaborée à la suite des consultations susmentionnées (1996-1999) et en mai 2000, le document de politique et ses stratégies de mise en oeuvre ont été adoptées par le Conseil des Ministres du Rwanda.

1. Objectif da la Décentralisation au Rwanda

L'objectif global de la décentralisation au Rwanda est d'assurer l'habilitation politique, économique, sociale, administrative et technique de la population locale à lutter contre la pauvreté en participant pleinement dans la planification et dans la gestion de son processus de développement. Les objectifs stratégiques de cette politique sont les suivants:

1. Responsabiliser et mobiliser les populations en vue de les amener à participer dans l'initiation, la préparation, l'exécution et au suivi et surveillance des décisions et des plans qui les concernent; en tenant compte des besoins locaux, des priorités, des capacités et des ressources; en transférant le pouvoir, l'autorité et les ressources du gouvernement central à l'administration décentralisée et aux niveaux inférieurs;
2. Renforcer la responsabilisation et la transparence au Rwanda en rendant les dirigeants locaux directement responsables devant les communautés qu'ils servent et en établissant un lien clair entre les taxes payés par la population et les services financés par ces taxes ;
3. Renforcer la sensibilité et la capacité d'intervention de l'administration publique aux besoins de l'environnement local en plaçant la planification, le financement, la gestion et le contrôle des services au point où les services sont rendus, en permettant aux dirigeants locaux de développer les structures organisationnelles et les capacités qui prennent en considération l'environnement locale et les besoins locaux;
4. Développer une planification économique durable et une capacité de gestion aux niveaux locaux qui serviront comme moteur pour la planification, la mobilisation et l'exécution du développement politique et socio-économique pour la réduction de la pauvreté ;
5. Renforcer l'efficacité, l'efficience et la compétence dans la planification, le suivi et la prestation des services publics en réduisant la charge qui pèse sur les fonctionnaires de l'administration centrale qui sont loin du lieu où les besoins sont sentis et où les services sont rendus.

Tout programme d'appui à la mise en oeuvre de la politique de décentralisation doit être élaboré non seulement dans le respect des cinq objectifs stratégiques, mais également en tenant compte des principes à respecter ainsi que des valeurs qu'elle cherche à promouvoir.

2. Principes à respecter dans la mise en œuvre de la décentralisation

Eu égard le chemin politico-administratif et socio-économique parcouru par le Rwanda tout le long de son histoire, les principes suivants doivent être respecter dans la mise en œuvre de sa politique de décentralisation:

1. Assurer l'Unité nationale, l'indivisibilité et le développement équilibré;
2. Assurer l'autonomie et l'identité locales, les intérêts locaux et la diversité;
3. Séparer le travail des autorités politiques et celui des autorités administratives et techniques;
4. Harmoniser les responsabilités transférées avec le transfert des ressources financières, humaines et matérielles nécessaires.

3. Valeurs à promouvoir dans la mise en œuvre de la décentralisation

La décentralisation au Rwanda doit être une politique à haute valeur que le gouvernement considère comme:

1. Un instrument du renforcement des capacités de la population;
2. Une plateforme de démocratisation durable;
3. Une structure de mobilisation pour le développement économique;
4. Un outil de réconciliation, d'intégration sociale et du bien-être de la population et
5. Un moteur pour la promotion de la culture de la bonne gouvernance politique, économique, civique et administrative.

15 La Politique National de la Décentralisation adoptée par le Conseil du Gouvernement du Rwanda en mai 2000.

4. Différentes phases prévues dans la mise en œuvre de la Décentralisation

Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de la politique de décentralisation au Rwanda trois phases successives avaient été prévues comme suit[16]:

4.1. Première Phase : 2000—2003

Faisant partie de la stratégie pour la mise en œuvre de la politique de décentralisation, le Programme de Mise en œuvre de la Décentralisation (PMD) de trois ans a été réalisé depuis 2001. Cette phase devait se focaliser sur la mise en place et le renforcement institutionnel des structures de coordination à travers les outils suivants:

1. Cadre légal et institutionnel pour la mise en œuvre de la décentralisation à travers l'établissement de structures institutionnelles de coordination et la mise sur pieds du cadre juridique pour la mise en route de la décentralisation ;
2. Réforme des structures administratives ;
3. Démocratisation à travers les élections surtout locales;
4. Renforcement et développement des capacités humaines et institutionnelles de tous les acteurs par une amélioration des capacités des différents acteurs à travers la formation continue, la fourniture de moyens logistiques, et l'émancipation de la population à travers l'éducation civique;
5. Transfert des responsabilités et des ressources fiscales et financières pour le renforcement des structures décentralisées pour qu'elles puissent efficacement mettre en œuvre des programmes relatifs aux services à rendre aux communautés.

4.2. Deuxième Phase : 2004—2008

Cette phase qui devra se consacrer à la mobilisation des ressources et au renforcement des capacités afin de transformer les attentes en réalités, mettra l'emphase sur les actions suivantes:

1. Augmentation du niveau de participation des citoyens dans le processus de prise de décision aussi bien dans la planification que dans la mise en œuvre des programmes de développement;
2. Renforcement des structures des Gouvernements Locaux et leur lien fonctionnel avec le Gouvernement Central pour augmenter leur capacité de gestion et de mobilisation des ressources;
3. Mise en place d'un système approprié des procédures et structures permettant la coordination, le suivi et l'évaluation afin de s'assurer de la qualité des services rendus à la communauté;
4. Renforcement de la coordination des interventions des différents acteurs au niveau politique et opérationnel pour créer une synergie et harmonie nécessaire dans l'élaboration, le financement et la mise en œuvre des programmes/projets. Ceci dans une perspective de passer progressivement de l'approche d'appui aux projets disparates, à l'approche programme basée sur l'appui budgétaire;
5. Renforcement de la prise en compte des thèmes transversaux tels que le genre, l'environnement, le VIH/SIDA et les Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC ou ICT : Information and Communication Technology) dans tous les programmes de développement.

4.3. Phase trois : 2009—2015

Cette phase envisagera la continuité du suivi de la mise en œuvre du processus de décentralisation, et au besoin procédera au réajustement des politiques et cadres institutionnels conformément aux capacités qui auront été développées au niveau des entités décentralisées. Les détailles des actions à mener dans cette phase seront spécifiés par les résultats des évaluations de la seconde phase.

5. Progrès réalisés

De juin 2003 à septembre 2003, une évaluation externe[17] de la première phase du processus de décentralisation a été effectuée et a montré que de nombreuses actions ont été réalisées.

Egalement d'autres études, évaluations et analyses ont été faites comme cela avait été prévu aux programmes. Les plus significatives concernent le domaine du patrimoine et l'autonomie financière, le mode d'interaction entre les instances ainsi que l'étude concernant la synthèse des réalisations. De toutes ces évaluations, études et analyses du processus de décentralisation réalisées par des organisations d'origines diversifiées, il s'en est dégagé notamment ce qui suit en sept thèmes:

16 Il faut ici mentionner que la 2ème phase a subit pas mal de changement par rapport ce qui était prévu ce qui est à l'origine de beaucoup de perturbations dans la mise en œuvre des programmes/projets des partenaires de cette politique.

17 Cette évaluation de la première phase du Processus de décentralisation au Rwanda a été réalisé par l'organisation VNG International entre le 18 juin 2003 et le 20 septembre 2003 sur le compte du MINALOC et sous le financement de l'Ambassade du Royaume des Pays Bas au Rwanda qui était, alors, le lead donor du cluster de la décentralisation.

5.1. Le cadre juridique et politique pour la gouvernance et l'administration locale

Le domaine de la législation est l'une des réalisations vraiment remarquables de la première phase du processus de décentralisation au Rwanda. En plus de l'adoption de la politique de décentralisation et sa stratégie de mise en œuvre en mai 2000, de la politique de développement communautaire en 2001 et de la politique de décentralisation fiscale et financière en novembre 2001, des lois et règlements relatifs à l'établissement, au fonctionnement et au financement des unités administratives locales ont été établis[18]. Cet état juridique a permis aux unités administratives locales de fonctionner à travers les actions suivantes:

- Etablissement et fonctionnement des unités administratives;
- Financement des gouvernements locaux;
- Des lignes directrices opérationnelles (celles relatives à la gestion financière du gouvernement local, aux appels d'offres publics, et aux relations entre différentes unités décentralisées sont en place et fournissent, globalement, un code de conduite de gouvernance locale);
- La politique d'égalité entre hommes et femmes, et le cadre juridique, garantissent aux femmes un tiers des postes électifs aux conseils locaux;
- La législation électorale qui prévoie des postes aux niveaux de la cellule, du secteur et du district.

Toutefois, il existe encore quelques préoccupations à ce niveau qui mérite une attention particulière notamment: La consolidation et la diffusion de ces lois particulièrement au niveau local, le suivi adéquat de l'application pratique de ces lois afin de pouvoir identifier les goulets d'étranglement techniques ou administratifs et certains règlements ainsi que les lois administratives qui doivent prendre en considération les lois et règlements sectoriels qui peuvent ne pas s'accorder avec la décentralisation.

5.2. Le développement institutionnel et renforcement des capacités

La durabilité de la décentralisation dépendra du degré auquel les institutions mises en place sont appropriées, viables et bien financées. Les principales réalisations dans ce cadre sont notamment:

- Les conseils de gouvernements locaux qui ont été établis à travers des processus démocratiques et qui ont reçu un mandat juridique;
- La mise en place de l'Association Rwandaise des Autorités Locales [Rwandese Association of Local Authorities] (RALGA) qui doit jouer un rôle fondamental en tant que voix pour les gouvernements lo caux;
- La mise en place du Fond Commun de Développement (FCD ou CDF : Commun Development Fund)19 qui fournit un mécanisme de coordination pour le financement du développement de ces enti tés;
- La mise en place de l'Unité de gestion de la décentralisation (DMU/MINALOC) qui par après (en 2005) a été remplacée par le Secrétariat National pour la Mise en Œuvre de la décentralisation (NDIS: National Decentralisation Implementation Secretariat) pour assurer la coordination de l'information, l'har monisation des interventions dans ce domaine et le secrétariat du cluster de décentralisation regroupant tous les acteurs de la décentralisation au niveau national.

Néanmoins, certaines inquiétudes subsistent et on peut notamment citer:

- Les institutions au niveau local [c.-à-d. les Conseils de District, les Comités Exécutifs, les Comités de Développement Communautaires (CDC)] qui sont encore trop faibles pour gérer le processus de développement communautaire;
- Les structures techniques créées qui n'ont pas encore suffisamment de personnel compétent et efficaces;
- Le CDF qui est encore très centralisé et a des difficultés de pouvoir surveiller la formulation des projets, le financement des activités des communautés dans les districts ainsi que le suivi de l'utilisation des différents fonds alloués aux projets de développement des entités décentralisées;
- Le flux d'information entre les CD d'une part et les conseils de niveaux inférieurs (secteurs et cellules) qui est encore est faible dans de nombreux districts;
- La faible capacité de rétention du personnel dans les districts et les provinces qui pose un grave problème aux gouvernements locaux pour le développement des ressources humaines;

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18 Révision de la constitution nationale pour y intégrer les principes du processus de décentralisation au Rwanda (2000 et 2003); Les lois portant organisation et fonctionnement de la Commission Electorale Nationale (2000, 2002, 2003 et 2004); Les lois portant organisation des élections des autorités au niveau des instances de base (2000, 2002 et 2005); Les lois portant organisation et fonctionnement des provinces (2000, 2002 et 2004); Les lois portant création, organisation et fonctionnement des districts et villes au Rwanda (2001, 2002 et 2005); Les lois portant création, organisation et fonctionnement de la Ville de Kigali (2001, 2003 et 2005); La lois portant finances des district et villes et régissant leurs utilisation (2002 et 2003) et la loi portant création, organisation et fonctionnement du Fonds communs de développement des districts, villes et la Ville de Kigali (2002).

19 Le CDF qui a été mise en place en octobre 2002 a trois principaux objectifs à savoir: (i) Financer les projets de développement, répartir entre les Districts et la Ville de Kigali les fonds alloués à ces projets et assurer la péréquation entre ces entités; (ii)Assurer le suivi de l'utilisation des fonds alloués aux projets de développement des entités décentralisées et (iii) Servir d'intermédiaire entre ces entités et les bailleurs de fonds.

- Le faible niveau d'alphabétisation de la communauté, la participation limitée de la société civile et l'insuffisance des moyens surtout logistiques dans les gouvernements locaux qui limitent le processus ainsi que
- Certaines institutions de bonne gouvernance (par exemple l'Office national des Appels d'Offres (NTB), l'Office de l'Auditeur Général (OAG), le bureau du médiateur (Ombudsman) et l'Office Rwandais des Recettes (RRA)) qui ne sont pas suffisamment représentées au niveau local pour assurer la supervision et la fourniture des capacités requises par les institutions locales en ce qui concerne la transparence et la responsabilité financière.

5.3. Gouvernement local et planification communautaire

Dans le contexte de la réduction de la pauvreté, l'une des attentes du Gouvernement du Rwanda (GdR) quant à la décentralisation est la création d'un cadre qui promeut la planification à partir du niveau le plus bas, dans lequel les communautés décident quels sont leurs besoins de développement et leurs priorités, et participent activement à la conception et à la mise en œuvre de tels programmes de développement.

L'autre approche poursuivie pour la planification du développement local est la planification à moyen terme, où les priorités de développement sont continuellement révisées dans la mesure où les ressources deviennent disponibles ou les besoins de la population changent, conformément à la *Politique de Développement Communautaire* adoptée par le conseil du Gouvernement du Rwanda en Novembre 2001.

Des progrès significatifs ont été réalisés à cet égard où les districts ont été aidés par les interventions de différents bailleurs de fonds et ONG à préparer des Plans de Développement de District (PDD), les Cadre de Dépense à Moyen Terme (MTEF: Medium Term Expenditure Framework) et les Plans d'Action Annuels, à travers des processus de participation. Aux niveaux sectoriels et politiques (nationaux), les principales réalisations dans le sens d'une planification intégrée des communautés locales ont été également enregistrées.

Malgré ces progrès, la planification décentralisée est encore caractérisée par nombre de faiblesses qui touchent principalement les liens institutionnels faibles; une intégration sectorielle insuffisante; les capacités limitées des acteurs locaux; le manque d'informations et de données appropriées résultant surtout d'un manque d'indicateurs objectivement vérifiables définis conjointement entre le niveau central et le niveau local; cohérence limitée en ce qui concerne les priorités nationales et les planifications locales; financement peu fiable a tendance à frustrer les efforts des autorités et des communautés locales en matière de planification.

Ainsi pour palier à ces difficultés il faut non seulement un renforcement des capacités des Comités de Développement Communautaire (CDC) afin qu'ils puissent apprécier, posséder et gérer le processus de planification; mais aussi une garantie d'un financement adéquat, fiable et durable ainsi qu'une amélioration de l'intégration sectorielle afin d'encourager les techniciens et les ministères concernés à participer au processus. Ceci pourrait également relier les projets/programmes sectoriels et les ressources dans les ministères concernés aux PDD.

5.4. Décentralisation fiscale et gestion financière

On observe que la mise en œuvre de la décentralisation fiscale et financière a fait des progrès substantiels après l'adoption de la *Politique de Décentralisation Fiscale et Financière* par le conseil du Gouvernement du Rwanda en Novembre 2001, la promulgation de la loi N°17/2002 du 10/05/2002 portant finances des district et villes et régissant leurs utilisation[20], celle de la loi N°20/2002 du 21/05/2002 portant création, organisation et fonctionnement du Fonds communs de développement des districts, villes et la Ville de Kigali (CDF: Common Development Fund) ainsi que l'adoption, par le Conseil des Ministre en mai 2003, du manuel de procédure de gestion financière et comptable des administrations décentralisées[21], qui ont fourni le cadre politique et juridique requis pour un financement durable par subvention aux unités décentralisées.

Le fait que dans la première phase de la décentralisation la législation financière et l'exécution du financement ont été entreprises, a aidé au fonctionnement des unités décentralisées surtout dans le domaine de la gestion financière et celui de la production et gestion de revenus locaux.

Le CDF fournit également un cadre approprié pour coordonner la mobilisation et la gestion des ressources de développement communautaire sans les complexités et la bureaucratie du gouvernement et des bailleurs de fonds. Dès que les fonds sont dans le CDF, les conditions d'utilisation et de responsabilité, ainsi que les procédures de suivi, seront uniformes et standard, par comparaison avec les procédures sectorielles ou celles des bailleurs individuels.

20 Cette loi est en cours de révision pour l'adapter à la situation du moment.

21 Ce manuel est en cours de révision par le Ministère des Finances et de la Planification Economique pour l'enrichir et l'adapter à la situation actuelle.

En outre, on a remarque que la dévolution de certaines catégories d'impôts à des autorités locales a eu pour résultat une performance améliorée. Les licences commerciales (patente), les impôts sur les propriétés et les taxes sur le loyer sont les catégories d'impôts qui devraient s'améliorer sous l'administration locale. A cet égard, la RALGA a un rôle fondamental à jouer, particulièrement en facilitant l'échange d'informations, de connaissances et d'idées concernant l'innovation dans le domaine de l'amélioration des revenus locaux.

Le processus témoigne néanmoins de certaines faiblesses et suscite certaines préoccupations. Ces préoccupations concernent principalement l'insuffisance du financement et des mécanismes de suivi de la gestion et de l'utilisation des fonds, afin de garantir la transparence et la responsabilité financière.

En 2004, une évaluation concernant la capacité financière des Districts et villes de se prendre en charge a révélé la vrai image en se problème dans tous les Districts et villes du Rwanda. Après avoir comparé les recettes et les dépenses journalières de chaque District et ville, l'étude montre partout des déficits même en ajoutant à leurs budgets la subvention du Gouvernement centrale prévu chaque armée. Cette subvention est égale à 3% budget national[22].

Le tableau ci – après montre l'image des fortunes des Districts et Villes en 2004 le tout regroupé par province.

Province	Rentrées /Impôts	Sorties	Différence (déficit)	%	Subventions du Gouvernement	Déficit	%	Dettes des ex-communes
Gikongoro	198,535,729	402,582,540	-204,046,811	-103%	173,299,660	-30,747,151	-8%	183,661,396
Kibungo	289,251,453	535,718,382	-246,466,929	-85%	237,862,612	-8,604,317	-2%	134,997,078
Ruhengeri	359,087,008	627,073,937	-267,986,929	-75%	271,262,608	3,275,679	-1%	197,066,020
Gisenyi	640,027,438	640,037,973	-311,010,535	-95%	59,465,052	-251,545,483	-65%	236,944,955
Umutara	319,383,548	462,866,166	-143,482,618	-45%	48,832,732	-94,649,886	-26%	118,701,512
Kibuye	307,110,021	355,444,023	-48,334,002	-16%	140,606,358	92,272,356	-21%	111,360,544
Byumba	322,776,972	932,592,073	-609,815,101	-189%	217,936,208	-391,878,893	-72%	311,197,302
Kigali-Ville	3,584,834,475	5,042,191,929	-1,457357,454	-41%	148,154,628	-1,309,202,826	-35%	1,038868,65
Gitarama	405,520,107	698,914,254	-293,394,138	-72%	241,639,632	-51,754,506	-8%	215,852,598
Butare	434,901,739	547,532,765	-112,631,026	-26%	231,292,070	118,661,044	-18%	277,544,274
Cyangugu	318,946,356	1,429,016,581	-1,110,070,225	-348%	172,722,594	-937,347,631	-191%	122,021,834
Kigali-ngali	473,952,650	1,409,346,688	-935,394,038	-197%	274,413,200	-687,980,838	-95%	197,305,915
Total	**7343,327,496**	**13083317302**		**-78%**	**2190,487,354**		**-37%**	**3145521796**

Source: MINALOC, 2005

En général, on observe que la mise en œuvre de la décentralisation fiscale et financière a été poussée trop rapidement de sorte qu'il n'y a pas eu d'orientations suffisantes des autorités locales quant à leurs attentes, leurs fonctions et leurs responsabilités, et que les procédures nécessaires ainsi que les systèmes de «checks and balances» restent encore à mettre en place et à évaluer. C'était néanmoins nécessaire pour exercer les activités de décentralisation administratives et politiques.

5.5. Décentralisation sectorielle et prestation des services

Il convient de souligner que l'essentiel de la décentralisation consiste à déléguer les responsabilités de prestation des services aux niveaux où peuvent le mieux y accéder les bénéficiaires, c.-à-d. plus près d'où ils vivent.

Les progrès réalisés dans la décentralisation sectorielle sont mesurés par le degré auquel les gouvernements locaux reprennent les responsabilités et les moyens de fournir les services économiques et sociaux, auparavant sous la responsabilité des ministères, et également par le degré auquel les communautés locales sont satisfaites et tiennent leurs dirigeants pour responsables.

Quelques légers progrès sont à noter:

Au niveau national, l'adoption des Approches Sectorielles élargies (SWAP) par le ministère de l'éducation, par exemple, fournirait un environnement grâce auquel il est possible de s'écarter de la planification sectorielle classique et de passer à une planification plus holistique et intégrée dont le modèle devrait inspirer les niveaux décentralisés.

Toutefois, *au niveau local,* la décentralisation sectorielle fait de très légers progrès. Les observations sur le terrain semblent indiquer que le personnel technique dans divers secteurs de prestation de services (particulièrement l'agriculture, la santé, l'éducation et l'infrastructure) n'a pas encore, dans la plupart des districts, été suffisamment intégré dans les programmes de gestion et de budgets du niveau central.

En général, on observe que, pendant la première phase de la décentralisation, la planification et l'exécution des activités de prestation de services ont été perturbée. Ceci est principalement lié à: des budgets secto-

22 Ces subventions pour l'appui au fonctionnement des Gouvernements Locaux a passé de 1.5% à 3% des recettes nationales en 2004 et sera de 5% en 2007.

riels et leur gestion inappropriés; une faible supervision de la prestation des services; et une surveillance et un suivi insuffisants du centre.

5.6. Coordination et collaboration

Au cours des dernières années, il y a eu plusieurs initiatives visant à améliorer la coordination des interventions de décentralisation.

Sous l'inspiration de la "Decentralisation Management Unit" [Unité de Gestion de la Décentralisation] (DMU)[23], plusieurs structures institutionnelles ont été établies et ont tenté à harmoniser la planification et l'exécution des activités de décentralisation.

Au niveau des bailleurs de fonds et de la société civile, on a mis en place des forums suivant les intérêts ou les domaines d'intervention (par exemple le cluster décentralisation, les Comités de Pilotage des projets/programmes et les joint actions au niveau des provinces) et on espère que ceci contribuera à l'harmonisation des opinions et des approches à l'appui de la décentralisation.

Toutefois, certaines structures institutionnelles n'ont pas été efficaces. Par exemple, le Comité de Pilotage de la Transformation Nationale (CPTN ou NTSC: National Transformation Steering Committee) ne s'est réuni qu'une seule fois depuis sa formation, principalement parce qu'il n'existe pas de cadre juridique établissant le CPTN et guidant son fonctionnement opérationnel.

Les activités des bailleurs de fonds et des ONG aux niveaux des provinces et des districts ne sont pas suffisamment coordonnées et la collaboration avec les Organisations de la Société Civile (OSC) et le Secteur Privé demande plus d'amélioration surtout au niveau local et ont encore besoin de renforcement de capacités. Dans ce cadre, pour certaines OSC, le regroupement croissant selon les intérêts d'intervention pourrait être utilisé comme point de départ vers une meilleure coordination parmi les OSC. Plusieurs organisations qui chapeautent de 5 à 30 ONG et OSC existent à Kigali et participent à la promotion de la formation de réseaux et du partage des informations entre leurs membres.

5.7. Intégration des thèmes transversaux

Intégration de l'égalité entre hommes et femmes
L'égalité entre hommes et femmes est l'une des politiques poursuivies par le Gouvernement du Rwanda dans les activités de développement et dans la gouvernance.

Au niveau national, un plan stratégique et une large politique d'égalité entre hommes et femmes ont été préparés et fournissent un cadre pour la programmation et l'action à ce sujet, à tous les niveaux.

Dans le domaine de la gouvernance locale, des structures pour les femmes ont été créées et des élections de femmes ont eu lieu.

Toutefois le niveau de participation et de confidence des femmes dans le processus de prise de décisions surtout en milieu rural devrait être beaucoup plus renforcé.

Prévention et lutte contre le HIV/SIDA
Au Rwanda, la prévalence (en 2005) du VIH/SIDA dans la population adulte est estimée à 3% dans le pays avec 7,2% dans la ville de Kigali et 2,2% dans les zones rurales. Etant donné ces chiffres, on ne peut pas exagérer les incidences du HIV/SIDA sur le développement humain et la réduction de la pauvreté au Rwanda. Il importe donc d'évaluer les effets sociaux, économiques et culturels du HIV/SIDA et, en conséquence, d'intégrer dans les programmes plurisectoriels comme la décentralisation, des stratégies et mesures appropriées pour la prévention et la lutte.

On note que des progrès louables ont été faits au niveau de l'intégration des mesures de prévention, lutte et réduction du HIV/SIDA dans les stratégies de développement sectorielles et plurisectorielles. Plusieurs interventions des ONG, des bailleurs de fonds et du gouvernement se sont concentrées sur la prévention et la lutte contre le HIV/SIDA à divers niveaux. D'autres ont abordé, directement ou indirectement, certaines des conséquences du HIV/SIDA, comme la protection des veuves et des orphelins ; l'éducation pour les orphelins à travers les programmes de parrainage des enfants de diverses ONG; et l'amélioration des revenus des ménages.

Au niveau institutionnel, la Commission Nationale pour la Lutte contre le HIV/SIDA (CNLS) a été décentralisée au niveau des districts (CDLS). Bien que cette structure ne soit pas encore suffisamment opérationnelle dans la plupart des districts, on s'attend à ce qu'elle améliore la coordination et l'harmonisation des stratégies et interventions dans le domaine de la lutte contre le HIV/SIDA.

23 Remplacée par le Secrétariat National (en 2005) pour la Mise en Œuvre de la décentralisation (NDIS: National Decentralisation Implementation Secretariat).

Questions environnementales
La viabilité environnementale est un élément intégrant du développement rural, particulièrement pour la Rwanda où l'économie dépend largement des ressources naturelles et où la population constitue une forte pression sur la terre.

Le Gouvernement du Rwanda a fait de grands progrès dans les domaines de la politique et du cadre institutionnel pour la gestion de l'environnement en adoptant sa Stratégie de Réduction de la Pauvreté (2002), les politiques et stratégies sectorielles en rapport avec l'environnement (2003), la gestion et l'utilisation des terres (2004), la gestion des forêts (2005), la gestion et la prévention des catastrophes (2003), l'Agriculture (2004), l'eau et assainissement (2004), les mines et géologie (2004) et même la loi organique N°04/2005 du 08/04/2005 portant modalités de protéger, sauvegarder et promouvoir l'environnement au Rwanda a été promulguée.

En outre, la mise en place de l'Office de Gestion de l'Environnement du Rwanda (REMA: Rwanda Environnemental Management Autority) représente un pas important pour le renforcement du cadre institutionnel pour la coordination et la surveillance de la gestion de l'environnement.

Dans le contexte de la décentralisation, les questions environnementales apparaissent de plus en plus dans les processus de planification des gouvernements locaux, et plusieurs interventions d'ONG et de bailleurs de fonds traitent de problèmes environnementaux (érosion des sols, gestion critique des eaux, pollution de l'eau, etc.).

En dépit de ces réalisations, l'intégration des questions de préservation de l'environnement dans les activités locales de décentralisation et de développement communautaire est encore insuffisante, et on note plusieurs sujets de préoccupation. Ainsi, dans ce cas, la société civile serait le meilleur avocat de la conservation environnementale durable: pour sensibiliser les gens; devenir active dans la promotion des technologies agricoles et d'énergie qui respectent l'environnement; et l'avocat de la législation et de la mise en vigueur des lois.

Technologie de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC)
L'application de la TIC est essentielle pour le développement car elle fournit des moyens rapides et fiables de communication et d'échange des informations, elle facilite l'éducation et l'utilisation efficace du matériel pédagogique. On remarque que l'amélioration de la communication et des échanges d'informations entre le centre et les autorités locales et les niveaux les plus bas, entre les autorités locales et le monde extérieur, ainsi que les autorités locales entre elles, est l'une des stratégies poursuivies pour approfondir les échanges liés à la décentralisation.

A cet égard, de grands progrès ont été faits au niveau national, particulièrement avec l'intégration de la TIC dans les politiques et programmes nationaux ainsi que dans leur mise en œuvre. C'est ainsi qu'une politique nationale de la TIC a été élaborée et une structure institutionnelle – le « Rwanda Information and Technologiy Authority (RITA)» a été établie pour superviser la mise en œuvre de cette politique.

Au niveau du gouvernement local, toutefois, le développement de la TIC représente encore un grand défi à relever, particulièrement pour les districts ruraux qui constituent environ 90% des autorités locales. En premier lieu, la plupart des districts ne sont pas raccordés aux infrastructures de base de la TIC, c.-à-d. l'électricité et le téléphone.

Le manque de personnel compétent en TIC est l'autre contrainte principale au développement de la TIC. On espère néanmoins que la stratégie de développement des ressources humaines s'occupera à long terme du problème du personnel.

6. Stratégies et perspectives

Pour faire face à ces contraintes et défis susmentionnés la deuxième phase (2004-2008) mettra l'accent sur les actions suivantes:

1. Augmentation du niveau de participation des citoyens dans le processus de prise de décision aussi bien dans la planification que dans la mise en œuvre des programmes de développement ;
2. Renforcement des structures des Gouvernements Locaux et leur lien fonctionnel avec le Gouvernement Central pour augmenter leur capacité de gestion et de mobilisation des ressources ;
3. Mise en place d'un système approprié des procédures et structures permettant la coordination, le suivi et l'évaluation afin de s'assurer de la qualité des services rendus à la communauté ;
4. Renforcement de la coordination des interventions des différents acteurs au niveau politique et opérationnel pour créer une synergie et harmonie nécessaire dans l'élaboration, le financement et la mise en œuvre des programmes et ou projets. Ceci dans une perspective de passer de l'approche d'appui aux projets disparates, à l'approche programme basée sur l'appui budgétaire ;
5. Renforcement de la prise en compte des thèmes transversaux tels que le genre, l'environnement, le VIH/SIDA et les Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC ou ICT: Information and Communication Technology) dans tous les programmes de développement.

Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de cette deuxième phase quelques mesures ont été déjà prises comme entre autres:

1. La révision des politiques de décentralisation, du développement communautaire et celle de la décentralisation fiscale, ainsi que la revue du cadre légal et réglementaire y relatif;
2. La réforme administrative incluant la restructuration administrative du pays (de 106 districts à 30, de 1956 secteurs à 416 et de 9165 cellules à près de 2150) et
3. La mise en place de nouveaux organes de gestion des ces structures ayant des capacités intellectuelles et techniques suffisantes pour répondre aux besoins de réduction de la pauvreté et de développement économique de la communauté.

Ces nouvelles structures ont les principales responsabilités suivantes:

Niveau	Nombre	Responsabilités
National	1	Promotion de la bonne gouvernance pour un développement socio-économique durable de la population à travers l'élaboration des politiques, la mise en place du cadre légal et réglementaire, des normes et standards, le suivi et l'évaluation de leur mise en œuvre ainsi que le renforcement des capacités des structures décentralisées et la mobilisation des ressources surtout extérieures.
Province	4	Liaison entre les orientations nationales et les plans des districts et suivi et évaluation de leur mise en œuvre.
Ville de Kigali	1	Développement socio-économique durable de la population de la ville à travers l'élaboration d'un plan directeur d'aménagement de la ville, le pilotage de sa mise en œuvre et le renforcement des capacités des districts de la ville. La ville de Kigali devant servir de ville modèle au Rwanda et même au niveau régional.
District	30	Mise en œuvre des orientations nationales en s'assurant de la qualité et de la cohérence des services de proximité rendus à la population locale par rapport aux besoins de cette même population.
Secteurs	416	Base de fourniture des services administratifs et ceux relatifs au développement socio-économique local participatif et durable, ainsi que la coordination et le suivi de la mise en œuvre des politiques nationales par la population.
Cellules	2150	Niveau de mobilisation, sensibilisation et coordination de la participation/contribution de la population dans la mise en œuvre des orientations nationales suivant les besoins locaux de lutte contre la pauvreté et de développement socio-économique durable des ménages.
Imidugudu (30 à 50 ménages)	14953	Niveau de base d'organisation et de mobilisation de la population pour l'entraide dans les ménages et l'autoprotection des membres de ces ménages.

Source: MINALOC, 2005

Annexe 2: Projets/programmes appuyant le processus de décentralisation au Rwanda et leurs modes d'exécution

Nom du projet	Objectifs/composantes du projet	Période	Coût total	Bailleur	Mode d'Exécution
1 Community development and decentralization Project (**CDDP**)	• Responsabiliser et mobiliser la population pour l'amener à participer dans l'initiation, la préparation, l'exécution et la surveillance des décisions et des plans de développement qui la concernent, • Renforcer la responsabilité et la transparence en rendant les leaders locaux de se sentir redevables vis à vis de leurs communautés, • Renforcer l'efficience et l'efficacité des services en déplaçant la responsabilité de la planification et d e la gestion du gouvernement central au point où les besoins sont ressentis et où les services sont fournis, • Développer une planification économique durable et une capacité de gestion aux niveaux locaux.	2004 -2008	20.000$us	Banque Mondiale IDA/GdR/ contribution de bénéficiaires	Par le GdR à travers une Unité de Coordination Nationale sous le ministère de tutelle avec des bureaux provinciaux sous l'administration de l'unité de coordination nationale. Il intervient dans les districts de Gicumbi au Nord; Rubavu, Nyabihu et Ngororero à l'Ouest; Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru, Huye, Gisagara et Nyanza au Sud ainsi que dans Nyagatare et Gatsibo à l'Est.
2. Local Development Program Labour Intensive Public works Programme (**PDL-HIMO**).	• To create Jobs (322 000 direct and 564 000 induced jobs) ; • To increase productivity of cultivable land (terracing 12 600 ha, afforestation 3 360 ha, marshland development 3 360 ; • To develop roads (rehabilitate fully 1260 km, partial rehabilitation of 2520 km an paving of 880 000 km of roads in urban areas, • Capacity building, training 5 726 people, equipping 30 SME an 30 production units.	2004 -2008	205.512.425$us dans la phase de recherche des bailleurs de fonds	CANADIAN COORPORATION pour la phase de préparation (500000 $can)	Par le GdR à travers une Unité de Coordination Nationale sous le CDF avec des bureaux provinciaux sous l'administration de l'unité de coordination nationale. D'envergure nationale, il a déjà démarré avec seulement les fonds du Gvt Rwandais et on est à la recherche des fonds supplémentaires.
3. Programme Microréalisations Rurales dans tout le pays (PMR). **Programme déjà terminé**	• Favoriser les initiatives collectives à caractère économique et social et social et renforcer la maîtrise locale de son propre développement.	1998-2004	11.100.000 €	Union Européenne (7ème et 8ème FED)	Par le GdR à travers une Unité de Coordination Nationale sous le ministère de tutelle.
4. Projet d'appui institutionnel aux organisations rwandaises de développement dans tout le pays (PAI). **Projet déjà terminé**	• Renforcer les capacités organisationnelles et faciliter l'intégration de l'approche développement organisationnel (DO) dans les organisations rwandaises de développement • Stimuler le rôle d'influence des organisations rwandaises de développement • Veiller à la durabilité de l'appui institutionnel par une organisation rwandaise spécialisée en DODI	1998-2004	247.170.000Frw	UNDP + Royaume des Pays Bas	Par le Bailleur à travers l'ONG Internationale SNV au niveau national.
5. Programme d'Appui à la Décentralisation et au Développement Economique Participatif (PADDEP) dans l'ancienne province de Ruhengeri. **Programme déjà terminé**	• Renforcement des capacités des structures déconcentrées (au niveau de la province) et des structures décentralisées (du niveau cellule) • Renforcement des capacités de la société civile • Contribution à la réduction de la pauvreté	2002-2005	12.209.700 €	Royaume des Pays Bas	Par le GdR à travers la province de Ruhengeri et avec les ONG Care Internationale et Helpage Rwanda comme agence d'exécution au niveau de la province et des districts.
6. Programme « Paix et Décentalisation dans l'ancienne province de Kibuye (PED) **Programme en phase de prolongation depuis 2005 et couvre les districts de Karongi et Rutsiro depuis la restructuration du territoire.**	• Contribuer à la démocratisation, à la décentralisation, à la lutte contre la pauvreté et à la promotion de la paix en appuyant la décentralisation dans l'ancienne Province de Kibuye (dans les districts de Karongi et Rutsiro dans la province de l'Ouest après la restructuration du territoire). • Harmoniser les activités et financements dans les deux districts dans le respect des mécanismes du CDF et du protocole de coopération CDF/BUCO.	2003-2004 **2005-2006** **2005-2006**	4 399 630 CHF **2.910.000CHF** **600.000CHF**	Coopération Suisse (DDC)	Par le Bailleur à travers l'organisation privée Suisse TULUM (sise au niveau de la province), pour 80% du budget, par le CDF pour 15% et 5% par une ONG nationale dont les techniciens qui sont au niveau des districts et des secteurs sont sous la l'administration de TULUM
7. Community Reintegration et Development Project dans 11 anciens districts/villes de Butare, Gisenyi, Gokongoro, Byumba et Umutara **Projet déjà terminé**	• Démontrer que la réintégration et le développement communautaire sont possibles à travers un processus de décentralisation de l'Etat et de participation communautaire. • A cet effet le projet devait viser à : (i) aider les rapatriés et les autres groupes vulnérables au moyen d'un processus de réintégration et de développement communautaire, (ii) renforcer la capacité des populations locales et les administrations locales à mettre en œuvre les projets de développement.	1999-2003	3.700.000 DTS	Banque Mondiale/GdR/ contribution de bénéficiaires	Par le GdR à travers une Unité de Coordination Nationale sous le ministère de tutelle avec deux techniciens par district (1 agent de développement et 1 agent comptable) sous l'administration de l'unité de coordination nationale et rien à la province.

8. Programme des Modules de Développement Ruraux et Urbains dans 9 districts de la ville Kigali, les provinces de Butare, Kibungo, Kigali Ngali, Kibuye et Gikongoro **Programme déjà terminé**	• Recapitalisation des bénéficiaires par les travaux HIMO; • Amélioration de l'environnement de production générant des emplois permanents.	2001-2004	5.000.000 €	Union Européenne (7ème et 8ème FED	Par le GdR à travers une Unité de Coordination Nationale (UGM : Unité de Gestion des Modules) autonome et avec des interventions au niveau local sans consultations préalables.
9. Projet d'Appui au Développement Communautaire et à la Bonne Gouvernance dans l'ancienne province de KIBUNGO **Projet déjà terminé**	• Participation éclairée des citoyens à la prise des décisions dans les institutions politiques décentralisées • Responsabilisation croissante des individus, des ménages et des associations des usagers en matière du développement social et économique.	2001-2003	2.467.248$us	USAID	Par le Bailleur à travers l'ONG Américaine IRC avec des agents au niveau de la province et au niveau des district sous l'administration directe de l'ONG exécutant le projet.
10. Projet de préparation du Programme National d'Appui à la décentralisation: PNAD/MINALOC-Phase préparatoire **Projet déjà terminé**	• Contribuer au renforcement des capacités de gestion, de planification, de suivi et d'évaluation du MINALOC dans le cadre de la préparation de la 2ème phase de décentralisation et au CDF à travers l'élaboration de son manuel des procédures.	2003-2004	1.457.069€	Royaume des Pays Bas	Par le GdR à travers les services du Ministère avec des rapports réguliers au bailleur de fonds conformément au contrat signé entre les deux parties.
11. Microréalisations Sociales dans 8 anciens districts des anciennes provinces de Ruhengeri, Byumba et Gitarama (MPS-IS) **Programme déjà terminé**	• Appui au Développement socio-économique des groupes vulnérables • Formation des élus à la Base	1999-2004	3.000.000€	Union Européenne (7ème et 8ème FED)	Par le GdR à travers une Unité de Coordination Nationale avec un point focal du projet au niveau de chaque district (l'agent du district en charge des affaires sociales).
12. Programme des Initiatives Sociales, Techniques et Economiques (PISTE) dans 7 anciens districts des anciennes provinces de Butare, umutara et Kibungo **Programme déjà terminé**	• Capacité technique, financière et institutionnelle des Fonds rotatifs (micro finances) renforcée • Les micro projets sont bien élaborés et bien gérés par les clients • Le partenariat entre les différents acteurs en micro projets.	1998-2004	708.440 €	Germany	Par le Bailleur à travers l'ONG allemande Agro Action Allemande avec une équipe d'agents de l'ONG au niveau national.
13. Programme de Renforcement des Organisation de Base au Rwanda (PROB). **Programme déjà terminé**	• Contribuer à la lutte contre la pauvreté et la construction d'une paix durable à travers les organisations locales à Gitarama et Butare	2000-2004	3.505.000 $us	ACDI/Canada	Par le Bailleur à travers l'ONG Internationale Développement et Paix avec une équipe d'agent de l'ONG basée au Sud.
14. Fiscal Decentralization Project (FDP-ARD) **Programme déjà terminé**	• Improve Financial Management Systems, Increase local revenues, improve district service delivery	2001-2004	2.470.163 $us	USAID	Par le Bailleur à travers un bureau privé américain ARD
15. Programme Protection des Ressources dans 9 districts de Cyangugu, Butare, Gitarama et Kigali Ngali (PPR). **Programme déjà terminé**	• La population rurale dans les districts et villes du programme exploitent leurs ressources naturelle (sol et végétation) de façon améliorée et durable. • Augmenter l'offre de travail rémunéré au niveau de la population des districts et ville par l'exécution des mesures du programme et des encouragements	2000-2004	3.000.000 DEM	Germany	Par le Bailleur à travers une agence de coopération Allemende DED
16. Appui à l'Unité de Gestion de la Décentralisation (DMU) **Programme déjà terminé**	• Develop institutional capacity for coordination of activities and implementation of decentralization • To review administrative organizational structures, design and train local governments personnel to operate decentralization, administrative and financial management systems that will maximize local government efficiency and accountability • To ensure an open and enabling environment for the development and continual review of legal texts concerning decentralization and democratization • To ensure an operational and functional program related to information, communication and civic education in order to provide circulation of information and promote responsive leadership • To establish effective and coordinated community development initiatives countywide, according to the principles and spirits of	2002-2004	2.992.510$us	PNUD, Netherlands, switzerland	Par le GdR à travers une Unité de Coordination Nationale sise au ministère de tutelle avec une administration conjointe entre le ministère de tutelle (le MINALOC à travers le DMU) et le PNUD.

	decentralization, participatory planning and implementation.				
17. Projet MI NALOC/SALA-IDA: Appui à la Décentralisation dans les anciennes provinces de Butare et Gikongoro **Projet déjà terminé**	• Appui à la coordination de la mise en œuvre de la Décentralisation • Renforcement des capacités de RALGA • Renforcement des capacités des entités décentralisées par l'intermédiaire des groupes thématiques des techniciens des ces entités et ceux des provinces concernées.	2002-2005	3.376.000$us	Suède	Par le Bailleur à travers l'organisation suédoise SALA-IDA avec une équipe de coordination à Kigali et une autre à Butare au Sud et des points focaux constitués des groupes thématiques (taskforces) dans les provinces.
18. Projet d'Appui Institutionnel et de Renforcement des capacités pour la Décentralisation dans l'ancienne province de Kibungo ou actuels districts de Rwamagana, kayonza, Ngoma, Kirehe et Bugesera.	• Appui Institutionnel et Renforcement des capacités pour la des districts de l'ancienne province de Kibungo ou actuels districts de Rwamagana, kayonza, Ngoma, Kirehe et Bugesera. • Renforcement des capacités de pilotage du Fonds Commun de Développement (CDF).	2004-2006	2.000.000€	Germany	Par le Bailleur à travers l'agence technique de coopération allemande GTZ avec une équipe technique de coordination nationale basée au ministère de tutelle.
19. Appui Institutionnel à la programmation des Investissement Publique (pour le Minaloc : au département de la Planification du Ministère et dans les anciennes Provinces)	• Renforcer les capacités du MINALOC en matière de planification de développement participatif; • Réaliser une interconnexion en réseau informatique entre le MINECOFIN, CEPEX, le MINALOC et les 12 anciennes Provinces et la Ville de KIGALI.	2002-2005	231.100$us	BAD (Banque Africaine de Développment)	Par le GdR à travers une unité de coordination basée au CEPEX/MINECOFIN
20. Evaluation de la 1ère phase de la mise en Œuvre de la poilitique de Décentralisation **Projet déjà terminé**	• Evaluation des progrès et les acquis obtenus dans la mise en œuvre de la première phase du processus de décentralisation, basée sur un diagnostic des stratégies utilisées durant la mise en œuvre de ces interventions afin d'aboutir à des propositions concrètes à être utilisées lors de la planification du futur programme d'appui au processus de la décentralisation.	15/05/2003-15/09/2003	165.369 €	Royaume des Pays Bas	Par le GdR à travers les services du Ministère avec des rapports réguliers au bailleur de fonds conformément au contrat signé entre les deux parties.
21. Système Intégré de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles par la stratégie HIMO autour des lacs BURERA et RUHONDO dans les anciens districts de BUKAMBA, BUTARO, CYERU et BUGARURA de Ruhengeri (SIG-HIMO) **Projet pilote**	• Lutte contre le chômage et réduire la pauvreté dans la région par l'introduction des travaux HIMO dans la réhabilitation des pistes ceinturant les 2 lacs ; • Promouvoir la conservation à long terme des écosystèmes humide et fragiles des 2 lacs incluant les aspects de protection et d'utilisation rationnelle des ressources halieutiques ; • Expérimenter l'efficacité du système HIMO pour des objectifs pratiques de monétisation et de relance de l'économie locale dans le milieu rural et inverser la tendance de l'exode rural par rapport aux principes et approches de la décentralisation.	2003-2006	3.459.552 €	Royaume des Pays Bas	Par le Bailleur à travers l'ONG Rwandaise Helpage Rwanda avec une équipe de techniciens basé à Ruhengeri au Nord et sous l'administration directe du bureau de l'ONG à Kigali.
22. Appui à la décentralisation dans le district de Gakenke au Nord.	• Renforcement des capacités institutionnelles du district, secteurs et cellules; • Développement communautaire pour la réduction de la pauvreté et la sécurité alimentaire; • Microfinance; • Coordination du projet.	2004-2009	5.900.000 €	Coopération Belgique (Fond Belge de Survie)	Cogestion entre le Gvt du Rda la coopération Technique Belge à travers une unité de coordination et une assistance technique Belge, mais les fonds destinés aux activités prévues dans le Plan d'Action Annuel du district passe à travers le CDF et son utilisés suivant les mécanismes du CDF.
23. Programme Décentralisé de Lutte contre la Pauvreté Rurale	• Mise en œuvre de l`approche UBUDEHE au niveau national et son intégration dans le développement communautaire comme stratégie de planification participative dans les imidugudu; • Financement des activités des plans de développement des districts de Rulindo au Nord; de Rwamagana, Kayonza, Ngoma, Kirehe et Bugesera à l'Est et de Nyarugenge dans la Ville de Kigali; • Renforcement des capacités au niveau des districts; • Assistance technique et coordination du programme.	2004-2008	22.000.000 €	Union Européenne (9è FED)	Par le Gvt du Rwanda à travers une unité de coordination nationale sous CDF pour l'aspect UBUDEHE et à travers le CDF suivant ses mécanismes et le protocole signé entre le GdR et l'UE pour les fonds destinés aux activités des Plans d'Action Annuels des districts concernés.
24 Programme de Démobilisation dans la Ville de Kigali	• Réinsertion socio-économique des démobilises par les travaux HIMO dans la Ville de Kigali	2004-2008	3.000.000 €	Union Européenne (9è FED)	Par la Ville de Kigali à travers une unité de coordination et un assistant technique représentant le

					bailleur
25. Programme UBUDEHE dans tous le pays. **Programme déjà terminé**	• Identification des priorités de la communauté dans les cellules administratives dans le cadre de la réduction de la pauvreté et financement d'une activité collective et une action d'une familiale pauvre dans la cellule.	2004-2005	10.000.000 €	Union Européenne (9è FED)	Par le Gvt du Rwanda à travers une unité technique de coordination nationale sous CDF.
26. Projet de Développement des Ressource Communautaire et des Infrastructures de l'ancienne province d'UMUTARA (PDRCIU) actuellement dans les districts de Nyagatare, Gatsibo et Kayonza de la province de l'Est	• Renforcement des capacités de planification et de maîtrise des ouvrages pour les Gvt locaux • Renforcement des capacités de la province dans sa mission • Financement des projets prioritaires identifiés par les Gvt locaux dans leurs PDC • Dvt des infrastructures communautaires • Micro finance	2001-2010 En 3 phases	57.000.000 $us	FIDA /OPEC/consortium des ONG internationales /GdR/contribution de bénéficiaires	Par le Gvt du Rwanda à travers une unité de coordination basée dans la province de l'Est des techniciens (5 par district et 2 au niveau de la province) sous l'administration directe de l'unité de coordination; un comité de pilotage au niveau de la province et au niveau national impliquant les différents ministères concernés sous la présidence du MINALOC.
27. Netherlands's support project for Rwanda's Decentralisation Implementation Programme (NL-DIP)	• Reinforce decentralisation in Districts and Towns in Rwanda through support to the design, management and implementation of their development plans . • Support the national decentralisation programme by institutional support to institutions responsible for its implementation.	2005-2008	26.495.000 €	Royaume des Pays Bas	Par le Gvt du Rwanda à travers le CDF suivant ses mécanismes et le protocole signé entre les deux parties.
28. Projet Sécurité Alimentaire	• Appui à la mise en œuvre des PDC pour des activités de sécurité alimentaire • Utilisation de l'approche UBUDEHE dans l'intervention	2004-2006	2.510.000 €	Germany	Par le Bailleur à travers l'agence technique de coopération allemande GTZ avec une équipe technique de coordination basée dans la province du Sud et des agents du projet au niveau du district Nyamagabe couvert par le projet.
29 Programme "Twubakane" de Décentralisation de la Santé	• Accroître l'accès, la qualité et l'utilisation des services de planification familiale et santé de la reproduction dans les formations sanitaires et au niveau communautaire • Accroître l'accès, la qualité et l'utilisation des services de prise en charge intégrée des maladies des enfants au niveau des formations sanitaires et au niveau communautaire, avec un accent particulier sur le paludisme et la nutrition • Appuyer le Ministère de la Santé et de l'Administration Locale à mettre e place des politiques et procédures de décentralisation effective, avec un accent sur le secteur de la santé • Renforcer les capacités des districts à planifier, budgétiser, mobiliser les ressources et gérer les services, en se focalisant sue les services de santé • Renforcer la capacité des formations sanitaires à gérer leurs ressources, à promouvoir et à assurer le bon fonctionnement des mutuelles de santé • Accroître la participation communautaire à l'accessibilité et à la qualité des services de santé.	2005-2009	24.000.000$us	USAID	Par le Bailleur à travers l'Organisation Américaine IntraHealth International avec ses partenaires internationaux RTI International, l'Université de Tulane, Engender-Health et VNG (Agence Néerlandaise de Coopération Internationale) et nationaux RALGA (Association Rwandaise des Gouvernements Locaux) et le Profemmes Twase Hamwe en collaboration etroite vec le MINISANTE, le MINALOC et le MIGEPROFE. Il opère dans 12 districts sur 30 (Rwamagana, Kayonza, Ngoma et Kirehe de la province de l'Est; Gasabo, Kicukiro et Nyarugenge de la Ville de Kigali ainsi que Kamonyi, Muhanga, Ruhango, Nyamagabe et Nyarugur de la province du Sud)
30. Programme d'appui au système de santé (PSP) dans les districts de Karongi et Rustiro dans la Province de l'Ouest	• Renforcer, de façon durable, l'accès du plus grand nombre des habitants des Districts de Rutsiro et Karongi, aux soins de santé grâce au renforcement des mutuelles de santé. • Développer l'engagement et la participation communautaire à tous les niveaux du système de santé (demande) dans les Districts de Rutsiro et Karongi. • Renforcer la qualité des soins (offre) dans les Districts de Rutsi-	2005- 2006	2.500.000 CHF	Coopération Suisse (DDC)	Par le Bailleur à travers l'organisation privée Suisse Institut Tropical Suisse, sise au niveau de la province avec un personnel technique très réduit (un expert international Coordinateur du Programme et deux experts nationaux (un admi-

	ro et Karongi. • Améliorer les capacités de gestion des différents acteurs du système de santé dans les Districts de Rutsiro et Karongi. • Renforcer la collaboration et la coordination entre les différents acteurs du système de santé des Districts de Rutsiro et Karongi. • Contribuer au développement de synergies régionales dans le domaine de la santé. • Appréhender les questions en suspens et les implications de la réforme de l'administration locale et adapter la mise en œuvre et certains appuis du projet au nouveau contexte.				nistrateur-comptable et une assistante technique). Pour des raisons de pérennités des acquis, le programme travail avec les structures en place pour les districts et les institutions sanitaires. En cas de nécessité, des interventions spécifiques sont fournis par des experts nationaux ou internationaux.
31. Programme d'Appui a la Gouvernance Locale en Milieu Rural au Rwanda (PAGOR) **Programme en préparation**	• Renforcement des capacités des instances décentralisées et organisations de base pour une amélioration de leur planification, mise en œuvre et suivi des activités de dvpt local tenant compte de l'égalité des sexes ; • Aider les organisation de base a concevoir et mettre en œuvre les activités agricoles et non agricoles générateurs de revenus ; • Renforcer les capacités des entités décentralisées et les organisations de base pour qu'elles puissent tenir en compte l'équité entre les hommes et les femmes, la gestion durable de l'environnement et la prévention contre le VIH/SIDA ; • Aider les structures de base a mieux ce structurer a participer au processus de planification et de mise en œuvre du dvpt local.	2006-2011	11.000.000$CAN	ACDI/CANADA	Par le Bailleur à travers une Organisation Canadienne eu processus de recrutement. Il interviendra dans les districts de Nyaruguru et Nyamagabe de la Province du Sud
32. Appui au Secrétariat National de la Mise en œuvre de la Décentralisation (NDIS)	• Coordination du renforcement des capacités dans la Décentralisation • Suivi, évaluation et dvpt des politiques • Information et communication • Facilitation des différents acteurs et activités de la décentralisation	2004-2008	2.000.000$us	PNUD	Par le GdR à travers une Unité de Coordination Nationale sise au ministère de tutelle avec une administration conjointe entre le ministère de tutelle (le MINALOC à travers le NDIS) et le PNUD.

Annex F – Case Study Report: Peru

NB: For Spanish version of the report please contact SDC.

Table of contents

1. Introduction: Purpose of evaluation, evaluation issues and its organisation
2. Overall conclusions
3. Context, that briefly describes the situation and prospects for decentralisation and sub-national governance including references to key documents providing additional material on these issues
4. Brief on other donors' involvement in decentralisation support, cooperation, compete tion and modes of operation
5. Overview of the project portfolio plus cooperation with other donors and with local and international NGO's on decentralisation issues
6. Strategic documents issued by SDC on decentralisation: Main issues
7. Main findings and conclusions
8. Analysis of SDC comparative advantages, strengths and weaknesses of the SDC approach
9. Cooperation with other partners and aid effectiveness
10. SDC Berne support and relations with country office
11. Recommendations
12. Management response of SDC Peru and SDC Berne/country desk

1. Introduction: Purpose of evaluation, evaluation issues and its organisation

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine the performance of SDC's decentralisationprojects in their countries of operation and to identify the elements that contribute to or deter its effectiveness, sustainability and impact. Moreover, this report aims to establish how the SDC should improve its participation in the decentralisation process. This report will also evaluate the current situation between the Swiss Cooperation's approach and the local authorities, and its relation to the policies and the activities of its counterparts.

This report assesses the support from the Thematic Department to the Operational Units (the National Offices). Finally, this evaluation helps visualise the comparative advantages of the Swiss Cooperation in Peru.

This evaluation presents an assessment of the overall approach, the institutional arrangements, the main trends and the comparative analysis of the decentralisation process, rather than a detailed evaluation of SDC's projects in Peru.

The evaluation was carried out in three stages: in the first stage, several interviews with the main representatives of the decentralisation process were conducted (the Congress, the CND and the Ministry of Economy and Finances) in order to obtain information and different viewpoints of the decentralisation process. Some SDC officials in Peru were also interviewed. In the second stage, a field trip was carried out to examine *in situ* different projects of the Swiss Cooperation in Peru. Finally, in the last stage, the information was organised for further analysis.

2. Overall conclusions

COSUDE PERU is very involved in the decentralisation process, incorporating in its national strategy SDC's general guidelines for 2010: sustainable development as the main goal and poverty reduction as the main strategy. Furthermore, it aligns itself on OECD-DAC's international commitments and on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Moreover, by incorporating the interests of the people involved in the process and by adequately understanding the national context, it stimulates the importance of the subject. However, it has no direct intervention in the national process.

Regarding the effectiveness of its interventions, APODER has developed more effective activities related to management by consensus and participation and to the promotion of the communication between the authorities and the civil society. The activities involved in the improvement of public services provision are more the result of linked processes and are not promoted by themselves. The sustainability of the process is weak because it depends on the political will and on the still incipient legitimacy of social leaderships.

COSUDE PERU includes in its intervention proposal the interests of its counterparts, that determine its Plan of Operations, especially in APODER. This restricts the independence and the vision of the institutional performance. Besides, it incorporates the vision and the understanding of the country's context in order to establish its relation to the national policy of decentralisation.

SDC's Thematic Department's support to COSUDE PERU is weak. Its role in the construction of specialised knowledge is recognised, although its ability to be relevant to local and regional contexts is limited.

COSUDE PERU has comparative advantages in relation to other interventions of the international cooperation, especially for its work in rural areas of extreme poverty, the promotion of local government association, its approach of economic development, and the promotion of the

communication between the national government and the civil society regarding public policy and agendas.

On the other hand, many of the lessons that have been learned are not currently used as much as they should be (for instance, projects such as SANBASUR and MASAL-both of them with nearly 10 years of implementation- have meaningfully contributed to the decentralisation process by its influence in public policy making at the local, regional and national levels).

3. Context

This chapter briefly describes the situation and prospects for decentralisation and sub-national governance including references to key documents providing additional material on these issues. The 1979 constitution allowed the implementation of a decentralisation process in Peru in the early eighties. However, Fujimori's coup d'état brought about the dissolution of the regional governments and a recentralisation of public policy decisions. Paniagua's transition government promoted the National Agreement, which had decentralisation [1] as one of its main public policies. This important reform was considered by the main political parties in their programs: Perú Posible (Toledo) and APRA (Alan García). With the election of Alejandro Toledo 2001-2006, the decentralisation process was relaunched with the creation of the regional governments and the democratic election of its authorities.

During this period these have been its main features:

Abundant yet incomplete legal framework
The main laws issued[2] during Toledo's government were: DecentralisationLaw, Organic Law of Regional Governments, Organic Law of Municipalities, Law of Participatory Budget and Law of the National System of Public Investment.

The government and more specifically the Congress took the initiative to promote the different laws. Several organised groups from the civil society insisted in the incorporation of citizen participation mechanisms in local and regional governments, Regional Coordination Councils and Local Coordination Councils respectively[3]. Accountability processes were also promoted, such as Public Hearings.

Two very important laws were not approved by the Congress, the General Law on Public Employment (result oriented, hiring and dismissal based on performance, different treatment to local and regional governments) and the Organic Law of the Executive Branch (which modifies the organisation and functions of ministries). They are currently in the Congress' list of pending projects[4]. Because fiscal decentralisation depends on the process of regional integration it has been postponed indefinitely, after the former did not succeed.[5].

The National Council of Decentralisation (CND)
The National Council of Decentralisation is the governing body of the decentralisation process. It has a law and its own Directive of operations. Its president is a Minister and takes part in the Council of Ministers, but he has no right to vote. During Toledo's government, the CND did not lead the decentralisation process; neither included it in the national agenda as a priority. At the present time, it's been reorganised.

1 Annex 1: National Agreement.
2 Compiled by Ombudsman
3 Propuesta Ciudadana, a consortium of NGO's from Lima and other regions, and the Mesa de Concertación para la Lucha contra la Pobreza, were the most important groups in this process.
4 Annex: Commission of Decentralization, Regionalization, Local Governments and Modernization of the State's work plan.
5 All of the pending laws have been compiled by the current Commission of Decentralization, Regionalization, Local Governments and Modernization of the State. See annex: Comission's work plan.

Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)
MEF was a key agent of the decentralisation process, with the publication of laws such as the Law of Participatory Budget, the Law of the National System of Public Investment (SNIP)[6] and the Law of the Integrated System of Financial Administration, which are the basis of a new scheme of national public management.

Sub-national governance
The relaunch of the decentralisation process stimulated the formation of regional governments elected democratically by popular vote. However, although the opposite parties obtained most of the regional governments, they didn't manage to articulate their interests in relation to the central government, nor became agents with initiative, opposing the decisions of the central government.[7] Local governments have developed initiatives regarding local economic development and citizen participation, among others.

Transference of competences
From the 187 competences considered in the law of regional governments, 87 have been transferred to the corresponding regional governments through an accreditation process conducted by CND. Such measures are mainly administrative and have no resources in order to fully exert their role on the regional governments.

Transference of resources to the sub-national governments
The current scheme of resource transfer to the sub-national governments lacks equality.[8] The resources resulting from the export boom (obtained through taxes on mining, oil and gas companies) only benefit 6 of the 25 regions. This situation has put resource transfers in the pending agenda of the decentralisation process.[9]

Municipalities association
The association of Peruvian municipalities (AMPE) had a key role in the eighties. Fujimori's government did not support its consolidation and provoked its division. Nowadays, its scope is more local. Today, the Peruvian Rural Municipalities Network (REMURPE) stands out; it congregates more than 400 municipalities. It gives technical assistance and has repercussions in national politics.

New regional and local authorities
The results of the recent elections show the deep crisis of the national political parties.[10] A majority presence of independent regional and local movements[11]will drive next year's demand for decentralisation. It's important to point out that this plurality could result in individual negotiations and political favoritism between the central government and the sub-national governments.

Perspectives
a) The government has declared its commitment to decentralisation as a priority[12]. With the new political map and 4 years of mandate still to come, core definitions in relation to the pending agenda are expected. The development of a Pilot Program of competences and functions transference in health and education for local governments should start in the upcoming weeks.

6 The SNIP is been accused by the local and regional governments of blocking, through technical and administrative mechanisms, the execution of projects in regions and districts. Because the SNIP Law has no directive its application rests on MEF decisions. The current government has decided to decentralize SNIP, but such proposal lacks technical feasibility.

7 In the 2002 elections, 24 out of 25 regional governments were obtained by the opposite parties: APRA took 12 regional governments; other national parties, 5 regional governments; and independent parties, 8 regional governments.

8 Despite the existence of technical criteria with social, economic and population indicators, the system has been weakened by the export-mining boom.

9 See Annex: DecentralisationAgenda 2006 – 2011.

10 See Annex: The New Political Map.

11 Part of the problem is that these regional independent movements have representation in the capital of the region but not in the rest of their jurisdiction.

12 See Annex: 20 decentralist measures

b) The Congress has as part of his agenda the General Law on Public Employment. However, its approval is highly unlikely because of the economic costs of its implementation.

c) The CND is currently facing an internal restructuring process. Many opinions have suggested the need to modify its law of creation (in order to consolidate its technical and regulatory role) and that the Presidency of the Council of Ministers should take political responsibility in the Council of Ministers[13]. The strengthening of regional and local governments' presence in their Directive Council has been also proposed.

d) Transfers to regional and local governments will become a key part of the proposal of the central government.

e) Fiscal decentralisation is one of the main demands of sub-national governments and will be one of the priorities for next year.

4. Brief on other donors' involvement in decentralisation support, co-operation, competition and modes of operation

International Cooperation Agencies are important agents of the decentralisation process A Sub-group of decentralisation has been formed; it consists of 19 International Cooperation Agencies, bilateral and multilateral, such as USAID, BID, BM, AECI, SNV, GTZ and COSUDE, among others[14].

These institutions have allocated significant amount of financial resources to strengthen the de-centralisation process, prioritising a direct relationship with counterparts at the sub-national level: local and regional governments and members of the civil society.
The main International Cooperation Agencies are[15]:

- USAID intervenes mainly in the process through the project Pro Decentralisation (PRODES) in 5 departments with high rates of poverty and cocaine production. The project works with local and international NGO's, that provide technical assistance for regional governments and municipalities. Its work has remarkable institutional impact.
- BID intervenes with the Program of Modernisation and Decentralisation of the State. It is a refundable loan of technical cooperation. This programme has suffered from several prob-lems in its implementation.[16]. Its impact is considerable due to its institutional significance.
- AECI intervenes with the Project CAPRODES; it aims to strengthen management skills in the central, regional and local governments. It's actively involved in the Grupo Gobernabili-dad. Its impact in the decentralisation process can be noticed in the Decentralisation Sub-group.
- German Cooperation: intervenes through refundable technical cooperation with KMF (strengthening administrative and financial management at the sub-national level) through refundable technical cooperation with KFW (strengthening administrative and financial management at the sub-national level) and non refundable with GTZ (improvement of na-tional management systems for services improvement at the sub-national level).
- The Dutch Cooperation: by means of the Regional Governance program it aims to strengthen the management of regional development. Its degree of impact is high in the re-gions where it operates.

13 This opinion has been collected by the current president of CND and has been publicly proposed.
14 See Annex: Committed with the decentralisationprocess. The sub-group is alternately coordinated by one of the agencies. USAID is currently in charge.
15 For further information and detail see Annex: Matrix of the DecentralisationSub-Group.
16 In practice, only 10% of the loan has been executed. Corrective measures are expected with the new government.

5. Overview of the project portfolio plus cooperation with other donors and with local and international NGO's on decentralisation issues

Program of Support to Decentralisationin Rural Spaces (APODER)
Its main purpose is to contribute to the decentralisation process through the development of participatory experiences of local management that produce local development opportunities and help in the fight against poverty. It's in the first stage of operation 2004 – 2007. It is present in 3 regions of extreme poverty.[17] It strengthens institutionally 5 associations of municipalities (53 directly and 150 indirectly). It operates by means of cooperation agreements and technical assistance in partnership with local NGO's specialised in each topic. This project is directly related to decentralisation in rural local spaces. It doesn't develop any direct political activities.[18]
It participates with other programs of the international cooperation such as Caprodes, Spanish Cooperation, Prodes (from the American cooperation), Agorah (from the EU), and CARE; in a group where experiences of management, materials and analysis of the decentralisation process are exchanged.

Project "Support for Ombudsman Five-Year Program"
It contributes to the fulfillment of human rights in Peru by promoting democratic institutionalism and the inclusion of the poorest people, taking equity into account. It operates by means of the "basket fund", together with the Peruvian Agency of International Cooperation (APCI), the Swedish Agency of International Cooperation, the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation, the Belgian Agency of International Cooperation, and the Canadian Agency of International Cooperation.

Project "Access to Justice"
It promotes egalitarian access to justice for the rural population of the country, by means of strengthening communal justice systems and their connection with formal justice. It operates in local NGO's.

Project "Basic Environmental Sanitation in the Southern Highlands"
It stimulates the strengthening of participatory management abilities of governments at the regional, local and communal level for them to assume their responsibility in basic rural sanitation to achieve sustainability of services. This project is in the last stage of execution. It has been implemented for 10 years. Its counterparts are: Regional Office of Health and Employment, Regional Government of Cusco, Ministry of Housing and Construction, and municipalities. Its expertise has allowed it to promote public policies in basic sanitation at the local, regional and national levels.[19].

Project "Sustainable Management of Land and Water in Laderas"
It promotes self-strengthening of institutional and human abilities of municipalities and economic and social organisations for the coordinated management of natural resources.
The project started in 1997; Phase III is currently under implementation. Its counterparts are the Ministry of Agriculture and the Regional Government of Cusco. Its impact is remarkable in districts. It works with local and national NGO's. It is part of the group for Territorial Zoning, together with GTZ, SNV y AECI.

Program of Support for Small and Micro Businesses (SMB) in Peru
It aims to improve competitiveness and the negotiation power of Small and Micro Businesses, promoting coordinated economic development processes. Its counterpart is the Vice-Ministry of

17 Cajamarca, Cusco and Apurimac. Paradoxically, these 3 regions have been favored by the export-mining boom, having more public resources at their disposal, which come from taxes on mining and gas companies.
18 REMURPE (Rural Municipalities Network of Peru) is the main counterpart, and is the institution in charge of duties with incidence in national policy.
19 Sanbasur is a good example of technical work with an overall perspective of development. See Annex: Impact in Sanbasur public policies.

Employment and SMB Promotion. This project is executed by the Swiss NGO Intercooperation, associated to the center of Research, Study and Development Promotion MINKA-Peru. The project started its operations in 2005.

6. Strategic documents issued by SDC on decentralisation: Main issues SDC Strategy for 2010

It raises 5 key topics, each one of them contributes to the general goal of sustainable development; its activities contribute to the reduction of poverty and to the elimination of the causes of structural conflicts.
1. Management and crisis prevention.
2. Good governance.
3. Income and employment improvement.
4. Social justice improvement.
5. Sustainable use of natural resources.

Decentralisation Guide
Decentralisation is not a new topic for SDC, it is a priority as it is a process which contributes to the objectives of the development policy. Decentralisation should achieve a dynamic and constructive cooperation among the government, the private sector and the civil society, and among the local and central powers and the authorities. From this perspective, decentralisation should make sustainable development and good governance easier among the member countries. It raises 3 objectives that are mutually interdependent:

1. Improve the relationship between the state and the society.
2. Improve the effectiveness of public services
3. Promote local development

Peru 2002- 2007: Multi-annual program of cooperation for development

- Fight against poverty is the main part of the Plan.
- Good governance as a new priority, with decentralisation as orientation, as a means to bring together the segregated sectors of the population, in order to bring the state closer to the society.
- Program oriented to productive and social services.
- Improvement of income and employment.
- Key: the activities will be executed under a comprehensive approach

7. Main findings and conclusions

In this section we present the main findings obtained through interviews, document revision and field observation. In order to obtain a conclusion, these elements have been analysed and compared with each evaluation question formulated.

7.1 Level 2: SDC Country office

Relevance

Findings
COSUDE's National Office links in its projects and programs the main guidelines established by SDC. Its thematic relationship with poverty reduction, local economic development, political influence and the promotion of citizen participation is strong. These thematic priorities gather the interests of its main counterparts and are connected to the national priorities, established in the legal framework

1. Describe the strategic position of SDC country offices and projects in support of decentralisation and good governance in relation to local and national decision-makers?

The strategic position of COSUDE PERU's National Office projects, related to decentralisation and good governance responds to the guidelines stated in the Decentralisation Guide, to COSUDE's medium term strategy for 2002-2010

The main point is the connection of Good Governance and the reduction of poverty, by relating it to focal points such as local economic development, the development of local agendas, the strengthening of the decentralisation process, and the promotion of citizen participation. These topics are defined together with the counterparts of COSUDES' projects and programs. There rests the connection with the agents of the decentralisation process, such as rural municipalities and associations, among others.

After reviewing the plans of operations and different projects of the National Office such as APODER, SANBASUR, MASAL and APOMIPE, we can assert that they incorporate SDC's strategic guidelines and that they support the decentralisation process from their field of expertise.

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the strategic, conceptual and thematic support system offered by the Thematic Department of SDC to the operational units?

After interviewing several COSUDE PERU officials we have identified:

Strengths:
- Guidance in many aspects, especially in Gender and empowerment.
- Elaboration of guidelines in different matters.

Weakness:
- There is no permanent communication with the national office.

3. Are the decentralisation measures relevant in the partner country context thereby considering both government and target group perspectives?

After checking the objectives of COSUDE's programs in Peru that are related to decentralisation, we can state that their measures are adequate for the Peruvian context, especially for their target groups.

Furthermore, we can assert that the implemented measures are related to the legal framework established in the Constitution, the National Agreement and the decentralisationlaws. The current government has not defined its decentralisation proposal yet.

Conclusion
COSUDE PERU's decentralisation approach is relevant because it is connected to the national context and its priorities; furthermore, regarding the decentralisation issue, it is closely linked to the strategic orientations of SDC's central office.

Effectiveness

Findings
By means of APODER, COSUDE Peru works closely with rural municipalities in areas of extreme poverty. It has also incorporated local economic development, and as an unexpected and significant outcome the promotion of municipal association has been achieved beyond its scope of operation and without the intervention of the project. This is one of COSUDE PERU's key strengths.

4. To what extent do the decentralisation measures supported by SDC achieve the expected outputs and outcomes? What are the unintended effects, if any?

APODER project, COSUDE PERU's interventions more closely related to decentralisation are in the first stage of implementation. The revision of the Matrix of outcomes 2004 – 2005 allows us to conclude that certain guidelines such as debate and public agenda, participatory management, local economic promotion and cross-sectional cooperation (with other COSUDE PERU's projects) have a 50% rate of achievement.

Regarding the expected outcomes, after interviewing the M&E responsible and the project manager we can assure that many municipalities have been interested in municipal association, resulting in several initiatives beyond the scope of APODER. Moreover, a greater political commitment from the people who took the training courses on development and local leadership has been displayed, as they took part in the municipal elections last November.

5. Does the SDC project design contribute to improved management and service delivery utility within its scope?

After reviewing documents and conducting interviews we can assert that COSUDE Peru's projects have been incorporating in its implementation design different measures that contribute to improve the provision of some public services. These services are water, drainage, civil registry, road maintenance, economic promotion and public sanitation; these are considered as impacts and will be measured in February 2007.

6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of SDC's cooperation with external partners in decentralisation processes: Government agencies, citizen's groups, NGOs including Swiss NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors, etc.

Strengths

- Incorporation of a vision of economic development in rural local spaces.
- Promotion of municipal association with the cooperation agencies and debate spaces for the civil society.
- Management of compensations with national partners.
- Capacity development for the agents of the decentralisation process it works on.

Weaknesses

- There is no explicit strategy for the work of national impact on decentralisation
- The visibility of its projects' contribution to the decentralisation process is weak.

7. What are the recommendations for increasing the effect of SDC thematic support system to its operational units and of the learning processes regarding decentralisation and in general?

After conducting several interviews with key staff of SDC's national office we suggest the following recommendations:

- Deepen the study of implementation strategies for the units of operation, regarding their projects related to decentralisation.
- Develop programs of exchange of experiences among the different units of operation.
- Discuss with the units of operation their strategies of political incidence.

Conclusion (on effectiveness)
The promotion of municipal association, the work in rural areas, the promotion of local economic development and citizen participation are COSUDE PERU's key strengths. They should be taken into consideration by the thematic department in order to legitimise its role and its contribution to strengthening national offices. Moreover, the improvement in public services provision in the areas where it operates is assumed as a result of the processes it has promoted.

Sustainability

Findings
COSUDE PERU's projects are connected to the existing local dynamics, and their social and political agents have a key relationship with the Rural Municipalities Network of Peru, which gathers 400 out of 1000 municipalities. It stimulates communication and political influence, training its counterparts as direct speakers in the decentralisation process .

8. How are the relations with ministry of local government, local government associations and other governmental agencies involved in governance reforms?

In Peru, at the local level, mayors are the political authorities, elected by popular vote. The implementation strategy of COSUDE's projects has a close connection with the existing local dynamics and with the agents who lead the process. In this perspective, they promote the development of skills of municipal authorities and officials.

As part of its objectives for the first stage APODER aims to strengthen institutionally the municipal associations within its scope. In this context, its relationship with the Rural Municipalities Network of Peru (which gathers approximately 400 rural municipalities of the country) is very close, developing technical assistance and institutional strengthening activities.[20]

On the contrary, we can't assert it has a close relationship with the National Council on Decentralisation, the public institution in charge of the process, despite being part of its Directive Committee.

9. Invariably decentralisation measures influence the administrative and political balance of power. How does SDC support decentralisation measures, local decision-making and central-local policy relations?

Both APODER and COSUDE PERU's strategies have influence on the empowerment of the key actors in the decentralisation process, aiming at improving their ability of communication, negotiation and political incidence. REMURPE, due to the weakness of the Association of Municipalities of Peru, has become the speaker in front of the congress (in the debate of the new Law of Municipalities and the bill of Law of Mancomunidades) and many other public institutions.

Moreover, COSUDE's projects work in local spaces strengthens the communication between the authorities and the civil society (organised in "mesas de concertación").

10. Which are the recommendations for SDC's role on the improvement to harmonized access for the support of decentralisation?

After reviewing documents such as COSUDE's strategy in Peru and conducting interviews of different public and international cooperation officials we suggest:

- Insist on the dialogue among agencies of international cooperation.

- Publicise the experiences learned in the field work of projects related to decentralisation.

Conclusion (on sustainability)
COSUDE PERU promotes abilities of communication and political incidence in its counterparts. Its project APODER stands out, as it works closely with the Network of Peruvian municipalities, developing initiatives of national impact. COSUDE PERU should be more actively involved in

20 In Peru, approximately 1000 municipalities are considered as rural. It's important to mention that there are other municipal association experiences that are not related to REMURPE.

the spaces of the international cooperation and should publicize nationally the lessons it has learned in its work field.

7.2 Level 3: Programme and Project level

Project information - APODER
Duration: June 2004 to December 2007
Total budget: US$ 2,750,000. 67% allocated to investment funds and 33%, to costs of operation.
Annual budget: US$ 740,000 approximately.
The Project has a National Coordinator (Lima) who has one assistant at his disposal. It has two regional offices with two regional coordinators, each one of them has administrative support. The national staff consists of 8 people, all of them on payroll (annual contract). There is one Swiss professional only in the regional office in Cusco.

Program Organisation
The Directive Committee is the top organism of decision. It is comprised of one CND representative, one from APCI, one from the association of municipalities, one from the organisations of the civil society, one private economic agent, one from COSUDE and one person responsible of the program management with no right to vote.

Project objectives
General: contribute to the process of decentralisation through the development of local management experiences which are participatory, transparent, inclusive, coordinated, effective, that generate local development and help to eradicate poverty.

Specific
1. Contribute to the development of learning processes from local management experiences in order to influence the design and application of rules and decentralisationpolicies at the regional and national levels.
   Outcome: development of capacities by local authorities and the community to jointly elaborate local agendas.
2. Promote processes and capacities for the participatory management of development.
   Outcome: strengthen the capacities of municipalities for an open and participatory management; strengthen social organisations to promote the co-management of public resources, institutionalise spaces of coordination between public institutions and social organisations, in order to achieve local development and to fight against poverty.
3. Make possible the identification and consideration of development opportunities for the local economies.
   Outcome: Achieve the development and implementation of economic promotion policies by local governments, in coordination with private economic agents, and promote public investment programs and projects, destined to stimulate private investment.
4. Strengthen the programs supported by COSUDE, including the decentralised structures of the State in their actions.
   Outcome: programs supported by COSUDE that receive technical assistance from CORLIM and APODER develop experiences and incorporate new approaches that pursue the involvement of the decentralized public institutions and the new agents and processes it encourages.

Target groups, there are two:
Focal action: municipalities where APODER will support with guidelines and activities. One or more partners will work directly and intensively in the municipality, with leaders, social and economic organisations, spaces of coordination and local authorities. Because this group belongs to the scope of the project, its results will be measured.

Broad action: municipalities under the influence of the program, because of certain activities of regional and national scope.

Impact
APODER has as one of its guidelines the empowerment of the civil society and local authorities, through the development of capacities for the creation of local agendas. Moreover, the institutionalisation of spaces for coordination among political authorities and social organisation was promoted, in order to fight against poverty and to achieve development.

The unexpected outcome of this process was the articulation of new associations of municipalities beyond the scope of the project. Another unexpected but negative outcome was the participation of local leaders in the recent election of November, in opposite lists to their major's. The electoral debate benefited from the process but the spaces of coordination and technical assistance to municipalities were weakened.

Project results
Upon revision of documents and interviews with APODER management we can assert that it has a Logical Framework. This instrument has allowed the formulation of general and specific projects with their corresponding indicators of outcome and impact. After reading the indicators for 2004-2005[21] we conclude that by the middle of Phase 1 the objectives are under construction. Moreover, APODER has impact indicators that will be measured next year.

Relevance

Findings
APODER considers the basic principles established by SDC in its guidelines and plans of operation. Its guidelines are also consistent with the priorities of the cooperation agencies that work with decentralisation, supporting initiatives related to the reduction of poverty and good governance, operating in areas of extreme poverty in rural parts of the country, and actively promoting municipal association.

1. Are the design, management and results of the project consistent with overall SDC guidelines and strategy and the aims outlined in the SDC DecentralisationGuidance Document?

Upon revision of the Decentralisation Guide regarding the design, management and results for APODER we conclude that their Basic guidelines have been consistently incorporated in order to define the project's objectives and for the development of its implementation strategy.

2. Are the design, management and results of the project responsive to the country context, taking into account particular perspectives of target groups and those of the government?

According to the implementation strategy described in its management reports, APODER supports itself and responds to the strategies of the different agents of the decentralisation process. Therefore, it considers the national context in its design and method of management, taking into account the interests of target groups. This is the case with rural municipalities. This is not the case with the current government because it hasn't developed its decentralisation proposal yet.

3. Are the design, management and results of the project responsive to state of the art developments in cooperation for decentralisation, e.g. best practices, donor priorities and agreements, international conventions, etc.?

After reviewing the Matrix of the International Cooperation Agencies regarding decentralisation , we conclude that the situation of the cooperation for decentralisation has the following features:

21 By the end of November 2006, APODER started collecting the information of this year, mainly from its partners and allies.

- communication and national influence with the leading institutions of the process: CND, MEF, Congress.
- work priorities at the national, regional and local levels.
- coordinated and complementary efforts in common work fields
- strengthening of coordination spaces and leaderships of the civil society, promotion of local economic development.

APODER's design and management responds to the last three features mentioned above. Regarding national incidence, APODER takes no active role because its counterpart, REMURPE, does that work, especially in the Congress. This responds to the design and strategy of the project.

4. What is the project's purpose, and how relevant is this purpose?

APODER's purpose is to support the decentralisation process based on the experiences of coordinated management in the rural areas where it operates. The relevance of its institutional purpose lies in its decision to work in rural areas, where there is extreme poverty and social exclusion, but where participatory experiences and municipal co-management with significant effects on national
processes can also be found. As a complementary criterion, there is strategic support in municipal associations and in the focal point of local economic development

Conclusion (on relevance)
The relevance of the APODER Project is based, on one hand, on its relation with SDC's guidelines referred to decentralisation. On the other hand, its institutional objectives consider both the interests of the political and social agents it works with, and the objectives and priorities of the international cooperation agencies specialised in the process of decentralisation.

Effectiveness

Findings
By means of the APODER Project (currently in the first stage of implementation), COSUDE PERU has contributed to improve the relationship between the citizen and the state, in the areas where it operates. Moreover, it has developed the approach of local economic development in rural municipalities, including this vision as part of its policies of municipal management. It has also encouraged municipal association as part of the strategy to promote decentralisation.
5. Has the project contributed to:

State-citizen relation:
Both APODER's objectives and its implementation strategy have the process of legitimacy of authorities before organised citizens as one of their priorities. This process is carried out in the coordination spaces APODER encourages and strengthens through technical assistance for more than 50 districts. Therefore, we can assure that it contributes to strengthen and legitimate the democratic participation of citizens.

The revision of the indicators for 2005 shows that the work on technical assistance in the processes of participatory budget promotes the integration of women, young people and small rural communities in approximately 30 districts.

Effectiveness of state services:
Regarding the effectiveness of state services we can't assert that the project has contributed to promote the substitution of responsibilities or the improvement of public services' provision because they are considered as long term impact results[22]. However, the measurement of quality

22 Impact results will be measured by February 2006.

improvement in water and drainage, public cleaning, economic promotion and civil registry is considered.

On the other hand, APODER has encouraged the development of financial and technical data in 69 municipalities and accountability processes in 38 municipalities.

Local Development:
Upon revision of APODER's objectives and strategies, and the results for its indicators of 2005 we can assert that the project is contributing to a better use of the local potential. The project has promoted economic development under an approach of territorial development in 9 districts. Moreover, 60 municipalities have a public-private agenda and an ad-hoc coordination space, where nearly 200 producers, manufacturers and suppliers of financial and non-financial services participate.

APODER's approach of local development aims to reduce the inequalities between the center and the periphery, as well as to reduce poverty, therefore creating more competence and more local capacities.

Promotion of decentralisation:
Two years after the start of Phase I, and after revising indicators of results and performing interviews on the main agents of the process, we consider that it has promoted good governance in the local space, including accountability processes and the transparency of the local authorities before their citizens, in approximately 69 districts. It has promoted and it works with 7 associations of municipalities in Cajamarca, Cusco and Apurimac, and, at the national level, it institutionally strengthens REMURPE.

Moreover, it has promoted economic development in 34 municipalities, resulting 20 Plans of Local Economic Development.
6. Have the objectives of projects been achieved, and if not fully, to what extent?

After revising indicators for 2004 – 2005 and interviewing APODER's board members we conclude that there is strong evidence that suggests that the planned objectives will be achieved by the end of Phase1.[23]

To confirm our statement we present the following evidence: more than 31 districts agreed on a common agenda with the population, approximately 45 districts have up-to-date financial and technical information, 13 municipalities perform accountability processes, 56% of the social organisations with previous agreements with their members are involved in coordination spaces, 19 municipalities have redefined their role as economic promoters, 18 municipalities include young people, women and small rural communities in the elaboration of the participatory budget.

Conclusion (on effectiveness)
APODER has contributed effectively to the decentralisation process from its rural work field. In this phase of implementation it has consolidated as a public policy the subject of local economic development. Furthermore, its strategy to improve the relationship between the State and the citizens, promoting spaces of debate and coordination, has been very effective.

Sustainability

Findings
APODER has as its sustainability strategy the participatory construction of the decentralisation process in rural areas, and for the lessons obtained in the work field to become key elements in

23 APODER works in approximately 50 districts.

the formulation of public policies. It also develops instruments to strengthen the capacities of the social political agents it works with.

7. Does the SDC project design contribute to enhancement of performance monitoring and accountability?

According to its Monitoring and Evaluation System, APODER uses a monitoring and evaluation approach of impact-oriented development actions. It considers that M&E should contribute considerably in the decision making process, in the program's strategic and operational direction. Moreover, M&E's process involves not only the staff of the project but also its partners and allies. Therefore we consider that APODER does contribute to improve monitoring and accountability.

8. To what extent is the results achieved sustainable or can be expected to prove sustainable?

Upon revision of APODER's implementation strategy and the sustainability analysis, it is based on two fundamental elements: 1) a building process of social legitimacy for the different activities of the project, that is, for the agents to make it their own; and, 2) for the learning processes of the different activities of the project led by local authorities and leading social organisations to be part of coordinated agendas an public policies.

Therefore, taking into account the results achieved so far and the vision of the program, we can assert that APODER's sustainability is very likely. However, with the election of new local political authorities, two important assumptions of the logical framework will be tested: the commitment and the political will this process of promotion of coordinated local management. The reformulation of this question in the first stage of Phase II will be very appropriate.

9. Does the project build management capacity in local government and how?

According to the design of APODER's management system, it contributes remarkably to the process of development of management capacities in the local governments where it directly operates.

The Project has developed many instruments for training activities: workshops, seminars, programs for the exchange of experiences.

Through these instruments it has been able to formulate different instruments of municipal management: Manual of organisation and functions, Diagram for staff allocation. Moreover, it has promoted instruments of development such as: Coordinated Plans of Development, Plans of Economic Development.

10. In the absence of ongoing SDC funding and support, how would the gains be capitalised and built on?

APODER's strategy of sustainability is based on two elements: the appropriation of the processes where the population and authorities are actively involved, that is, for the legitimacy framework of the process to rest directly on the institutional and social actors; and public policies -as they are the result of processes of collective learning between the local government and the civil society- which influence public management and provide it with a long term perspective.

As long as the encouraged processes and the agents are empowered, and they become key elements of the "new social capital" we can expect sustainability in this experience of participatory and coordinated local management.

1. Would funding, competencies and external expertise be required after the project has ended, and how would these be secured?

After interviewing APODER's board members and some local partners we consider that their implementation strategy encourages a partnership with local agents and institutions. Moreover, it operates with municipalities that have a compensation at their disposal in order to implement the most important activities. This happens because the activities programmed by the project are based on the project's main agents.

By the end of the Project, there will be better conditions for local management, but we consider that they will still require funds, competences, and local and foreign experiences. Moreover, we assert that the certainty of accomplishment on these inputs will depend on local authorities' commitment and in the development of a local market of professional services.

2. Will local authorities build on project gains?

The learning processes of authorities and social organisations leaders are verified throughout the implementation of the APODER project, to that extent, the authorities include the lessons they have learned to their local management by means of their agendas and public policies.
Conclusion (on sustainability)
APODER bases the sustainability of the Project in the existence of political will from authorities and commitment from social leaders. Furthermore, both public agendas' formulation and their execution into policies of municipal management are key pieces of this process. However, in this first Phase it is not possible to categorically affirm that all sustainability conditions are guaranteed, especially when the change of municipal authorities is under way.

7.3 Level 4: Policy and country context level

Relevance

Findings
The decentralisation process in Peru has the legal framework for local and regional governments, establishing roles and competences for each level of government. Both the approaches for sustainability and the fight against poverty, and the guidelines of the Paris Declaration have been included in the proposal of the donor community.

1. Are the decentralisation measures relevant in the respective partner country context thereby considering both government and target group perspectives?

The current decentralisation process has a legal framework that consists of laws for local and regional governments, and laws that encourage citizen participation, transparency and accountability at the local and regional level. However, important topics such as fiscal decentralisation, the system of transferences to sub-national governments, the Law of the Executive Branch, and the Law of Public Employment have not been considered yet.

We conclude that there are regulations which consider the interests of target groups. However, their disobedience makes the results more formal that real; therefore, the decentralisation process has not had an impact on the quotidian life of this country's poorest and excluded people.

2. Is the relevant discussion in the donor community (DAC Govnet) and in the applied research reflected in SDC's decentralisationmeasures?

The donor community (DAC) points out on its guidelines for the XXI century that sustainable development depends on local support, and that foreign donors should focus more on the participation of the groups they target and on strengthening local capacities. COSUDE's mid-term strategy for 2002-2010 takes these guidelines into consideration and establishes "sustainable development" as the main goal, and the "fight against poverty" as the key strategy.

3. What is SDC's role in regards to decentralisation in harmonised approaches as prescribed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness?

COSUDE Peru's role regarding the effective promotion of the agreements of the Paris Declaration is incorporated in SDC's strategy for 2010, in the Multi-annual Program of Cooperation for Development, and in COSUDE's strategy in Peru.

Moreover, COSUDE's projects such as APODER include those guidelines as part of their objectives and their implementation strategy. We can assert that COSUDE PERU promotes the main guidelines of the Paris Declaration in his work related to decentralisation.

4. What is the legal and institutional context for the national local government system? (If possible give sources.)

The decentralisation process in Peru has an abundant legal framework: the Political Constitution places decentralisationwithin the institutional framework; the Organic Law of Municipalities establishes functions, competences, and attributes for local governments: the Law of Regional Governments establishes functions, competences, and attributes for regional governments; the Law of Participatory Budget and the Law of the National System of Public Investment. Moreover, the National Agreement -the institution for political coordination for the consolidation process of democracy, the affirmation of national identity and the design of a national common vision for the future- established decentralisationas one of the government's policies.

5. Have decentralisation reforms been initiated recently, what are the main issues and what may be the relation to the Swiss measures?

The process of decentralisationwas relaunched on 2001. Its main features are: new legal framework for local and regional governments, announcement of regional elections in 2003, greater control on the use of public resources (from MEF and from the civil society), greater involvement of the civil society in public issues, and the obligation for accountability processes and transparency in public management procedures. If we consider COSUDE PERU's guidelines such as the work in local rural spaces, the promotion of local economic development, the promotion of communication and incidence, and the coordinated and participatory management of the government, we can conclude that there is a good correspondence between both work perspectives regarding the process of decentralisation.

6. What other donors are involved in decentralisation programmes and how (broad lines only)?

USAID, through PRODES (Pro Decentralisation), with technical assistance in local governments in areas of extreme poverty; AECI (Spanish Cooperation), with technical assistance in local and regional governments; SNV (Dutch Cooperation), promotes governance and economic development in regional spaces; GTZ, encourages governance and the improvement of public administration at the sub-national level; IADB and World Bank, with loans aimed at improving capacities for regional and local governments and the reform of the State.

Conclusion (on relevance)
The national context has been favorable towards decentralisation. However, because it is a legal process mainly administrative, it has had no repercussion on the target groups. There have been many efforts from international cooperation agencies to emphasize the relevance of the process as part of a perspective of State Reform.

Effectiveness of cooperation and aid

Findings
The projects promoted by COSUDE PERU work closely with rural local governments, encouraging coordinated and participatory municipal management and with a territorial approach that promotes local development.

The different international cooperation agencies, including COSUDE, promote several interventions in the three levels of government, contributing with technical assistance on topics such as the development of capacities in national, regional and local governments, and promoting transparency and control of public management. Most of these agencies use other institutions as mechanism to execute their interventions.

7. Is the design of decentralisationprojects pointing to an effective way of promoting decentralisationfor the different government tiers?

After reviewing decentralisation projects such as APODER, SANBASUR and MASAL, we consider that by promoting coordinated and participatory local management, by having the territory as central axis of economic development, and by encouraging the strengthening of the capacities of local agents and their specific experiences on public policies, these projects can contribute to decentralisation .

8. Does the design of sector programs or projects that support decentralisation aim for the different government tiers?

According to the Matrix of the cooperation agencies and the interviews performed on the American, Spanish, Dutch and German Cooperation Agencies; we assert that the design of the programs and projects supported by the decentralisation process are present in the three levels of government.

There are interventions of national scope in the case of the multilateral cooperation; and regional and local scope, in the case of the bilateral cooperation. We believe that there is a greater correspondence between the design and the local level of theses projects.

9. Are the institutional arrangements appropriate to offer assistance to any decentralisation reform strategies?

According to the Decentralisation's Sub.-Group's International Cooperation's Matrix of projects, the programs or projects that offer technical assistance and that were executed or are currently been executed respond to an institutional framework of international cooperation with national counterparts and local and regional governments. This is not the case for the Multilateral Cooperation, especially for the IADB, which hasn't been able to execute its program on the forecasted time, due to regulatory and technical remarks made by the National System of Public Investment.

We conclude that the institutional framework to offer technical assistance for the decentralisation reform is not standardised and prevents the execution of projects and programs, especially from the multilateral cooperation, where the main counterpart is the government. This issue is being considered by the current government.

10. What is the strategic position of decentralisation projects in relation to reforms of government and for decentralisation?

After conducting several interviews of officials in the International Cooperation's program and reviewing the main institutional operation frameworks we find that the strategic position responds basically to the strengthening of the process (legal framework appropriate to the reality

of the local and regional governments and to the interests of the civil society), promotion of the communication with the governing institutions of the process (CND, MEF , PCM), technical assistance to strengthen and develop capacities in local and regional governments, incidence and technical assistance with key agents such as the Congress, CND and MEF.

Conclusion (on effectiveness of cooperation and aid)
The commitment of the international cooperation agencies towards the decentralisation process has been diverse in themes and in geographical scope. From the Sub-Group of Decentralisation 's work, the sharing of experiences, and specific works and resources in themes such as capacities development at the sub-national level have been initiated. However, most difficulties lie on the incapacity of the government to implement projects of the international cooperation, especially those which come from multilateral aid.

Sustainability

Findings
COSUDE PERU is recognised for its work in rural areas, the promotion of municipal associations-especially REMURPE- and its approach of local economic development, agenda promotion and public policies. There lies its comparative advantage. It doesn't' stand out for a leading role in the subject of regional and national incidence.

11. What is the assessment of key players on sustainability of the Swiss cooperation measures on decentralisation?

Interviews were conducted with other agencies of international cooperation that take part in the decentralisation process, such as USAID, AECI, SNV and GTZ. The work with local governments in rural areas, and the promotion of local economic development and municipal association –especially technical assistance with REMURPE-are recognised. Its promotion approach of social and economic inclusion is also recognised. From a different point of view, not too flexible intervention models and a limited commitment with the national agenda of decentralisation are perceived, the former been connected to the lack of visibility in the national political agenda.

12. Do the interventions of SDC lead to improved public finance management?

The current legal framework of the decentralisation process establishes the obligation from all public institutions -local and regional included- to manage their systems of public finances according to the guidelines of the Integrated System of Financial Administration -an interactive system of information that integrates budget, accounting and treasury processes among the different institutions nationwide, making the work of the national government more transparent- and to the National System of Public Investment –which promotes planning capacities for public administration, regarding the implementation of the "project's stage" to public investment-.

According to the Matrix of outcomes for 2004-2005, APODER has worked with approximately 45 rural municipalities promoting the elaboration of reports on financial management according to the technical-legal requirements established by MEF. Therefore, it has promoted technical assistance in order to strengthen the institutional capacities in financial management.

13. What, if any, appear to be the comparative advantages of SDC's approach to decentralisation process es? And what are its pitfalls?

From our perspective, the comparative advantages of COSUDE PERU's approach are: the work with municipalities in rural areas located in regions which a large amount of economic resources-that come from taxes on mining and gas companies-at their disposal, the promotion of local economic development, the work with municipal associations, and the promotion of agendas and local public policies.

Moreover, we consider that the sustainability strategy is weak because it doesn't connect more actively the lessons it has learned with the work on national political incidence; especially by leaving in the hands of its counterparts such key job that visualizes the institutional work, it does not assume responsibility in the support of national incidence strategies sponsored by other development agencies.

14. Are any comparative advantages exploited sufficiently?

The work on promoting municipal association developed with REMURPE is one of the most remarkable points acknowledged by the different institutional agents of the decentralisation process, and represents one of the key comparative advantages of COSUDE PERU's work.

15. What are the relations between projects and the Swiss local government system?

In this evaluation process we have found no evidence of a relationship between the projects executed in Peru and the system of Swiss local governments.

16. What are the strengths and weaknesses of SDC's cooperation with external partners in decentralisation process es: Government agencies, citizen's groups, NGOs including Swiss NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors, etc.

Strengths

1) Implementation of its projects in rural areas with municipalities from districts and provinces.
2) Works with municipal associations at the regional and national level.
3) Promotion of communication for the formulation of agendas and local public policies.
4) Promotion and technical assistance for local economic development.
5) Cooperation with other cooperation agencies in common work fields.

Weaknesses

1) Weak capacity of national and regional incidence.
2) There is no consistent evidence of a strategy that promotes and strengthens professional local services in order to give sustainability to the project.

17. What is SDC's role in regards to decentralisation in harmonised approaches as prescribed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness?

The agreements of the Paris Declaration are incorporated in SDC's strategy for 2010, in the Multi-annual Program of Cooperation for Development, and in COSUDE's strategy in Peru. They are implemented in the articulation of approaches (decentralisation as a means to strengthen social actors and not merely as transfer of competences, the development of institutional and human capacities and the promotion of participatory processes). The promotion of political debate is considered as well.

18. How would you describe the relations in partner countries with ministries of local government, local government associations and other governmental agencies involved in governance reforms?

According to its implementation strategy COSUDE PERU maintains and promotes in this country, institutional relationships with local authorities (majors) and their governments. Moreover, it's closely connected to municipal associations from the areas where it operates. COSUDE PERU has included in APODER's board committee the National Council on Decentralisation, which is the governing body of the decentralisation process. We conclude that the relationships with local and national institutions regarding governance reforms, especially those regarding decentralisation are consistent.

Conclusion (on sustainability)

COSUDE PERU has in its approach and in the implementation plan of its decentralisation projects different comparative advantages that could become key pieces of a sustainability process. Subjects such as economic development, citizen participation and associations in rural areas are recognized as its main contributions to promote decentralisation. However, it has no leading role in spaces of national and regional incidence.

8. Analysis of SDC comparative advantages, strengths and weaknesses of the SDC approach

Upon revision of SDC's strategic documents and performance of interviews on different agents such as cooperation agencies and public officials of governing bodies, we consider the comparative advantages of the Swiss Cooperation in Peru the following:

- Room for the development of innovative experiences in different subjects related to decentralisation.
- Work levels in national and local areas.
- Institutional strengthening and capacities development of the agents of the decentralisation process.
- Use of counterparts as part of the commitments with national partners.

Strengths

- Choice of rural spaces in districts, provinces and regions for all of its interventions.
- Incorporation of the territory as part of the concept and the local economic development strategy.
- Articulation of experiences and processes under implementation.
- Promotion of public policies together with regional governments and municipalities from districts and provinces.

Weaknesses

- In the implementation of different projects/programs it is not established precisely who is the governing body on the subject of decentralisation.
- Political incidence in public management should have local, regional and national scope. APODER doesn't have regional scope.
- No evidence supports a development strategy of a market for local services which contributes to a strategy that promotes local capacities.

9. Cooperation with other partners and aid effectiveness

Upon revision of the Matrix of the DecentralisationSub-Group's Donors and the activities of some of COSUDE PERU's projects we consider that:

a) APODER project: it coordinates actively with other projects and programs of the International Cooperation such as CAPRODES from the Spanish Cooperation, PRODES from USAID, AGORAH from the EU and Fortalece from DFID.
b) There is a coordination space where certain joint activities are planned, such as seminars and/or national and international events related to the subject of decentralisation. Moreover, educational materials for training and technical assistance have been produced for local governments and for the civil society.
c) Ombudsman Project: which operates by means of a "basket fund", together with the Peruvian Agency of International Cooperation (APCI), the Swedish Agency of International Cooperation, the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation, the Belgian Agency of International Cooperation, and the Canadian Agency of International Cooperation

10. SDC Berne support and relations with country office

To answer this question we performed interviews on CORLIMA' officials, including COSUDE PERU's director and some officials of the programs of the National Office. We acknowledge a positive relationship with the Latin American Departments. This is not the case for the Thematic Department on Governance; despite its role in the process of building specialised knowledge we consider that the relationship with the National Office is weak. They recognize the existence of visits and communication, however, we found that the lack of close support is perceived, being a distant work partner.

The particularity of this process is the exchange with other offices in South America. We conclude that there is no recurrent process of policy definition between Berne and the National Office. Paradoxically, this has resulted in more flexibility to define national priorities, as well as in a more favorable attitude towards the promotion of innovative experiences.

11. Recommendations

SDC's Latin America department

- Promote a program of experience interchange for Latin American countries regarding the decentralisation process, especially its implementation and its strategies of national incidence.

COSUDE Peru

- Define the leadership in the subject of decentralisation among the different projects it is responsible for. This will contribute to define roles and responsibilities and will encourage a greater use of the lessons learned in the different interventions.
- Define the guidelines on political incidence of the projects in charge. This will encourage the debate on COSUDE' roles.
- Spread the contributions of projects such as SANBASUR y MASAL in the subject of decentralisation, especially in management of public policies at the local, regional and national levels.
- Strengthen the institutional work of the Decentralisation Group. This includes the promotion of debate, spaces to meet with specialists from other institutions, and the dissemination of the learned lessons among the different projects in charge.

APODER

- Promote spaces of debate and coordination among local and regional governments where it operates.
- Redefine together with CORLIMA from COSUDE PERU, its strategy of political incidence, especially in national and regional areas. This will contribute to define the roles in the decentralisation process, especially for the second Phase of intervention.
- Specify the role it plays in the development of local markets of professional services for local development. This subject will contribute to the sustainability strategy of the project
- Link the lessons learned throughout the Project with the incidence on public policy at the local and regional levels. This will contribute to the sustainability strategy of its interventions.
- Support and strengthen municipal associations.
- Support interregional articulation, promoting the participation of other agents from the international cooperation and the promotion of development

12. Management Response of SDC Peru and SDC Bern/Peru desk

Peru

In general the information report in this document seems important and useful. We also agree with the methodology used (interviews, visit of field and documents reviews), but we don't agree with some issues, which we explain below.

Chapter 2: Overall conclusions	
" However, it has no direct intervention in the national process "	SDC-Peru doesn't intervene directly in the internal national process but it promotes political dialogue through the governance donors group. The governance donors group holds high level dialogues with the Peruvian State and the national government. We prepare many events related to the decentralisation process, e.g. proposing to the national presidency candidates for public posts in decentralization. We created capacities for Peruvian social actors, so that they can have political influence on the government, e.g. REMURPE (rural municipalities net).
"The sustainability of the process is weak because it depends on the political will and on the still incipient legitimacy of social leaderships ".	The sustainability is still weak, because the APODER project is at its first stage. Decentralization is a political and social process; therefore the results will occur in middle and long term periods. The sustainability depends on the political will and citizen responsibility. In this sense, new social actors (Remurpe, rural municipalities, and rural communicators) are changing the political system, e.g. many local authorities with new visions, new initiatives and new styles of ruling have participated as students at the leadership school. There are many experiences of local agreements (social covenants) that show that this is a new trend in governance process.
"COSUDE Peru includes in its intervention proposal the interests of its counterparts, that determine its Plan of Operations, especially in APODER. This restricts the independence and the vision of the institutional performance."	The APODER Project is innovative, because it supports the social actors, this doesn't mean that they work for APODER interests, the APODER project works on behalf of the social actors and for their benefits. The APODER project is a mechanism whereby many social actors, consultants, experts and institutions create new knowledge in order to reach the decentralization goal. APODER is not an institutions, it's a temporary project.
Chapter 7.1 Level 2: SDC Country Office	

Relevance	Ok
Effectiveness Weaknesses "There is no explicit strategy for the work of national impact on decentralization." "The visibility of its projects' contribution to the decentralisation process is weak"	Empowerment is an important principle in the SDC's strategy. In this sense, the scope of the APODER project is less wide than that of the social actors (municipalities associations). This is an intentional strategy.
Sustainability	Ok
Chapter 7.2 Level 3: Programme and Project level	Ok
Chapter 7.3 Level 4: Policy and country level	Ok
"Moreover, we consider that the sustainability strategy is weak because it doesn't connect more actively the lessons it has learned with the work on national political incidence; especially by leaving in the hands of its counterparts such key job that visualizes the institutional work, it does not assume responsibility in the support of national incidence strategies sponsored by other development agencies."	The strategy of the sustainability was created at the beginning of the APODER project. The sustainability is part of the decentralization process, it's not the project itself. Sustainability means strengthening local leaders, local agreements, local communicators, and the local actors, so that the latter may exert political influence, e.g. on the law of the municipalities, on the law of participatory budget, and on the law of the communities.
Chapter 8: Analysis of SDC comparative advantages.	
"In the implementation of different projects/programs it is not established precisely who is the governing body on the subject of decentralization". "Political incidence in public management should have local, regional and national scope. APODER doesn't have regional scope".	We lack of a cross-strategy for our projects, but SDC – Lima does manage the executions of the project goals.

Annex G: List of documents

Area / type	Title
Decentralisation	Decentralisation in development cooperation – the Swiss case (Author: Prof. Linder)
Decentralisation	Switzerland's International Cooperation, Annual report 2004
Decentralisation	Guide to Decentralization
Decentralisation	Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction (Policy Insights No.5 2005)
SDC	SDC Strategy 2010
Evaluation	Evaluation 2005/3 Independent Evaluation of the SDC/seco Medium Term concept 2002-2006 in Serbia & Montenegro
Evaluation	Evaluation 2004/1 SDC's Human Rights and Rule of Law Guidance Documents - Influence Effectiveness and Relevance within SDC
NGO material	General info on Helvetas and InterCooperation
NGO material	Knowledge-Management on IC local governance projects + annex II
Regional workshop, South	Regional Workshop on Local Governance Report, Maputo, Mozambique 17-18 March 2004
Regional workshop, East	Report on Workshop of SDC's SRP and SOE divisions on Municipal Development / Local Governance. Mokra Gora, Serbia, June 6 -8 2005
PERU	
SDC in Peru	General intro to SDC in Peru
APODER	1) Pro.doc (Phase 2 01.06.2004-31.12.2007) 2) Plan de fase de Implementacion del Programa APODER (2004-2007)
Country Programme 2002-2007 (In German)	Peru 2002-2007 Landesprogramm der Schweizerischen entwicklungszusammenarbeit
Country Programme 2002-2007 (In Spanish)	Perú 2002-2007 Programma plurianual de cooperación para el desarollo
Good governance in Peru	Contribuir a la buena gobernabilidad, Estrategia de COSUDE en el Perú
Good governance in Peru	Good Governance Concept, SDC Strategy of Peru, Executive Summary
Info from José, SDC Peru	List of all SDC programmes in Peru APODER resumé
Poverty Reduction in Latin America (Spanish)	Apoyar a América Latina para reducir la pobreza – La cooperación al desarrollo de Suiza en América Latina: Estrategia de COSUDE a mediano plazo 2002-2010
Poverty Reduction in Latin America (German)	Die schweizerische Entwicklungszusammenarbiet mit Lateinamerika: Mittelfrist-strategie 2002-2010 der DEZA
Dec.doc	"Ayuda memoria" del taller sobre descentralization de 29 al 30 octubre 2004 en Quito, Ecuador
INDIA	
SDC India	Annual Programme 2006 India
SDC India	SDC India - Country Programme 2003-2010
India Hunger	Pro.doc (01.06.2004-31.05.2008)
India PRIA (The society for Participatory Research in India)	1) Critical Appraisal of PRIA strategy 2003-2006 2) Governance where people matter.." External review of SIDA support to PRIA 3) Pro.doc 01.01.2003-31.12.2005)

	4) Pro.doc.01.06.2006 – 31.05.2009)
India PRISMO (Panchayati Raj Institutions' support and Mobilisation Programme)	1) Pro.DOC (Phase 6 July 2002-June 2005) 2) "A situational analysis for the PRISMO" External rep. Dec.2004
India ISPS (Indo Swiss Project, Sikkim)	Pro.doc. (01.08.2005-31.07.2008)
India, Post Tsunami	Pro.doc. (01.08.2005-31.07.2008)
India, CapDecK (Programme for Capacity Development for Decentralisation)	1) "Capacity Building for Local Governance: Lessons and Strategic Issues for Future", Oct.2005 2) Pro.doc. 01.04.2003 – 31.03.2006)
Indo Swiss Participative Watershed Development – Karnataka (ISPWDK)	Pro.Doc, Phase 4 (and last – 01.09.2006 – 31.08.2009)
Other docs	IDS Working Paper 130 – Decentralisation and Poverty Alleviation in developing countries: A comparative analysis or, is West Bengal unique? February 2001.
Other docs	New trends in Decentralisation, Literature Review. "Decentralisation and Local Governance in South Asia" October 2005
Other docs	Note for Discussion on Decentralization
Other docs	Decentralisation and Local Finance Issues in India (by Dr.G.Narenda Kumar)
Info from SDC India	List of programmes of SDC India Decentralisation Portfolio Organogram of SDC India SDC India Desk questions Summaries of decentralisation programmes with "some" relationship to decentralisation
BULGARIA	
SDC Bulgaria	Bulgaria – Midterm programme 2001-2006
Other docs	New trends in Decentralisation, Literature Review. "Decentralisation and Local Governance in the Western Balkans" June 2005
City partnerships	3 different documents describing partnership arrangements between towns in Bulgaria and Switzerland
Community Forum Programme	1) External Review Report, April 2004 2) Report on the External Evaluation of Cooperation. March 2000-August 2001 Phase, Oct.2001 3) Pro.Doc Phase 3 (2005-07)
Community Forum Programme	Planning Workshop for Phase III of Community Forum Program Bulgaria. Workshop Documentation, May 2004
Community Forum Programme	Planning Workshop for Phase III of Community Forum Program Bulgaria. Workshop Report, May 2004
Community Forum Programme	Proposition de crédit (01.08.2000-31.05.2001) : « Forums à Stara Planina (Balkans centraux) »
Community Forum Programme	Sustainable Rural Development in the trans-boundary Region of West Stara Planina. Follow up to the project: "Trans-boundary Cooperation through the Management of Shared Natural Ressources" Project proposal for 2007 & 2008.
Community Forum Programme	Auftrag B SDC – Tulum (contract and ToRs from 01.01.2005 – 31.12.2007)
Community Forum Programme	Concept for Forum Mizia
RWANDA	
« Paix et Décentralisation » (Dans la Province de Kibuye / l'Ouest)	1) Pro.doc Phase 1 (01.08.2002-31.12.2004) 2) Pro.doc Phase 2 (01.01.2005-31.12.2005) 3) Pro.doc Phase 3 (01.03.2006-28.02.2007)

	4) Annex, Logic model 5) Etude sur les progres et defis du processus de decéntralisation. Août 2004. (PDF)
Other docs	Evaluation externe du Programme spécial 2002-2004 de la coopération suisse au Rwanda (by Erika Schläppi & Michael Marx) (PDF)
Other docs	«L'Administration Territoriale Rwandaise – Rapport d'expertice rédigé a la demande du tribunal pénal international des nations unies sur le Rwanda » (Décentralisation avant le génocide: analyse 1998). Août 1998.
Other docs	« Swedish Support to Decentralisation Reform in Rwanda » SIDA Evaluation 04/33 (by Merrick Jones) (PDF)
Other docs	Rapport d'evaluation à mi-parcours du projet : Appui au renforcement de l'Etat de droit et de la justice au Rwanda
Other docs	«Les politiques de développement « décentralisé » - Réflexions à partir du bilan de l'expérience Rwandaise de planification communale» (André Guichaoua
MALI	
SDC West Africa	La Coopération suisse en Afrique de l'Ouest, Orientations stratégiques
SDC West Africa	Actualisation de la stratégie de la Section Afrique Occidentale, Rapport au COSTRA (Comité stratégique) 27 avril 2006
SDC West Africa	12 jalons pour préciser le profil de la section afrique occidentale de la DDC
SDC Mali	Statégie de coopération au Mali 2006-2011, 1ère version de synthèse
PAD (Programme d'Appui à la Decentralisation)	Pro.Doc. Phase 3 (2001- 2004) Pro.Doc. Phase 4 (2004-2007)
Other docs	«Evaluation de la coopération décentralisée Franco-Malienne» Février 2003 (PDF)
Other docs	Evaluation du thème "Appui à la décentralisation et à la gouvernance locale» Etude Mali, Février 2006
Other docs	"Evaluation du dispotif d'appui aux collectivites territoriales du Mali» Avril 2004, by I&D (Insititutions et développement)
Other docs	FORMULATION DU PROGRAMME NATIONAL D'APPUI AUX COLLECTIVITES LOCALES DU MALI, 2ème PHASE
BOLIVIA	
PADER	1) Proposition de crédit (01.04.2003-31.03.2006) 2) Excel spreadsheet, budget for PADER 2003-2006 3) External Evaluation of PADER, Oct.2005
PADEM	1) External Evaluation of PADEM, Nov.2004
GODEL-AOS	1) Proposition de crédit (01.01.2005-31.12.2008)

Annex H - Approach Paper

Decentralisation in SDC's bilateral cooperation: Relevance, Effectiveness, Comparative Advantage

1 Background

2 Why an Evaluation and Why Now? – Rationale

3 Purpose, Focus and Objectives
- 3.1 Purpose
- 3.2 Focus and Scope
- 3.3 Objectives

4 Key Questions
- 4.1 Relevance
- 4.2 Effectiveness (and impact)
- 4.3 Sustainability
- 4.4 Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness
- 4.5 Support System and Learning
- 4.6 Policies, Politics and Comparative Advantage

5 Recommendations

6 Expected Results
- 6.1 At Output Level
- 6.2 At Outcome Level

7 Partners
- 7.1 Organisational Set-up and Respective Roles
- 7.2 Core Learning Partnership (CLP)

8 Process
- 8.1 Methodology and Approach
- 8.2 Main Steps – Schedule
- 8.3 Evaluation Team

9 Reference Documents
- 9.1 SDC and related
- 9.2 Other Publications
- 9.3 Resource Persons

1. Background

In the 1980s the Bretton Woods Institutions favoured structural adjustments programmes as a means to overcome indebtedness and the lack of sustainability of technical cooperation programmes and projects. The mixed results of structural adjustment helped to bring the state and its institutions and thus the importance of good governance more into the focus of development theory and practice. This tendency was intensified by the end of the bipolar world and the ensuing promotion of the transition to democracy in the erstwhile Communist countries and eventually pretty much anywhere else. Thus, good governance became one of the major foci in international development. Within the development agenda of SDC decentralisation as a main component of good governance became prominent in the 90s and has remained so up to the present. Decentralisation attempts to promote political, administrative, fiscal and sometimes legal decentralisation not as an end in itself, but as a means to promote a number of agendas that are not always explicitly stated and that vary considerably across countries and programmes. Such agendas are: democratisation of political structures, political participation and empowerment particularly also of disadvantaged groups, rule of law, more efficient delivery of public goods and services, local control of resources, poverty reduction, mitigation of conflicts, etc.

Within the realm of good governance, SDC has early on placed particular emphasis on decentralisation. In 2006, SDC's portfolio includes close to 30 projects that are supported in the area of decentralisation and local governance. A first capitalisation of experiences in decentralisation was published as a collection of articles in *Decentralisation and Development (1999)* and the SDC *Guide to Decentralisation* was issued in 2001 (cf. 9 Reference Documents). Regional capitalisations of experiences workshops were held in Mozambique in March 2004, in Ecuador in October 2004, in Serbia in June 2005 and in Bangladesh in October 2005.

In addition to SDC projects and programmes with an explicit focus on decentralisation and local governance a more indirect decentralisation approach has been and still is part and parcel of most SDC supported development measures. Since SDC began operations in 1961, participation, development based on local resources, the needs and wants of people at the local level, cooperation with local organisations have been and still are central elements of most SDC projects and programmes in water and sanitation, forest management and rural transport, health and education, agriculture and dairying.

SDC's affinity to decentralisation likely owes much to Switzerland's long tradition with a clear differentiation of roles between community, canton and federal state, a political structure that accommodates different language groups and religions and is based on the principle of subsidiarity or, in other words, on the principle that this particular state is built bottom-up (that is in a process of centralisation). Thus most Swiss that care to reflect on decentralisation and development, including the ones working in SDC, believe that the organisation holds a comparative advantage in the promotion of democratisation and decentralisation.

2. Why an Evaluation and Why Now? – Rationale

- Given the long-standing preoccupation in SDC with decentralisation described above and taking Switzerland's political tradition into account, a thorough examination of decentralisation and development in SDC is called for. The sheer volume of SDC supported projects with a decentralisation/local government focus in all regions warrants a critical look at how effectively and relevantly these topics are promoted in SDC, a consolidation of past experiences and a thorough reflection on how to proceed in the future.

- Recently there has been a surge in the international donor community towards a more institutional and harmonised approach in the delivery of aid. The Millennium Development Goals and Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus on financing the MDGs (2002), the Marrakech Declaration on Results (2004), the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), to name

just the key events, all call for aligning donor programmes to national priorities and for a harmonised approach, which may involve SWAPs and eventually budget aid. This will inadvertently strengthen the central level of government in the partner countries - at least if no special emphasis is placed on decentralisation.
Assuming that the trend towards an approach based on the Paris principles will continue, it will be highly useful for SDC to consolidate the organization's experiences in decentralization in bilateral cooperation in view of contributing to ensure that regional and local development is adequately covered in harmonised approaches. At yet another level, the findings of the evaluation can be expected to form an input for multilateral policy dialogue and possibly also humanitarian cooperation. Such inputs are likely to assist a bilateral agency like SDC to better show and explain the results of harmonised approaches to the home constituency.

- Through its recent Portfolio-Analysis SDC aimed to sharpen the geographical and thematic focus of the organisation. It was decided that governance will become one of only two transversal subject in SDC and that "rule of law and democratisation" will be one of ten thematic foci with decentralisation to be given special emphasis. This makes a stock taking in view of shaping the future of decentralisation in SDC's (bilateral) operations a very timely undertaking.

3. Purpose, Focus and Objectives

3.1 Purpose

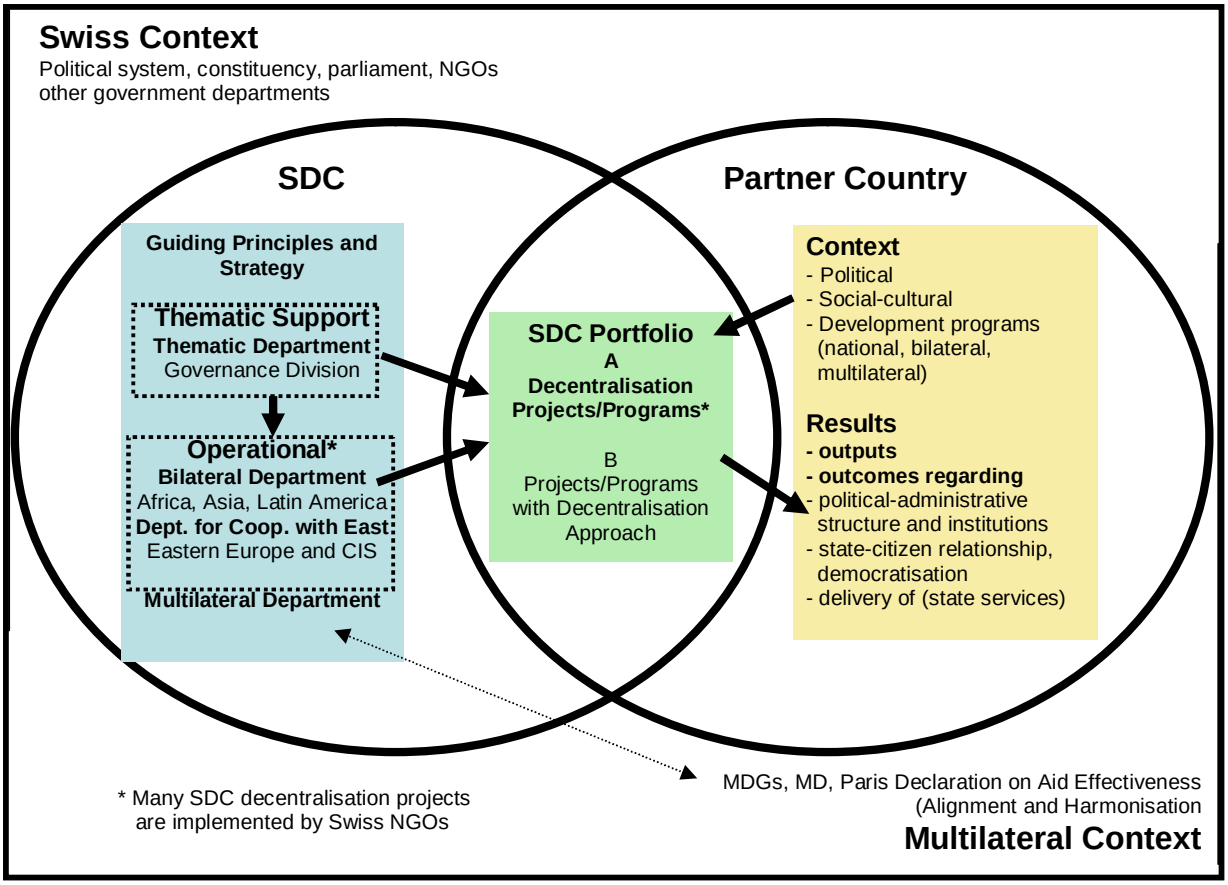
The **purpose** of the evaluation is to investigate the relevance and effectiveness of SDC's decentralisation measures and to explore whether SDC holds, as is frequently assumed, a comparative advantage in the field of decentralisation and management of local government affairs (accountability aspect of the evaluation).The evaluation is furthermore expected to provide findings, conclusions and recommendations on how to improve the relevance and effectiveness of decentralisation measures as well as strengthening the conceptual and strategic support in this field (learning aspect of the evaluation).

3.2 Focus and Scope

The **primary** focus of this evaluation (see graph) is the analysis of SDC's decentralisation measures in the agency's bilateral cooperation in the South and in the East and it includes decentralisation projects and programmes as well as decentralising approaches in sectoral projects (operational dimension).
An important **secondary** line of inquiry concerns the support provided by SDC's thematic department including backstopping mandates and how processes of learning are organised.

Bilateral cooperation is understood as comprising all activities coordinated by SDC country offices, including multilateral activities undertaken together with other donors. In Africa, Asia and Latin America development measures are planned and overseen by SDC's Bilateral Department, in Eastern Europe and the CIS and by the Department for Cooperation with the East. Many SDC decentralisation projects are implemented by Swiss NGOs. The evaluation will neither extend to the activities of the Multilateral and the Humanitarian Departments nor to decentralisation measures that are foremost an instrument for conflict mitigation.
SDC's Thematic Department through its Governance Division provides **thematic support** to decentralisation projects and programmes but it is not directly involved in implementation. The Governance Division upholds links to several Swiss institutions that provide thematic support.

Other departments of the federal administration, Swiss universities and research institutes, NGOs, cantons and communes are also, but to a lesser degree, involved in de- centralisation projects in partner countries.



3.3 Objectives

The objectives of this independent evaluation are

- to analyze relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of SDC's decentralisation approaches, projects and programmes in bilateral cooperation
- to test the hypothesis that SDC has a comparative advantage in decentralisation measures
- to identify strengths and weaknesses in the thematic, strategic and conceptual support provided by SDC Berne to the operational units in the area of decentralisation
- to formulate recommendations for improving SDC's performance in and support to decentralisation projects and approaches in bilateral cooperation

As far as it is feasible the issue of impact shall be addressed together with the analysis of effectiveness. Efficiency questions are expected to be part of project evaluation and monitoring and will not be treated in-depth in this more overarching evaluation.

4. Key questions

The key questions should contribute to responding to the central issue for SDC**:**
What works where and why and how can it be made to work better and in other regions?

4.1 Relevance

The question of relevance invariably needs to determine the yardstick by which relevance should be assessed. In the present evaluation the following need to be considered: SDC policy, partner country context, state-of-the-art discourse.

1) Are the decentralisation measures and approaches relevant in the respective partner country context thereby considering both government and target group perspectives?

Variables that may be considered are:
Decentralisation in general:

a) Why is the decentralisation process promoted?
b) How is decentralisation implemented?
c) How does decentralisation relate to the political, legal and socio-cultural context and changes therein (if any)? Is there a political will for decentralisation? Is the necessary le gal framework in place or are reforms a prerequisite for decentralisation? Are new insti tutions compatible with the socio-cultural context?
d) Are decentralisation measures coordinated among the donors and aligned to partner country priorities?

SDC supported measures:

e) How relevant are the SDC supported measures taking the overall partner country decen tralisation process and its context into account?
f) Do decentralisation measures respond to target group priorities (poverty-focus; munici palities)?
g) Is gender integrated as a crosscutting issue?

2) Are the decentralisation measures and approaches relevant in terms of the overall SDC guidelines and strategy and the aims outlined in the SDC's Guide to Decentralisation and similar documents?

3) Is the relevant discussion in the donor community (DAC Govnet) and in the applied research reflected in SDC's decentralisation measures and in the Guide to Decentralisation and similar documents?

4.2 Effectiveness

An essential prerequisite for assessing results is the following:

4) Are the development measures based on a plausible and spelled out result hypotheses and a specified chain of results?

Three dimensions of possible outcomes are suggested in the SDC's Decentralisation Guidance Document (see below).

A State-citizen relation:

Key words: political legitimacy of the state and social citizenship; democratic participation; protection of human rights, integration of women, minorities and weaker sections; empowering civil society; etc.

B Effectiveness of state services:

Key words: subsidiarity principle; need-based quality services, in particular for the poor, at the local level; improved use of resources through transparency and accountability; appropriate functional and fiscal assignments, linkages between decentralisation and sectoral approaches; etc.

C Local Development

Key words: programmes adjusted to context; better use of local potentials, local economic development in conjunction with a decrease in disparities between centre and periphery; decrease in poverty; more competence and capacity at local level; local ownership, etc.

SDC's main approaches to promoting decentralisation are:

- Support to formal decentralisation processes
- Reinforcement of good governance at the local level including accountability and transparency

- Enhancement of functional decentralisation and local service delivery
- Support to association of municipalities
- Support to civil society
- Support to local, economic development

5) To what extent do the decentralisation measures supported by SDC achieve the expected outputs and intended outcomes? What are the unintended outcomes, if any?

   The overall decentralisation measures and the contribution of SDC need to be differentiated where indicated.

4.3 Sustainability (and possible impact)

In many instances the sustainability of development measures is difficult to gauge before a number of years have elapsed. This holds particularly true for areas that involve social and political change like decentralisation and democratisation. Thus in some cases the assessment will have to focus on the to be expected sustainability of results and financial and institutional sustainability, giving due consideration to design, context and progress so far achieved.

6) To what extent are the results achieved sustainable or can be expected to prove sustainable?

7) How is the strategic position of SDC country offices and projects in support of decentralisation and good governance policies?

4.4 Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness

Cooperation with external partners is an important element of the SDC contribution to decentralisation processes. More recently the Paris Declaration has explicitly called for aligning donor efforts to partner country goals in a harmonised fashion.

8) What are the strengths and weaknesses of SDC's cooperation with external partners in decentralisation processes: Government agencies, particularly the ministry responsible for local government, local governments, citizen's groups, NGOs including Swiss NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors, etc.
9) To what extent are the SDC activities in regard to decentralisation in harmony with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness?

4.5 Support System and Learning

10) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the strategic, conceptual and thematic support system offered by the Thematic Department of SDC to the operational units?
11) How appropriately are the processes of learning and capitalisation regarding decentralisation organised in SDC and how well are they linked to the international debate?

4.6 Policies, Politics and Comparative Advantage

12) How SDC do supported decentralisation measures and policies support local decision-making and appropriate central-local relations?

The issue of SDC's comparative advantage in promoting decentralisation processes is somewhat blurry as it is hardly ever explicitly stated, nor verified, but rather runs as a sous-entendu within SDC's cooperation. This issue can be brought more to the fore by exploring the relevance of SDC's contribution in view of other donor's efforts and the given partner country context and by linking it to Swiss political culture.

13) What, if any, appear to be the comparative advantages of SDC's approach to decentralisation processes and the management of local government affairs? And what are its pitfalls?
This question could be used as a starting point for a concluding summary.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the independent evaluation

14) What are the recommendations for increasing the relevance and effectiveness of SDC's support to decentralisation processes in bilateral cooperation?
15) What are the recommendations for increasing the effect of SDC thematic support system to its operational units and of the learning processes regarding decentralisation and in general? Does the SDC *Guide to Decentralisation* need to be revised?
16) What are the recommendations for SDC's role regarding decentralisation in increasingly harmonised approaches?
17) What are additional findings or recommendations, for example regarding SDC's multilateral cooperation, humanitarian aid, etc.?

It is expected that the recommendations reflect the state of knowledge on decentralisation and development and the findings on the comparative advantage thesis.

6. Expected Results

6.1 At Output Level

By the consulting team:

- A fit to print evaluation report containing findings, conclusions and recommendations not exceeding 40 pages plus annexes and including an executive summary
- A summary according to DAC-Standards not exceeding 2 pages produced by the evaluation team and edited by SDC Division E&C
- Case study reports

By SDC:

- An Agreement at Completion Point including the response of the CLP (cf. 6.1) to the recommendations and, if essential, to the key conclusions of the evaluation
- Lessons drawn by the CLP
- Dissemination of lessons learned

6.2 At Outcome Level

The independent evaluation "Decentralisation in SDCs bilateral cooperation" is expected to contribute

- to the analysis of Swiss bilateral assistance to decentralisation processes
- to the clarification of the comparative advantage issue
- to the sharpening of SDC's understanding of decentralisation in development processes: What can decentralisation help to achieve and what not? What measures and instruments are suited (or not suited) in which contexts?
- to improved planning and implementation of decentralisation measures including the management of the relevant external cooperation
- to better position and focus decentralisation within SDC's portfolio and as part of the transversal topic governance

- to knowledge generation and thematic support in SDC in general and for the topic decentralisation and development in SDC in particular
- to the promotion of decentralisation through different means such as pilot or demonstration projects; local development; contribution to multi-donor approaches and cooperation with key actors and agencies.

7. Partners

7.1 Organisational Set-up and Respective Roles

- The **Core Learning Partnership** (CLP) ensures that the consultants have access to all necessary information (documents, interviews). The CLP comments on the evaluation design and the draft evaluation report. During the Completion Point Workshop, the CLP discusses the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations and negotiates and approves the Agreement at Completion Point (ACP) and the Lessons Learned. It decides who should be targeted for dissemination.
- **Department-level Management** and the **Director General** of SDC comment in COSTRA on the Agreement at Completion Point.
- **Consultants** contracted by SDC's E&C Division elaborate an evaluation work plan and methodology, carry out the evaluation according to international evaluation standards, conduct debriefings with stakeholders as appropriate, present a draft of their Evaluators' Final Report to the CLP, follow up on the CLP's feedback as appropriate and submit the Evaluators' Final Report in publishable quality as well as an Evaluation Abstract according to DAC specifications. The evaluation team leader attends the ACP meeting in Switzerland as a resource person.
- **Division E+C, SDC,** commissions the independent evaluation, drafts the Approach Paper with the inputs from the Core Learning Partnerships and the Evaluation Team, drafts and administers the contracts with the evaluators, ensures that the evaluators receive appropriate logistical support and access to information and organizes the overall process with respect to i) discussion of evaluation results, ii) elaboration of the Agreement at Completion Point and Lessons Learned, iii) publication and iv) dissemination (contact: Samuel Wälty, when absent Anne Bichsel).
- A small **Steering Group** to accompany the evaluation process, sorts out practical problems and links with organisational units.

7.2 Core Learning Partnership (CLP)

The Core Learning Partnership will consist of the following members in:

- SDC Department Thematic and Technical Resources
  Anne-Claude Cavin, Division Good Governance
  Chantal Nicod, Division Good Governance
  Jean-Francois Cuénod, Division Conflict Prevention and Transformation
- SDC Department Bilateral Development Cooperation
  Ahlin Byll, Division West Africa
  Laura Bott, Division West Africa
  Yvan Pasteur, Division Eastern and Southern Africa
  Eliane Belser, Division South Asia
  Ursula Läubli, Division Latin America
  Regula Bäbler, E-Controlling
- SDC Department Cooperation with Eastern Europe and CIS
  Jean-Pierre Egger, Division South Eastern Europe
  Shirin Sotoudeh, Division Special and Regional Programmes
- Representatives of other Swiss organisations:

Odile Keller, Division Evaluation, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs,
Michael Murezi, Programme Officer Middle East, Political Affairs Division IV, Human Security, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
Felix von Sury, Director Intercooperation
Karin Füeg, Coordinator Decentralisation, Helvetas

- SDC Country Offices of case studies (consulted electronically)

8. Process

8.1 Methodology and Approach

The evaluation is to cover a number of **case studies** chosen from among SDC priority countries and special programmes and to analyse the **thematic support structure** in the SDC headquarter.

Based on the criteria "regional representation" and "substantial SDC projects/programmes in decentralisation operational since at least July 2003", the following **case studies** have been selected:

- Latin America: Peru
- Africa: Mali, Rwanda
- Eastern Europe and CIS: Bulgaria
- Asia: India

The evaluation will employ the usual **methods** such as review of decentralisation in development in relevant literature and evaluation reports, review of relevant SDC documents, interviews with staff at SDC headquarter and other Swiss stakeholders, case studies in to be selected partner countries, analysis of data and report writing.
Care needs to be taken that the methods and approach chosen effectively capture the results dimension.

The main steps of the evaluation are depicted in the graph "Sequence and Responsibilities" and the table "Main Steps" (see below). The design of the evaluation is planned as an **iterative process**. Both key questions and methods presented in this paper are to be adapted by the selected evaluation team.

The **main inputs for the evaluation design** are (see graph next page):

- Approach Paper
- Issue Paper: Decentralisation and Swiss Experience
- Current Issues and Insights in Decentralisation and Development
- First Meeting of Core Learning Partnership including a summary of the most desirable outcomes of the evaluation

Based on these inputs the evaluation team is expected

- to finalize the **evaluation design** in consultation with SDC
- to finalize the TOR for the local evaluators

Explanatory Remarks for graph "Evaluation Design" (next page)

Issue Paper: Decentralisation – Swiss experiences and development

As the evaluation team might not be familiar with the Swiss context, this paper in combination with a meeting with the author(s) will contribute to the team's entry into the Swiss context and discourse on decentralisation.

Insights and Issues: Decentralisation and Development

It is expected that the evaluation team commands the necessary expertise to inform the evaluation design, the assessment and the recommendations

1st CLP meeting: Comments on Approach Paper, presentation of Flash Survey "Most Desirable Outcomes" (MDO) of the evaluation.

Evaluation Design finalized based on Approach Paper, Issue Paper, Insights and Issues and 1st CLP Meeting including Flash Survey "MDOs".

Interviews SDC Berne 1st round: Bilateral cooperation and thematic support
A first round of interviews in Switzerland will familiarize the team with SDC and provide inputs for the final shaping of the case studies.

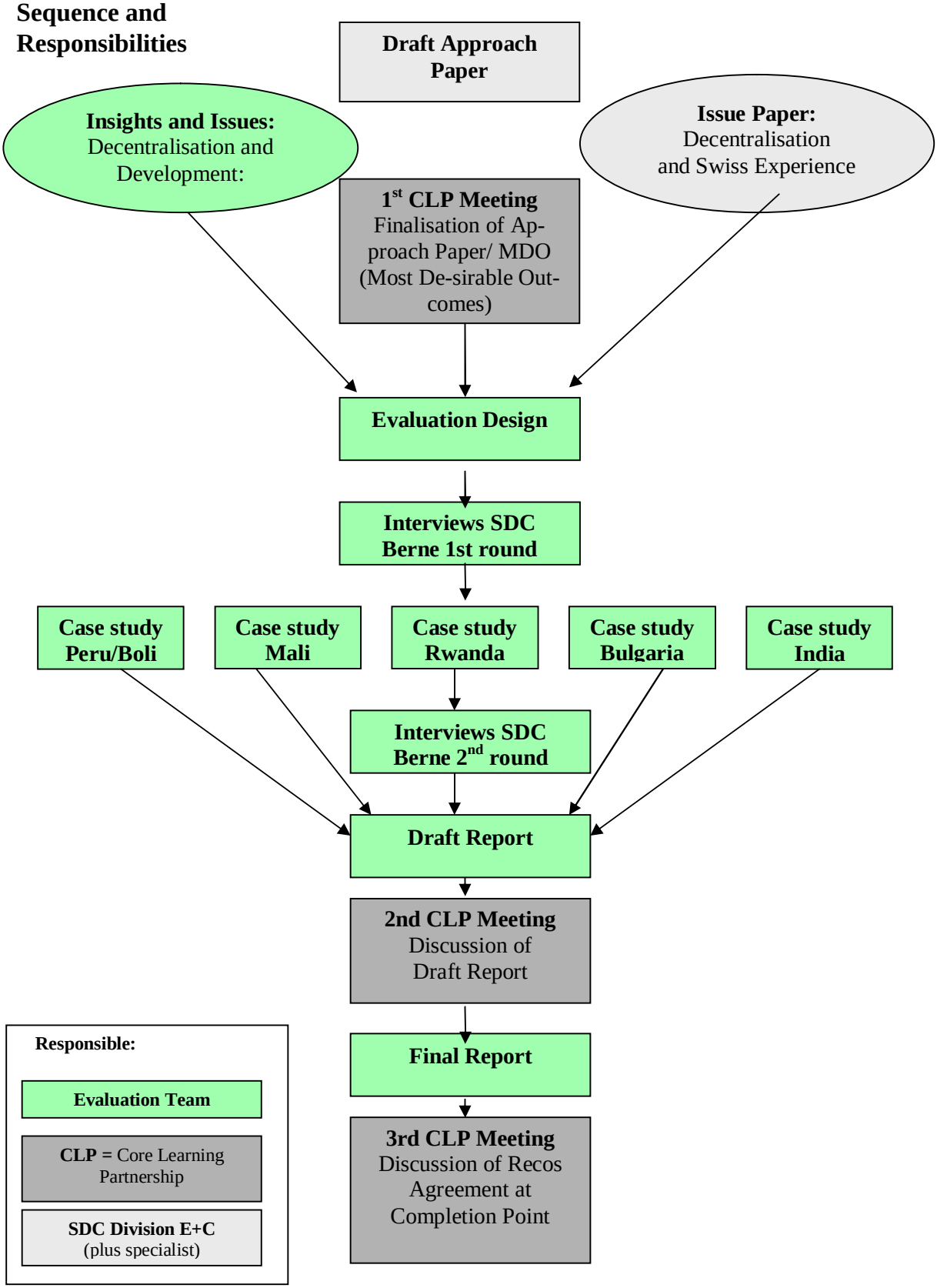
Case studies conducted by a local evaluator or small team in each of the selected countries and subsequently finalised, discussed and further elaborated with the international evaluator.

The case studies should inform on the context including why decentralisation is promoted and how and what other actors are involved (±30%) and on this basis cover the Swiss contribution (±70%).

Discussion and further elaboration of case studies by international evaluator working together with local evaluator.

Interviews SDC Berne 2nd round: Analysis of SDC support system (knowledge generation and thematic support); verification of first round interviews on the basis of case study findings

Sequence and Responsibilities



8.2 Main steps – Schedule

Activity	Date 2006	Responsible
Draft Approach Paper	April	E+C (=SDC Evaluation + Controlling)
Call for offers	May	E+C
Formation of CLP	May	E+C
Selection of Evaluators	May	E+C
1st CLP/Switzerland meet: Finalisation of Approach Paper	July 17	CLP (Core Learning Partnership) / E+C
Contracts signed with evaluators	July	E+C
Preparatory, qualitative interviews with stakeholders in Switzerland	July 17 – 18	Nordic Consulting Group (NCG): Søren Villadsen (SV) + Julie Thaarup (JT)
Incorporation of CLP comments and Flash-Survey; desk study of project and other relevant documents	July 31	NCG
Finalisation of Evaluation Design including structure, approach, matrix and semi-structured interviews	Aug 15	NCG
Selection of national case study evaluators	Aug	NCG/SDC country offices/ E+C
Logistic and administrative preparation of evaluation mission	July/August	SDC country offices with NCG
Interviews with stakeholders in Switzerland first round, (possibly incl. meeting with CLP)	September	NCG: Ian Davies (ID) + SV
Case studies in partner countries first stage	August, September and October	National evaluators with NCG Peru: ICD; India: SV; Bulgaria: SV; Rwanda: JT/SV Mali: ICD
Workshop Decentralisation in Switzerland	Sept 14/15	SDC Division Governance
Case studies in partner countries second stage including end-of mission workshop, selectively including international evaluators and E+C	October to November	Follow-up by NCG JT to follow in detail;
Follow-up on field studies including interviews with stakeholders in Switzerland, second round, (possibly by telephone)	November	NCG: SV + ICD.
Final editing of case study reports, synthesis report	November	NCG
Draft Report	December	SV
2nd CLP meeting: Discussion of Draft Report	December	CLP / E+C
Final Report, incorporation of final comments	Jan 2007	NCG: SV
3rd CLP meeting: Discussion of Findings and Recommendations; Agreement at Completion Point	January	CLP / E+C
Presentation and Discussion in COSTRA (Comité stratégique)	Feb/March	E+C
Publication	March	E+C

8.3 Evaluation Team

The **evaluation team** is to consist of two international evaluators and one to two national evaluators for each case study. The team should comprise both genders. The evaluators are expected to have the following evaluation and subject matter expertise and regional experience

- proven track record in decentralisation and development
- up-to-date knowledge on development cooperation including the more recent discourses on Aid Effectiveness (Paris Declaration), MDGs and PRSPs.
- strong analytical and editorial skills and ability to synthesize
- professional evaluation experience

The **international evaluators** are expected to have

- field experience in two of the four geographical areas (Latin America, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and CIS; more than two is considered an asset)
- ability to work well in English and in either French or Spanish (all three would be an asset)
- ability in steering complex processes involving different cultural contexts

The **case study evaluators** are expected to have

- sound knowledge of decentralisation processes, national planning and political landscape
- sound knowledge of the international donor community and harmonisation in their country
- willingness to contribute to a team effort and to cooperate with the international team leaders
- not be close associates of SDC

Based on these criteria the **Nordic Consulting Group (NCG),** Denmark, were selected as international evaluators. NCG will identify the case study evaluators in consultation with SDC.

9. Reference Documents

9.1 SDC and related:

SDC (1999): Decentralisation and Development

SDC (2001): Guide to Decentralisation

Institute of Federalism (BYRNE, Sarah) (June 2005): Decentralisation and Local Governance in the Western Balkans, 19pp.

Institute of Federalism (BYRNE, Sarah) (June 2005):Gender and Decentralised Governance, 35pp.

Institute of Federalism (BYRNE, Sarah; SCHNYDER, Matthias) (October 2005): Decentralisation and Local Governance in the South Asia, 85pp.

9.2 Other Publications

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Evaluation (2005): Wirkungsbeobachtung und Evaluierung bei der Förderung von Demokratie und Good Governance. Leitfaden für Geberinstitutionen und GutachterInnen, 34pp.

OECD (2004):Lessons Learned on Donor Support to Decentralisation and Local Governance. DAC Evaluation Series, 83pp.

OECD Development Centre (2004): Decentralisation and Poverty in Developing Countries: Exploring the Impact. Working Paper No. 236, 59pp.

9.3 Resource Persons

A list of resource persons will be prepared by E+C including backstopping institutions, consulting services and researchers engaged in SDC's decentralisation measures and/or in the topic of decentralisation.

Annex I - Evaluation design and methodology

NORDIC CONSULTING GROUP
AUGUST 2006

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

DECENTRALISATION IN SDC'S BILATERAL COOPERATION: RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Table of contents

1. Overall purpose 194
2. Objectives 194
3. Scope of the evaluation and practical limitations 194
4. Definition of key concepts in the evaluation 194
5. Design and methodology 196
6. The existing structure 198
7. Quality 199
8. Specific evaluation questions 199

1. Overall purpose

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to determine what works (i.e. in SDC decentralisation projects), where (i.e. in relation to national contexts), why (i.e. the factors that contribute to or impede the effectiveness, sustainability and impact of SDC projects), and what SDC should do to improve the performance of its decentralisation efforts.

2. Objectives

The evaluation will be carried out to:

- Determine the extent to which SDC's decentralisation efforts are relevant, effective and sustainable;
- Assess the state of SDC's cooperation with local authorities and harmonisation with external partners' policies and activities;
- Assess the support of SDC's Thematic Department to operational units, i.e. SDC country offices;
- Clarify whether SDC has a comparative advantage, i.e. relative to other donors and to partner countries' activities, in support of decentralisation;
- Provide to SDC practical recommendations related to each of the preceding objectives.

3. Scope of the evaluation and practical limitations

The evaluation will only assess current decentralisation projects (2005 and 2006 plus ongoing). The evaluation will assess SDC decentralisation projects in Rwanda, Mali, Bulgaria[1], Peru and India and make comparative analyses to approaches taken to decentralisation support in other countries where deemed necessary.

The evaluation will not conduct detailed reviews of individual SDC decentralisation projects and programmes, implementing agencies, government activities, other donors, country offices and individual performance, but will focus on approaches, institutional arrangements, main trends and comparative analyses. The individual project or programme is not the focal point of the evaluation, but the ensemble of measures and the general approach utilised in development cooperation has been defined as the main focus.

4. Definition of key concepts in the evaluation

Clarifications and specification of the key concepts for the evaluation are listed in this section and will be used by all evaluators to increase reliability for the entire evaluation.

Relevance:
Relevance is here defined as the appropriateness of development cooperation measures, for their capacity to enhance decentralisation of public service management, better local living conditions and good governance at the local level. Relevance of the SDC supported measures is seen in relation to SDC policy, partner country context, and state-of-the-art discourse. The higher degree of relevance for programmes and projects, the more development cooperation will assist the communities, local government units and other actors involved in sub-national governance to enhance the institutional arrangements and performance of social service providers (better public service delivery, better financial management, better means of participation, enhanced accountability) leading to improved social conditions in the communities.

1 Bulgaria may be supplemented with evaluations in Bosnia.

Effectiveness:
This evaluation variable relates to the degree to which programmes and projects supported by SDC are leading to the expected results as agreed between the partners of cooperation and seen in relation to improvement of local conditions as per the project or programme document. The main issue in relation to effectiveness is to what extent the decentralisation measures supported by SDC achieve the expected outputs and intended outcomes. What are the unintended outcomes, if any? The execution of projects and programmes is influenced by the contextual conditions as indicated in diagram 1. Implementation through non-governmental agencies is included in the assessment of effectiveness. Efficiency is not part of the design for the present evaluation.

Sustainability:
Sustainability is measured in accordance to two dimensions: Institutional sustainability and impact sustainability.
Institutional sustainability is the degree to which decentralisation measures from programme and project cooperation are set in the context of legal, organisational and fiscal structures or reforms of the country of cooperation. Institutionalisation will thus contribute to a more solid basis for decentralisation measures.
Impact sustainability is the extent to which results of a programme or project can be expected to be maintained in the longer perspective even after the input from the donor is discontinued. It is assumed that a high degree of sustainability represents a solid impact.

Decentralisation:
Decentralisation will be assessed in accordance to four dimensions:

1) Functional decentralisation
2) Political decentralisation
3) Fiscal decentralisation
4) Administrative decentralisation

These four dimensions for evaluation of the decentralisation concept can be detailed as follows:

- Decentralisation of central government service functions: Functional decentralisation
  - Enhancing subsidiarity and better utilisation of public finances and human resources;
  - Good governance institutions including popular participation, transparency, rules and procedures for councils and popular representation;
  - Implications for local government reform related legislation;
  - Public service brought to the people: Fostering a dramatic increase in the proportion of government resources spent on public service delivery instead of on political or administrative purposes.
- Political empowerment and decentralisation of centralised decisions: Political decentralisation
  - Political decision-making is devolved to local councils and civil society is allowed to participate in planning and management of local affairs
  - This is the key element in the good governance strategies and the foundation of the entire governance reform.
  - Decentralisation is closely related to the subsidiary principle, which involves bringing decision-making at the lowest sensible level of government and service allocation as close as possible to the end user;
  - Bringing decisions closer to the people, and to provide stronger accountability and participation of key stakeholders with the overall aim to improve service delivery and reduce poverty.
- Fiscal decentralisation measures:
  - Fiscal decentralisation is the transfer of expenditure and revenue assignments and responsibilities from the central to local government levels. Fiscal decentralisation is

typically pursued in order to enhance efficiency in resource allocation and utilisation (providing more flexibility, lo cal choice and responsiveness);
    - Local, financial management systems, transfers and local revenues;
- Decentralised management of personnel: Administrative decentralisation
    - Introduction of non-subordination of local government personnel to central government agencies;
    - structure of the future administrations (organisational restructuring);
    - Development and management of local payrolls;

5. Design and methodology

The primary goal of the evaluation is to assess what works, where and why; accordingly, the main design approach consists in:

- Identifying and gathering data on 4 levels of analysis (SDC Berne, SDC country office, project/programme level and Policy and National Context level), where the designed set of questions will determine to a significant degree the effectiveness, sustainability and relevance of SDC decentralisation programmes, projects and other means of cooperation in five different countries;
- Analysing the performance of the various SDC agencies and of the implementing agencies such as NGOs' management of programmes and projects in terms of their effectiveness, and the sustainability and relevance of programmes and projects;
- Analysing vertical and horizontal relations within SDC (SDC Berne and country offices) in the development cooperation on decentralisation issues;
- Drawing conclusions on what factors affect positively and what factors impede the performance of projects;
- As a separate and crosscutting issue, deliberation of the overall SDC approach and strategy in the perspective of the Paris Declaration principles of ownership and institutional support, and assessment of to what extent SDC may have comparative advantages on development cooperation concerning decentralisation;

Main evaluation matrix: levels of analysis and main analytical variables

Analytical variables Level of analysis	Relevance	Effectiveness	Sustainability
SDC Berne organisation			
Country offices' set-up			
Programme/ project execution			
National policy context			

The four levels are characterised as follows:

5) SDC Berne level includes all offices and functions with a relation to country offices and any agencies such as Swiss NGOs involved in execution, planning and control of projects and programmes. These relations are indicated in diagram 2 below.
6) Country offices are agencies of SDC, but they are administratively non-subordinated to SDC Berne and will thus be analysed according to the three main analytical variables as indicated in diagram 1.
7) Programme and project level is the level of execution of development cooperation and may also include other ways and means of development cooperation, donor coordinated initiatives etc., which includes cooperation initiated from SDC Berne and a partner of co-

operation, projects between SDC country offices and local partners and multi-donor projects. All these means of cooperation need to be taken on board in the evaluation.

8) National policy context includes the national, regional and local framework and working conditions of a legal, institutional, cultural, economic and environmental nature that set the operational parameters for the SDC development cooperation and particularly for the relevance of the measures of programmes and projects.

The evaluation will pay attention to all of these four levels of analysis as well as the relations between these levels. For each level the analysis will be conducted according to the main, analytical dimensions indicated.

Specifically, the evaluation design includes a multiple case study with literal replication. This means that each country will be treated as a case in which the local evaluator will:

1. Analyse the relationships between the key characteristics (or variables) of SDC, the national context, the implementing organisation and the programme or project and their influence on the effectiveness, sustainability and relevance of decentralisation programmes, projects and other means of cooperation;
2. Conclude what factors enhance and impede the success of cooperation on measures to enhance decentralisation efforts in the countries selected for evaluation;
3. Recommend actions to improve the results of cooperation on decentralisation efforts.

The country case studies will then be compared and analysed by the international NCG evaluation team to identify across the cases similar factors, i.e. pattern matching, that affect positively and negatively the outcomes of decentralisation measures.

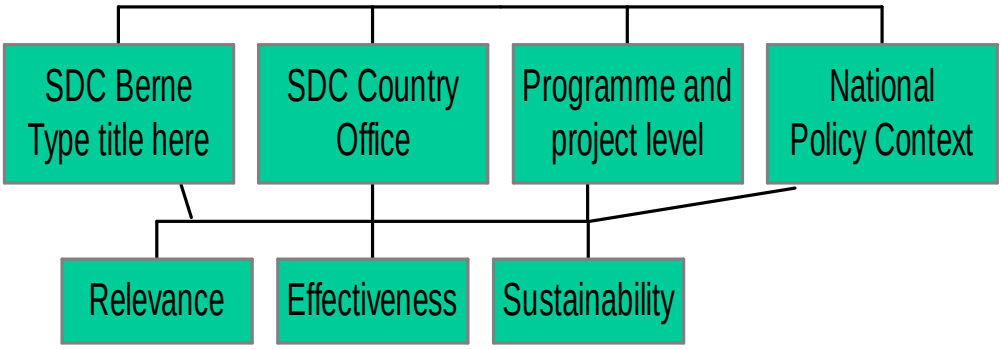
Comparative observations will be made in respect of typologies of approaches to local government and decentralisation support programmes involving other donors in various countries.

On that basis the NCG evaluation team will draw overall conclusions as to “what works” and make recommendations to SDC for “replicating” and enhancing wherever possible those factors over which it has some control, in order to improve the performance of its decentralisation measures globally if deemed advisable.

The assessment of SDC’s cooperation and harmonisation with external partners as well as the question of its possible comparative advantage in respect of decentralisation will form part of each local evaluator’s case study. As well, the NCG evaluation team will, as part of its comparative analysis of the case studies, conclude and recommend on how these two aspects might be designed and executed in a better way.

The assessment of SDC’s Thematic Department support to and relations with the operational units (national offices) and with Swiss NGOs will be done by the NCG international evaluation team as part of its fieldwork in each country and in SDC’s head office. Relations with local NGOs will be followed-up in the country reports from the national consultants.

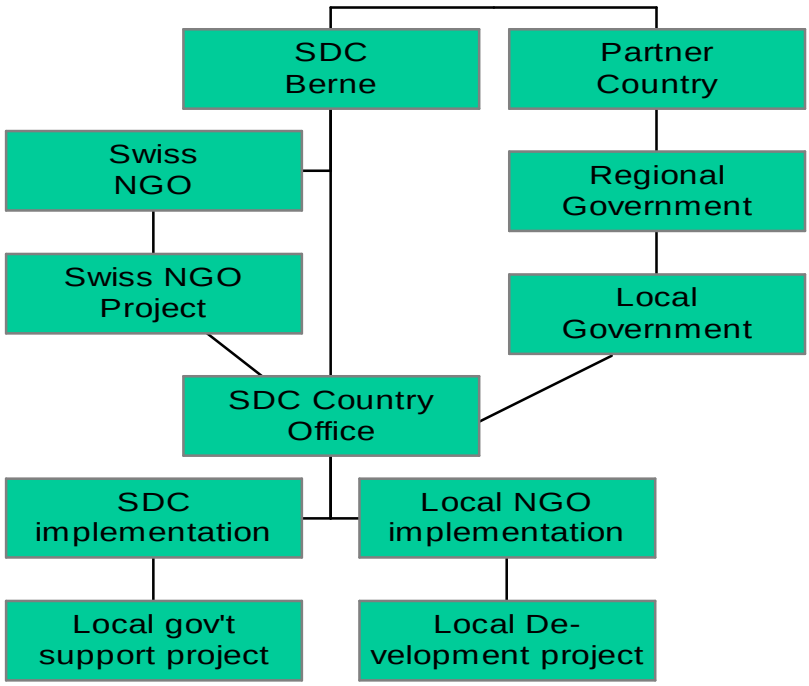
Diagram 1: Relations between the four levels of analysis and the main analytical variables



6. The existing structure

The SDC development cooperation has an elaborate structure as indicated in diagram 3. At he level of project execution the real picture may even be more complex than indicated in the diagram, and this issue will be analysed in the five country studies.

Diagram 2: The overall structure of SDC's organisation and activities



Explanatory comments:
The relation between SDC Berne and the country offices is not hierarchical, but based on a high extent of cooperation and consultation. Staff members are circulated between country offices and Head Office with regular intervals.

The diagram indicates that there are several ways of organising and implementing decentralisation projects and also points to the combination of vertical and horizontal relations in the execution of development cooperation.

7. Quality

Among others, key components of evaluation quality are the reliability of information, i.e. data, and the validity of conclusions, i.e. evaluative judgment.

In all country case studies and in the overall evaluation, the evaluation process and report will distinguish clearly between findings of fact (based on reliable data) and evaluative conclusions (based on valid analysis). This allows all parties to the evaluation to see clearly, and to differentiate between, the factual information that is gathered on one hand, and the evaluative conclusions on the other.

Data will come from multiple sources and be found in a combination of at least 2 of the three following forms: oral, written and direct observation. In all cases data will be recorded and constitute the basis for the evaluation's findings of fact.

Each country case study and the overall evaluation will use pattern matching analysis and explanation building to formulate conclusions, identifying clearly the findings of facts on which the evaluative judgments are made and showing how and why the conclusions have been reached. As each country case study will be carried out independently yet based on the same methodology and core sets of variables, the overall analysis will control for inter-rater reliability.

8. Specific evaluation questions

Level 1: SDC Berne variables

This part of the study will be conducted by the International Evaluation Team.

Relevance

1. Are the decentralisation measures relevant in terms of the overall SDC guidelines and strategy and the aims outlined in the SDC Decentralisation Guidance Document?

2. Is the relevant discussion in the donor community (DAC Govnet) and in the applied research reflected in SDC's decentralisation measures?

3. What is SDC's role in regard to decentralisation in harmonised approaches as prescribed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness?

4. Invariably decentralisation measures influence the administrative and political balance of power. How do the SDC supported decentralisation measures support local decision-making and central-local policy relations?

Effectiveness

5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the strategic, conceptual and thematic support system offered by the Thematic Department of SDC to the operational units?

6. Are the institutional set-up at Berne and the SDC vertical relations appropriate for the required tasks?

Sustainability

7. How are the processes of learning and capitalisation regarding decentralisation organised in SDC?

8. How are the relations in partner countries with ministries of local government, local government associations and other governmental agencies involved in governance reforms?

Level 2: SDC Country office

Study to be conducted by the International Team and the national consultants.

Relevance

2. Describe the strategic position of SDC country offices and projects in support of decentralisation and good governance in relation to local and national decision-makers?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the strategic, conceptual and thematic support system offered by the Thematic Department of SDC to the operational units?

4. Are the decentralisation measures relevant in the partner country context thereby considering both government and target group perspectives?

Effectiveness

5. To what extent do the decentralisation measures supported by SDC achieve the expected outputs and outcomes? What are the unintended effects, if any?

6. Does the SDC project design contribute to improved management and service delivery utility within its scope?
7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of SDC's cooperation with external partners in decentralisation processes: Government agencies, citizen's groups, NGOs including Swiss NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors, etc.

8. What are the recommendations for increasing the effect of SDC thematic support system to its operational units and of the learning processes regarding decentralisation and in general?

Sustainability

9. How are the relations with ministry of local government, local government associations and other governmental agencies involved in governance reforms?

10. Invariably decentralisation measures influence the administrative and political balance of power. How do the SDC supported decentralisation measures support local decision-making and central-local policy relations?

11. What are the recommendations for SDC's role regarding enhancement of increasingly harmonised approaches for support to decentralisation?

Level 3: Programme and Project level variables

To be carried out by the national consultant

Project information (included in introductory questionnaire – please check the information):

What are the project's duration, total budget, and annual budget?
What is/are the source (s) of funding?
What is the project's budget breakdown between compensation, operational expenses and capital expenditures?

How many staff work on the project, what is their composition (i.e. local/international, permanent, contractual, full time/part time, professional, clerical, etc.)?
What is the organisational and management structure of the project?

What are compensation levels in the project?
What are national/local compensation levels for equivalent jobs?

What are the project's inputs, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes?

Who are the primary beneficiaries of the project?
Are there observed broader effects, intended and unintended, positive or negative?

Does the project set targets for achieving results?
Have these been met?

Are there measures of success for the project?
Have these been met?

Relevance

1. Are the design, management and results of the project consistent with overall SDC guidelines and strategy and the aims outlined in the SDC Decentralisation Guidance Document?

2. Are the design, management and results of the project responsive to the country context, taking into Account particularly perspectives of target groups and those of government?
3. Are the design, management and results of the project responsive to state of the art developments in cooperation for decentralisation, e.g. best practices, donor priorities and agreements, international conventions, etc.?

4. What is the project's purpose, and how relevant is this purpose?

Effectiveness

5. Has the project contributed to:

State-citizen relation:

- **ü** political legitimacy of the state and social citizenship
- **ü** democratic participation
- **ü** integration of women, minorities and weaker sections
- **ü** empowering civil society

Effectiveness of state services:

- **ü** subsidiarity
- **ü** need-based quality services, in particular for the poor, at the local level
- **ü** improved public service delivery
- **ü** improved use of resources through transparency and accountability
- **ü** appropriate functional and fiscal assignments
- **ü** linkages between decentralisation and sectoral approaches

Local Development

- **ü** better use of local potentials
- **ü** local economic development in conjunction with a decrease in disparities between centre and periphery
- **ü** decrease in poverty
- **ü** more competence and capacity at local level
- **ü** local ownership

Promotion of decentralisation:

- **ü** support to formal decentralisation processes
- **ü** reinforcement of good governance at the local level including accountability and transparency
- **ü** enhancement of functional decentralisation and local service delivery
- **ü** support to local, economic development
- **ü** support to association of municipalities
- **ü** support to civil society

6. Have the objectives of projects been achieved, and if not fully, to what extent?

Sustainability

7. Does the SDC project design contribute to enhancement of performance monitoring and accountability?

8. To what extent is the results achieved sustainable or can be expected to prove sustainable?

9. Does the project aim for sustainability and how?

10. Does the project build management capacity in local government and how?

11. In the absence of ongoing SDC funding and support, how would the gains be capitalised and built on?

12. Would funding, competencies and external expertise be required after the project has ended, and how would these be secured?

13. Will local authorities build on project gains?

Level 4: Policy and country context level variables

To be carried out by the national consultant:

Relevance

1. Are the decentralisation measures relevant in the respective partner country context thereby considering both government and target group perspectives?

2. Is the relevant discussion in the donor community (DAC Govnet) and in the applied research reflected in SDC's decentralisation measures?

3. What is SDC's role in regard to decentralisation in harmonised approaches as prescribed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness?

4. What is the legal and institutional context for the national local government system? (Possibly give sources.)

5. Have decentralisation reforms been initiated recently, what are the main issues and what may be the relation to the Swiss measures?

6. What other donors are involved in decentralisation programmes and how (broad lines only)?

Effectiveness of cooperation and aid

7. Is the design of decentralisation projects pointing to an effective way of promoting decentralisation for the different government tiers?

8. Is the design of sector programmes or projects supporting decentralisation aims for the different government tiers?

9. Are the institutional arrangements appropriate to offer assistance to any decentralisation reform strategies?

10. What is the strategic position of decentralisation projects in relation to reforms of government and for decentralisation?

Sustainability

11. What is the assessment of key players on sustainability of the Swiss cooperation measures on decentralisation?

12. Do the interventions of SDC lead to improved public finance management?

Comparative advantage

13. What, if any, appear to be the comparative advantages of SDC's approach to decentralisation processes? And what are its pitfalls?

14. Are any comparative advantages exploited sufficiently?

15. What are the relations between projects and the Swiss local government system?

16. What are the strengths and weaknesses of SDC's cooperation with external partners in decentralisation processes: Government agencies, citizen's groups, NGOs including Swiss NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors, etc.

17. What is SDC's role in regard to decentralisation in harmonised approaches as prescribed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness?

18. How would you describe the relations in partner countries with ministries of local government, local government associations and other governmental agencies involved in governance reforms?

Annex J – Case Study tactics and responses

Case study tactics and responses (Adapted from: [Yin, 1998])			
Tests	**Case Study Tactic**	**Evaluation Phase in which tactic occurs**	**Action taken in this evaluation**
Construct validity	Use multiple sources of evidence	Data collection	Use of interviews, documentary evidence and physical artefacts (SDC gave the opportunity to establish interviews and workshops to deliberate key issues)
	Establish chain of evidence	Data collection	Interview data both taped and transcribed; multiple evidence sources used whenever possible (various approaches were used in this respect)
	Have key informants review draft case study report	Composition	Round-table discussions are organised to discuss main findings and recommendations
Internal validity	Do pattern matching	Data analysis	Patterns identified across cases
	Do explanation building	Data analysis	Some causal links identified
	Do time series analysis	Data analysis	Study changes in project design, methods etc.
External validity	Use rival explanations within single cases	Research design	To be tested with SDC
	Use replication logic in multiple-case studies	Research design	Multiple cases investigated using replication logic
Reliability	Use case study protocol	Data collection	Same data collection procedure followed for each case; consistent set of initial questions used in each interview
	Develop case study database	Data collection	Interview transcripts, other notes and links to online and physical artefacts entered into database

The methodology depicted in table 1 (which was a key part of the technical proposal's suggested approach) has been carefully followed throughout the evaluation as can be seen from the additional comments inserted in parentheses in the last column of table 1. The opportunity of having the international consultants together with the national consultants in all five countries and the combination of desk study, questionnaires, direct interviews and the detailed evaluations from the national consultants have contributed importantly to the construction of validity, the internal and the external validity. Reliability has been assured through standardised and controlled procedures for data collection and handling.

Annex K - Initial questions for Country Office desk officers

NCG
August 2006

NCG Team:
Soren Villadsen, team leader, sv@ncg.dk
Ian C. Davies, deputy team leader, icd@ncg.dk
Julie S. Thaarup, team member, jst@ncg.dk

Confidentiality:

The following questions will not be published in any form that makes it possible to identify individual interviewees, and the questionnaires will be kept by the evaluation team until the evaluation is over. No other persons than the evaluation team members will have access to the questionnaires. At the completion time the questionnaires will be deleted.

Introduction

As you have already been informed by SDC, Evaluation Unit, Berne, NCG is currently conducting an evaluation of SDC's decentralisation measures and in particular looking at the activities in five selected countries. In order to save time and resources we would like to raise a few introductory questions of clarification that can be answered easily by e-mail and prepare for the short visit by the NCG consultant at an agreed date.

If you would be kind enough to send us your answers and any other information you might think would be useful for the evaluation team we would be grateful. Please send your questions before by e-mail.

You may fill-in the questionnaire using the suggested format. However, should you want to add further information and comments, you are most welcome to send or mail this information. Our office telephone is +45 43716200, and you may also find one of us there or at least be given further information on contact details by the secretary.

Practical information: A few questions include options. You are requested to insert an "X" at the preferred option.

Questions to the decentralisation desks:

I. SDC country office and project portfolio

1. Please indicate the total project portfolio for 2005 – 2008 including:

    - Global list of projects in operation during 2005 or 2006
    - Objective and main tasks of the projects listed above

Project 1 title:
Objective:

Main results expected:

Total budget for 2005 / 2006

Project 2 title: (as for project 1

Project 3 title: (as for project 1)

Main results expected:

Total budget for 2005 / 2006

2. Please indicate the staffing at your country office:

II. Project fiches

3. Please forward project fiches on ongoing or new projects in electronic versions to the NCG team, preferably using e-mail.

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4. What other sources of written information exist about the projects, which is publicly accessible?

III. Relation to decentralisation and governance

5. Please indicate for each sector project or programme if there is relation to the decentralisation dimensions:

Project 1: (title) Strong relation / some relation / weak relation / no specific relation

Project 2: (title) Strong relation / some relation / weak relation / no specific relation

Project 3: (title) Strong relation / some relation / weak relation / no specific relation

IV. SDC Policy Documents on decentralisation

6. What is the role of the Guide to Decentralisation, SDC Berne, in design and execution of projects:

The document plays a major role / a certain role / little or no role

7. Has a local or regional guidance paper on decentralisation has been elaborated at SDC?

Yes / No

- If yes, please forward an electronic copy.
- If yes, what is the role of the regional or local decentralisation guide in project formulation and execution:

A major role / a certain role / little or no role

V. Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness

8. Do you consider SDC's cooperation with external key governmental players in decentralisation processes in your country strong or weak:

Government agencies: Strong / moderate / weak
Regional authorities: Strong / moderate / weak
Local government councils and administrations: Strong / moderate / weak
Local government associations: Strong / moderate / weak

9. What are the strengths and weaknesses of SDC's cooperation with external key governmental players in decentralisation processes in your country:

Citizen's groups: Strong / moderate / weak
NGOs including Swiss NGOs: Strong / moderate / weak
Bilateral and multilateral donors, etc.: Strong / moderate / weak

10. How would you describe the relations in partner countries with ministries of local government, local government associations and other governmental agencies involved in governance reforms in a few sentences?

VI. Support System and Learning

How often have you been in contact with the Thematic Department at SDC, Berne on issues related to decentralisation issues during the last 12 months? (Indicate number:)

11. How many visits have you received from Berne during the last 12 months on decentralisation issues? (Number:)
- How many visits have you made to Berne, which included discussions on decentralisation issues? (Number:)

12. Can you offer a few sentences on strengths and weaknesses of the strategic, conceptual and thematic support system offered by the Thematic Department of SDC to the operational units?
