



Decentralised political and administrative systems: citizen-centred, democratic and effective

Advisory approach and examples of projects implemented
by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
in the areas of decentralisation, local self-government and federalism

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1. Foreword



In today's world, regions, cities and municipalities exert a decisive influence over the living conditions and quality of life of a nation's citizens. In most of the world's countries, public-sector goods and services are provided by regional and local governments and authorities, or with their involvement. This applies to basic education, health services, water supply and waste disposal, to name just a few areas. With increasing frequency, citizens are obtaining the essential official

documents they require directly from their local authorities. These include, in particular, birth certificates, personal identification documents, electoral documents or business licences. The regions, cities and municipalities are also able to allow citizens to participate in local decision-making and planning processes more directly and with a more decisive influence.

This allows decentralised political and administrative systems to create particularly effective framework conditions for the provision of administrative services in all subdivisions of their national territory, to make citizen-oriented political decisions and to promote local economic development. Active citizen participation at the local level allows the needs of the population to be better met in all a country's regions, and to leverage the economic and innovation potential more effectively in these regions, which also benefits the nation as a whole. However, to do so, the regional and local governments and administrative units require access to the necessary competencies, human resources and financial resources.

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH has been supporting the introduction, consolidation and modernisation of decentralised political and administrative systems all over the world for more than 25 years. GIZ is now one of the world's leading partners for effecting reforms in this dynamic field of action. Within the scope of international cooperation, GIZ offers its partners and clients a unique combination of extensive experience and expertise in advisory services relating to the implementation of reforms. This expertise is based on its concrete experience with federal state-building and local self-government in Germany, as well as on its broad range of support services, all of which are distinguished by customer orientation, flexibility and quality.

GIZ provides advice to governments, administrative bodies and parliaments at various state levels on developing and establishing decentralised political and administrative systems in order to deliver the services that citizens most urgently require. Ultimately, the state exists for its citizens – regardless of whether these reside in the capital city or in a rural community. Experience has shown that failures and obstacles can be avoided when reforms are based on the lessons learned from reform processes in other countries.

This publication presents our advisory approach to strengthening decentralised political and administrative systems, as well as examples of our projects. We would be more than happy to extend our support to you in developing modern, citizen-centred political and administrative systems.

i.v. Elke Sieder

(Director of the Good Governance & Human Rights Division)

2. Decentralisation of political and administrative systems: a dynamic field of action in international cooperation

States all over the world are facing the challenge of satisfying the growing expectations of their citizens in a modern state, despite the scarcity of public funding and administrative personnel. Citizens who benefit from better education and organisational skills are, above all, demanding more involvement in decision-making and planning processes and better local public services.

Decentralised political and administrative systems offer a multitude of opportunities to address this challenge. Regional and local governments and administrative units – such as the German federal states, administrative districts and local authorities – work more closely with the local population and can therefore involve them more directly and more extensively in decision-making and planning processes. At the same time, they can deliver the most urgently needed public services – from water supply to support for economic activity – locally, efficiently and in line with regional conditions.

The municipalities, cities and regions are where the citizens have direct contact with the civil servants working for the public administration. A citizen-oriented, democratic and effective administration can make a decisive contribution to ensuring that citizens not only receive urgently required public services by dealing directly with the administrative bodies, but that their trust and confidence in the state itself is reinforced.

In states with distinctive regional differences within their economic structures and firmly rooted regional identities, decentralised political and administrative systems can also make a contribution to ensuring that the country's potential is tapped in all its variety. They can also help to promote innovation and competition and continue to foster distinctive cultural characteristics. In particular, this applies to federal states, but also to unitary states with a decentralised structure.



GIZ understands decentralised political and administrative systems as a form of government and administration in which government actions are geared as closely as possible to citizens, with citizen participation. This form of government aims to satisfy citizens' needs, take their priorities into account and uphold their rights.

Decentralised systems offer particularly favourable framework conditions for aligning political and administrative action with the needs, priorities and rights of citizens in all areas of the country and for striking an optimum balance between regional differences in states and municipalities. Operating at regional and local levels allows interests to be better articulated, more allowances to be made for regional distinctions, and resources to be mobilised more effectively. This way, the decentralisation of the political and administrative system can help build a state that is more citizen-oriented, more democratic and more productive.

Whether the regions and local authorities can exercise the public duties and responsibilities assigned to them to the satisfaction of the citizens does, however, depend on a number of factors. Firstly, the specific tasks and responsibilities must be assigned to those levels of government and administration that are best able to fulfil them. Secondly, the regional and local authorities must have at their command the responsibilities, capabilities and resources required for performing their functions. Thirdly, the various government and administrative levels must work in close cooperation to function in the best interests of citizens, because many decision-making processes require approval by different political levels and many services can only be successfully provided when these levels interact effectively. This is why decentralisation reforms always focus on the appropriate allocation and reorganisation of decision-making powers, responsibilities, human resources and funding between government and administrative levels, based on the principle of subsidiarity.

In light of the above, it makes sense that most countries in the world have now started to decentralise their political and administrative systems. All over the world, a 'trend towards decentralisation of states with a centralised organisational structure' can be observed.¹

1 Annette Coly und Elke Breckner (2004): 'Dezentralisierung und Stärkung kommunaler Selbstverwaltung zur Förderung von Good Governance', published in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte 2004 / Kommunale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit

Trends towards decentralised political and administrative systems

As a result of ongoing global **urbanisation**, cities and municipalities are becoming increasingly visible as agents and drivers of processes promoting growth and innovation. Cities – starting with small cities, and extending through to megacities – are facing the increasingly difficult challenge of ensuring that their rapid growth is organised in a well-regulated and proactively planned way. They need to provide services and opportunities for participation and create jobs under the pressure of booming populations. Rural municipalities, in contrast, need to improve the local quality of life to retain their residents. The local governments require adequate policy-making powers, administrative abilities and financial resources – and more rights to contribute to the formulation of national policies.

Secondly, a strong trend towards **regionalisation** is emerging worldwide. There are cultural, political and economic motivators for this. Regionalisation has resulted in elected representatives, citizens and businesspeople increasingly asserting their regions as parts of the country with traditions and responsibilities of their own, demanding regional self-government and incorporating their regional interests to a greater extent into national policies. This trend can currently be observed in Europe, under the keywords 'Regional Autonomy' and 'A Europe of Regions'. It also represents an important impulse for the introduction of federal political orders or the initiation of decentralisation processes.

Thirdly, a worldwide trend towards more **citizen participation** in public decision-making and the provision of public services can be observed. This trend includes the demand for more transparency and free access to information, for more opportunities for consultation and dialogue, and for more political participation in decisions relevant to citizens. This can improve the acceptance and the legitimacy of public sector decisions, and of fees and taxes. Decentralised political and administrative systems provide a greater number of opportunities for more extensive involvement by the population than do centralised systems.

In the year 2000, around 95% of all countries already had elected representatives at a middle or lower political and administrative level.² This is why this trend is also referred to as a 'silent democratic revolution'.³ This worldwide trend towards decentralisation of political and administrative systems is being further augmented by three different developments. An increasing number of regions are demanding more regional autonomy, the rapidly growing cities in many countries are demanding more local self-government and a growing number of citizens are demanding more opportunities for participation on a local level (see boxed text).

2 See: World Bank (1999): 'Entering the 21st Century: The Changing Development Landscape'. The Growth Report 1999/2000. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

3 United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) (2008): 'Decentralization and local democracy in the world'. First global report by United Cities and Local Governments. A co-publication of the World Bank and United Cities and Local Governments.



However, decentralised political and administrative systems do not automatically result in the provision of better public services or greater participation by broad sections of the population. Inexpertly designed systems, or incomplete implementation of reforms, will prevent the desired outcomes from being achieved to their full extent, and may even worsen the situation. If, for example, functions are transferred to the local authorities without allocating them the funds necessary for financing these tasks, then service provision will not improve. Reform efforts are also in danger of backfiring when there has been a failure to clearly define and communicate the responsibilities of the various levels of government and administration – leaving citizens unable to comprehend who is to be held accountable in the event of misconduct. Or, if local decision-makers are not subject to effective control, clientelism, mismanagement and corruption may well be the result.

This is why governments, administrative bodies and parliaments all over the world are showing a keen interest in reshaping their political and administrative systems with the support of international experts, learning from experiences gained internationally, and adapting them to changing circumstances and requirements.

Observers have therefore arrived at the conclusion that the demand for advisory services aimed at promoting decentralised political and administrative systems will remain consistently high in the near future.⁴ This is due to the fact that virtually all states have already started to decentralise their political and administrative systems. Many of these countries, with international support, are well underway to restructuring and consolidating their still-young systems, with concrete results. Those states with decentralised political and administrative systems that are considered to be consolidated are still facing the challenge of ensuring ongoing modernisation of their systems in order to do justice to new framework conditions and requirements. A distinction can be made between three phases of reform efforts, which require different forms of advisory services: decentralisation of the political and administrative systems, consolidation of the decentralised political and administrative system and modernisation of the consolidated, decentralised political and administrative system (see boxed text).

4 Von Haldenwang, Christian & Jörg Faust (German Development Institute) (2012): 'GIZ Support to Decentralization and Local Governance Reforms: Changing Markets, Core Strengths, Future Opportunities'. Study commissioned by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit.

The evolution of decentralised political and administrative systems: three characteristic phases⁵

Decentralisation of the political and administrative system: This phase covers the far-reaching transformation of a centrally organised system into a decentrally organised system. This transformation represents decentralisation itself, in the strict sense of the word.⁶ As a rule, this phase commences with the initiation of the decentralisation process and encompasses the formulation of national strategies, policies and laws on decentralisation (for example, by enshrining decentralisation in the constitution and enacting the local government constitution). It encompasses the division of the national territory into different local authorities, establishing at least two, but more likely three, and sometimes even four levels of government and administration, agreeing to the first distribution of duties between these levels and their financing, establishing a local government association and holding the first regional or local government elections.

Consolidation of the decentralised political and administrative system: This phase encompasses a series of modifications to, and reorganisation of, the structure of the local authorities, the distribution of duties and the fiscal relationship between the levels (including financial transfers and a decentralised system of tax and excise revenue) as well as establishing forums for exchanging information and promoting collaboration between the different levels. These modifications are specifically targeted at improving the way functions are performed at the responsible levels. The decentralised system can be considered to be consolidated as soon as the structure of the local authorities and the distribution of responsibilities and human and financial resources between the levels is regarded as appropriate and finds widespread acceptance, and procedures for further-reaching modifications to the system have been firmly established.

Modernisation of the decentralised political and administrative system:

This phase encompasses consistent and ongoing development of the decentralised system to ensure it can adapt to changing framework conditions and demands of its citizens. Approaches to strengthening citizen orientation, direct democracy and the efficiency of the decentralised system can be developed and implemented within the scope of established forums and processes. These might include computerisation of political and administrative systems (for example, by introducing e-government and e-democracy based approaches) or selective modernisation of public service provision (for example, by introducing citizens' offices and one-stop shops, or promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency to adapt to climate change)

5 In a number of countries, several phases are being launched simultaneously, or the phases overlap over longer periods.

6 Deep-seated changes to the existing political and administrative system are effected in this phase, such as the introduction of federalism (enshrining the legislative competencies of the regions in the constitution), the introduction of regions as a mid-level in the political and administrative system (regionalisation) and the introduction of municipalities as the lowest level of the political and administrative system (local self-government). Decentralisation is generally organised to involve a combination of devolution (transfer of duties to selected, subnational units), deconcentration (transfer of duties to regional offices of the central administration) or delegation (transfer of national duties to municipalities, civil society organisations or private companies).



Germany serves as an example to demonstrate how important the modernisation of a consolidated, decentralised political and administrative system can be.⁷ Germany, with all its federal states, political and administrative districts, cities and municipalities, municipal associations and local government special-purpose bodies that have formed over the course of its history, is characterised by a highly refined and efficient decentralised governmental and administrative system. This system is nowadays formative for the culture and the civic awareness of its citizens. At the same time, it allows citizen-oriented policies, ensures a citizen-centred administration and balanced economic development throughout all parts of the country, as well as preserving and sustaining regional identities and their distinctive features in a shared state and polity. This system can, however, only maintain its efficiency and performance capacity if it consistently adapts to changing circumstances and rises to new challenges. This is done over the course of reform periods, which aim, for example, to regulate the territorial boundaries of the federal states and municipalities, the distribution of responsibilities between the national and federal state levels, the modernisation of local government administration or funding for public services.⁸

7 The adaptations currently needed are the specific result of demographic change, the expansion of infrastructure resulting from the energy revolution and the transfer of new responsibilities for pre-school facilities to the municipalities.

8 Past examples include the introduction of a federal political system in 1949, the merger of Württemberg-Baden, Baden and Württemberg-Hohenzollern in 1952, the local government and functional reform of the German federal states in the 1970s, the local government and functional reform of the newly formed German federal states from 1990 on, the reallocation of competencies between the national and federal state governments from 2003 – 2006, and the restructuring of the fiscal relationship between the national and federal state governments from 2006 – 2009.

3. A citizen-centred state: trademark of reform advice 'Made in Germany'

International cooperation can provide support to reform-oriented states in introducing citizen-centred political and administrative systems, and consolidating and continually modernising them. Depending on the respective national context, the decentralisation of administration, the promotion of local self-government or the introduction of a federal system can represent a particularly effective method of ensuring that the political and administrative system becomes more citizen-centred, more democratic and more efficient (see boxed text) The Federal Republic of Germany has firmly established itself as one of the world's leading

Key terms

Decentralisation: A process of transferring responsibilities, human and financial resources from a higher-level political and administrative level to a lower-level political and administrative level.

Local self-government: A form of government and administration in which the political and administrative units at the regional and local government level benefit from a legally entrenched right to make decisions, perform duties and use human and financial resources within their own area of responsibility on their own initiative and without interference from the higher levels.

Federalism: A form of government and administration in which the regions enjoy a constitutionally enshrined right to formulate and enact laws within their own areas of responsibility without interference from the higher-level political and administrative levels.

Decentralised political and administrative systems: A form of government and administration that allows political and administrative action in a state to be performed as closely to the citizens as possible, and with their participation, in order to satisfy their needs, take into account their priorities and uphold their rights.

partners for supporting reforms aimed at strengthening decentralised political and administrative systems. Germany is meanwhile the largest bilateral development partner in Africa that supports reforms in the areas of decentralisation and local self-government.⁹ In many of the countries in this region, Germany is the lead donor in this funding area. In Europe, Germany is acting as a domain leader to coordinate the support being provided to modernise administration at local government level in Greece. Germany has been a member of the Forum of Federations since 2006, an international network in which all federal states exchange information and experiences about potential methods for modernising federal systems. Furthermore, the German Government has been financing the secretariat of the international Development Partners Working Group on Decentralisation and Local Governance since 2008, in which 28 bilateral and multilateral development partners are currently harmonising their approaches to supporting decentralisation reforms, and jointly emphasising

⁹ Beerfeltz, Jürgen (2013): 'A lever for reducing poverty', published in: Development & Cooperation No. 3, 2013



sing the importance of decentralised systems for sustainable development in international discussions.¹⁰

Strengthening citizen-centred political and administrative systems has therefore evolved into a trademark of German support for reforms – and therefore a trademark for reform advice ‘Made in Germany’. The German Development Institute describes the support of decentralisation and local self-government as a ‘strategic core competence’ of German development cooperation and as a ‘German brand’.¹¹ The Forum of Federations considers the German model of federalism to be a ‘first-rate export item’.¹² This assessment is corroborated by a current study detailing Germany’s specific strengths: experts and managers from industrialised, emerging and developing nations have expressed a high level of interest in the model provided by German federalism because it is perceived as being ‘efficient, decentralised and citizen-centred’ and as being ‘easy to implement and easily transferable’.¹³ This underlines the fact that German reform advice enjoys a very high level of credibility, acceptance and a first-rate reputation precisely because Germany itself is characterised by a decentralised political and administrative system that is citizen-centred, democratic and effective. At the request of partners and clients, this experience and expertise can be incorporated into a long-term and structure-building approach to support services adapted to the respective national circumstances¹⁴. Specifically German experience and expertise are considered to be Germany’s model of federalism, its tradition of local self-government, the efficiency of the German federal states and municipalities, the professional demeanour of the central local government associations, the administrative schools for regional and local public servants and its most recent approaches to consolidating citizen participation in the municipalities.¹⁵ The large number of experts and senior managers in the German municipalities, local government associations, administrative districts and ministries of the interior also makes it possible to involve German civil servants in providing reform advice within the

10 The secretariat is based within the GIZ. See: www.delog.org

11 Von Haldenwang, Christian & Jörg Faust (German Development Institute) (2012): ‘GIZ Support to Decentralization and Local Governance Reforms: Changing Markets, Core Strengths, Future Opportunities’. Study commissioned by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit.

12 Knüpling, Felix (2009): ‘Wachsende Bedeutung des Föderalismus weltweit – Folgerungen für Deutschland’, published in: Ralf Thomas Baus/Henrik Scheller/Rudolf Hrbek (Eds.) *Der deutsche Föderalismus 2020*. Nomos Verlag (Baden Baden), 2009, p. 311–318.

13 GIZ (2012): ‘Deutschland in den Augen der Welt. Zentrale Ergebnisse der GIZ-Erhebung “Außensicht Deutschland – Rückschlüsse für die internationale Zusammenarbeit”’, p. 17. Bonn / Eschborn: GIZ.

14 Also see Deutscher Bundestag, 15th electoral period, the response of the federal government to a question posed during question hour by members of parliament Dr Conny Mayer (Freiburg), Dr Christian Ruck, Arnold Vaatz, other MPs and the CDU/CSU parliamentary group – Bundestag paper 15/5767 – ‘Dezentralisierung und lokale Selbstverwaltung in der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit’, 11 July 2005.

15 Also see Deutscher Bundestag, 11 July 2005.

scope of study tours or short-term assignments¹⁶. Not least, German federalism also provides the opportunity to compare the situation in the 16 German federal states and their respective local government constitutions with each other.

4. Strengthening decentralised political and administrative systems: advisory approach and examples of GIZ projects

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is a cutting-edge German federal enterprise with global operations and a wealth of experience. It supports the German Government in introducing, consolidating and modernising decentralised political and administrative systems both in Germany and around the world. Today, GIZ is one of the world's leading partners for reforms in this dynamic field of action within international cooperation.

GIZ's support for reform processes is geared to the model of the citizen-centred and citizen-oriented state that aims to sustainably improve the living conditions of all citizens in all parts of the country. This model places the citizens and their needs, priorities and rights at the centre of state action. This involves organising the state in a way that ensures its responsibilities are consistently discharged – in accordance with the subsidiarity principle – at the political or administrative level that is the closest possible to citizens and that can make sure these responsibilities are carried out effectively, efficiently and to the satisfaction of citizens. Given this background, GIZ understands decentralised governmental and administrative systems as a form of government and administration in which governmental and administrative actions in a state are geared as closely as possible to citizens, with citizen participation.

This form of government aims to satisfy citizens' needs, take their priorities into account and uphold their rights. To achieve this, GIZ promotes capacity development at the individual, organisational and social level to ensure its partners can articulate, negotiate and implement their own conceptions of what a decentralised political and administrative system entails.

GIZ provides its partners and clients with a unique combination of more than 25 years of worldwide experience and expertise in reform advice, based on its concrete experience with federal state-building and local self-government in Germany. It also offers a broad range of support services that are characterised by customer orientation, flexibility and quality (see boxed text).

A worldwide network of well-established implementation structures with experienced staff allows GIZ to plan and implement measures to support reforms comprehensively and promptly. This is of particular interest for those clients who do not have implementation structures and staff of their own at their disposal in a partner country.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

Principles of GIZ advisory services aimed at strengthening decentralised political and administrative systems

Strengthening national systems:

The projects implemented by GIZ help decision-makers in its partner countries to establish and consolidate effective national systems and make more efficient use of them. Decentralised political and administrative systems are comprised of different elements. These include, for example, training systems for public servants, the local government finance system, a system for monitoring the performance of municipalities, or supervisory and regulatory systems for local governments and their services.

Open-model advisory services based on German experience and expertise:

The framework conditions for, and demands made of, decentralised political and administrative systems differ from country to country. This is why the projects implemented by GIZ assist decision-makers in its partner countries in developing a system that is suitable for the specific national context and respective reforms. Where there is interest, GIZ can also contribute its extensive experience with German federalism and local self-government, in the form of lessons learned, alongside its international experience.

Integrated analysis of the political, administrative and fiscal dimensions:

The projects implemented by GIZ analyse and address all three dimensions of decentralised systems: the political, the administrative and the fiscal dimension. This means that when responsibilities are allocated or restructured between the various levels of government and administration, it is necessary to harmonise policy-making powers, the capacity of the administrative systems and allocation of the required funding. This is the only way to ensure that the municipalities, for example, also have the necessary human and financial resources at their disposal to be able to perform the duties assigned to them.

Involvement of all important agents of reform:

Incorporating the interests, experiences and knowledge of all agents of reform can help all stakeholders to accept the system and successfully perform the duties assigned to them. Incorporating the local government associations is, for example, necessary to ensure that local governments can have their needs for reform and proposed solutions included in the definition of national policies and support schemes. The projects implemented by GIZ therefore ensure that all relevant political, administrative and social actors are sufficiently involved in designing or reforming the decentralised political and administrative system.

Promoting interaction among all levels:

The projects implemented by GIZ support actors at all levels of government and administration and promote interaction between them. This is essential, because decentralised systems are complex, multilevel systems. These can only function effectively and efficiently if actors at the various levels communicate, coordinate and cooperate successfully and therefore interact across all levels with a common focus on outcomes.

Human rights orientation:

The state is there for its citizens. The projects implemented by GIZ therefore help experts and managers, as 'duty bearers', at the various levels of government and administration to observe, uphold and guarantee citizens' rights as assiduously as possible in their area of responsibility. This applies in particular to safeguarding basic services, or ensuring participation in decision-making processes. At the same time, GIZ helps citizens, as 'bearers of rights', to exercise their rights and fulfil their obligations. This includes, for example, constructively helping to improve basic services, or the payment of taxes and charges.

Integrating with other building blocks for modernising the state: The projects implemented by GIZ regard the strengthening of decentralised political and administrative systems as an important building block for modernising a state. In many countries, this reform represents one of several reforms aimed at modernising the state. Considerable synergies can be generated when the various building blocks used to modernise a state are integrated with each other. This includes, for example, strengthening the democratic system of checks and balances, reforming the public service law, or reforming the public finance system.

Cross-sectoral advisory services: Improving local services and infrastructure, and encouraging the promotion of local economic development in the regions and municipalities, calls for a good combination of skills and knowledge in different disciplines. Improving local energy supplies or reassigning responsibilities in the education system can, for example, be best regulated when experts in local government and experts in energy or education work closely together. The projects implemented by GIZ ensure that all the knowledge required can be suitably combined.

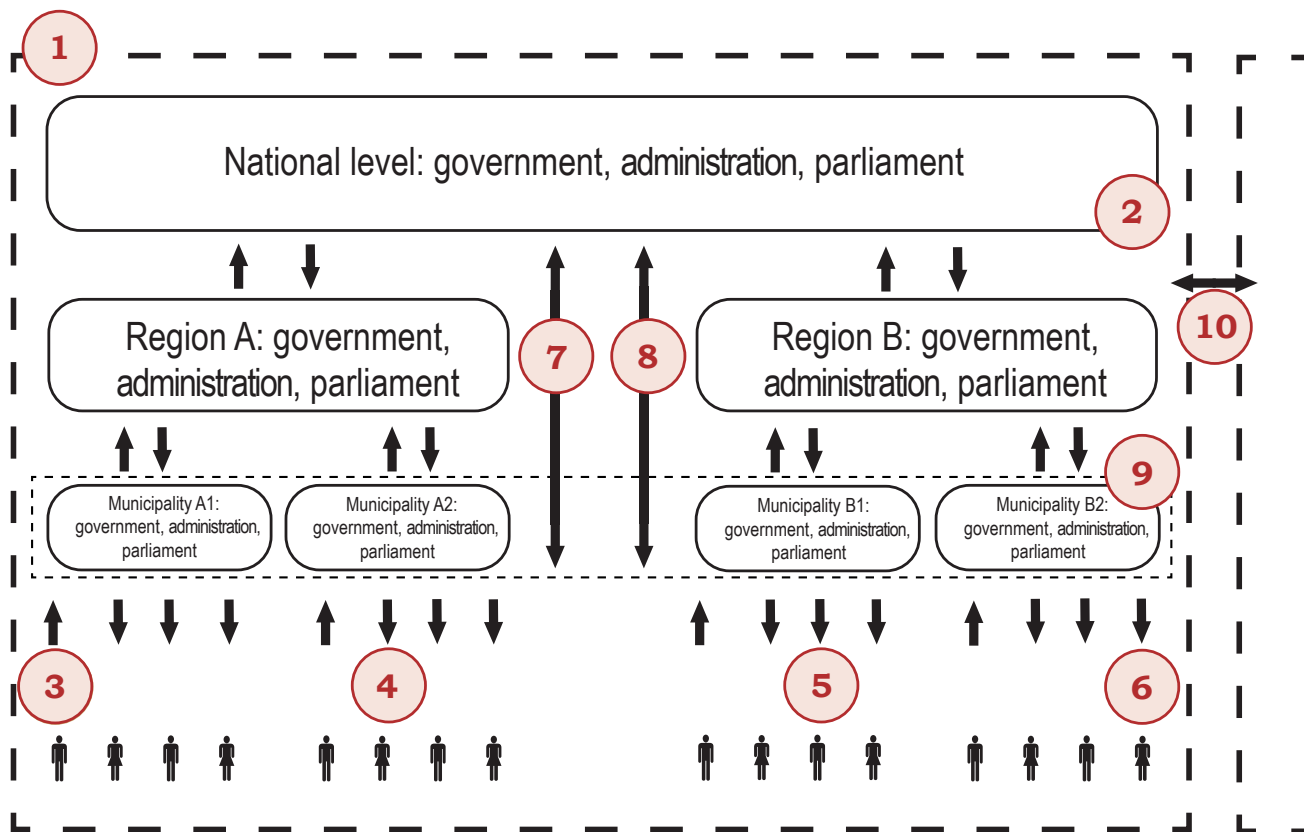
Country group-based approach: The projects implemented by GIZ orient their advisory and support services towards the specific needs and respective characteristics of the partner countries. Countries that share similar framework conditions can learn particularly well from, and with, each other. This is why GIZ supports a specific exchange of experience between countries that have similar framework conditions and are pursuing comparable approaches to reform. This applies in particular to EU candidate countries, countries with comparable administrative structures or traditions, and fragile states.

Politically and economically informed reform analysis: The decentralisation of a political and administrative system entails a far-reaching redistribution of power, responsibilities and financial resources within the state fabric. This makes it necessary to identify the concerns and objections of stakeholders at an early stage in order to highlight solutions. At the same time, decision-makers can benefit from support in informing the wider public of the anticipated results of the reform, and encouraging broad backing for the reforms. The projects implemented by GIZ therefore look closely at the political economy of the reform processes to identify suitable time frames, partners and entry points to obtain effective support for reforms.

Furthermore, its flexible framework for commissions allows GIZ to support the dynamics of reform in a swift and targeted manner.

Within the scope of its reform advice, GIZ is able to use various entry points to support the introduction, consolidation and modernisation of decentralised political and administrative systems (see diagram).

The advisory fields covered are described below and illustrated by means of ongoing GIZ projects. The advisory fields are selected and combined in line with partner needs and priorities, following comprehensive analysis of the reform objectives, the reform situation and the framework conditions for the reform efforts.



① Detailed design of decentralised political and administrative systems

The advisory services provided by GIZ in this area aim to design in detail the structure of a decentralised political and administrative system in accordance with the respective national context. The advice given mainly focuses on the national level, but also ensures that all stakeholders are involved in the process (see point 1 in the diagram on page 14).

Specifically, GIZ provides the following services in this advisory field:

- Support for the constituent assemblies, parliamentary committees, government commissions and ministries in formulating or amending national constitutions, laws, implementing regulations, strategies and policies that relate to setting up a decentralised political and administrative system (for example, the formulation of a national decentralisation policy, spatial planning strategies or local government constitutions).
- Support for the ministries, commissions and boards responsible for the reorganisation of responsibilities and the distribution of personnel and financing between the various levels of government and administration, as well as for the reorganisation of local authorities (for example, by means of regional, functional and financial reforms to consolidate or modernise the decentralised political and administrative systems).
- Support for think tanks and scientific institutes working in the fields of decentralisation, local self-government and federalism in applying scientific insights and recommendations to the design or adaptation of decentralised political and administrative systems (for example, by holding expert conferences, public discussions and scientific congresses, having experts participate in parliamentary hearings, or distributing publications on alternative system options with their respective advantages and disadvantages).



Nepal: Introducing a federal political and administrative system

Context:

Signature of the peace treaty in November 2006 marked the formal end of armed conflict between the Nepalese Government and Maoist forces after a period of 12 years. The treaty forms the basis for maintaining peace and instituting a new form of state and government. At its very first meeting, the constituent assembly decided to abolish the monarchy and declared Nepal to be a 'Federal Democratic Republic'. This ushered in a highly politicised and protracted process involving the concrete organisation of the new Nepalese federal system of government and administration that would simultaneously guarantee peace, democracy and good governance. The Nepalese Government expressed a keen interest in the experiences of German federalism and therefore agreed to cooperate with the German Government in this area.

GIZ approach and activities

On behalf of the German Federal Foreign Office, GIZ, along with bilateral and multilateral sponsors, supported the constituent assembly from 2008 to 2010 in organising the consultations about the future structure of the federal system transparently and with a participatory and open-ended approach, to ensure that citizens could advance their ideas within the process of consensus building and decision-making. At the same time, the Municipal Association of Nepal, civil society associations and business associations were assisted in integrating their ideas for local self-government, reorganisation of the political and administrative system and provision of public services in a federal system, into the discussion. GIZ also made it possible for the members of the constituent assembly to access the lessons learned in other federal states and the latest scientific insights relating to federal systems. Accompanying this, citizens were kept consistently informed about the significance of federalism, effective decentralised structures and citizen participation. In doing so, GIZ worked locally in close cooperation with the Forum of Federations, the global network of all federal states.

Results achieved so far

GIZ's support allowed the members of the constituent assembly to develop concepts for the individual sections of the constitution and to discuss them with international experts. The members of the committees were able to build and expand their understanding of the way federal political and administrative systems function on the basis of scientific insights and practical experiences gained in other federal states. The study commissioned by the GIZ, 'Structure of Federalism and Local Government', became a reference work for the members of the committees. Within the scope of a conference on the Dynamics of Constitution Making in Nepal in a Post-Conflict Scenario, which was supported by GIZ, the members of the committee were also able to gain information about international experiences with introducing, organising and regulating federal systems. A study commissioned by GIZ, 'Civil Service Reform: Experiences of the United Kingdom, India, South Africa and Nepal', highlighted to the members of the committee how the public service can be organised in a federal system. Over the course of the discussion it was, however, revealed how difficult it can be for the political actors involved to agree on one and the same basic structure for the state and polity. The constituent assembly elected in April 2008 was disbanded in May 2012 without enacting a new constitution. A new constituent assembly was elected in November 2013. It is hoped that this second attempt will soon result in success and a clear structure for a new, federal order.

② Management, communication and supervision in decentralised systems

The advisory services provided by GIZ in this field aim to improve management, communication and supervision in decentralised systems. The advisory services provided in this area focus mainly on the national level (see point 2 in the diagram on page 14). Specifically, GIZ provides the following services in this advisory field:

- Support for the responsible national and regional state agencies in setting up and developing a system for gathering information, supervising and advising the decentralised political and administrative units (for example, in introducing national and IT-supported local government information systems, local government performance monitoring systems or municipal benchmarking systems, in setting up national observatories for monitoring decentralisation processes or in drafting regular progress reports on the decentralisation reform or on the situation of the local governments).
- Support for multi-stakeholder forums in holding regular discussions on the current situation in the regions and municipalities, on the performance capacity of the regions and municipalities, and for identifying the reforms required and future approaches to reforms (for example, supporting sector reviews, annual conferences on the status of decentralisation, or a national local government day).
- Strengthening the lead political or administrative agencies and the responsible inter-ministerial boards and their secretariats in effectively managing and coordinating the interdepartmental and multilevel reform of the political and administrative system (for example, the office of the president, office of the prime minister or interministerial reform commission).
- Equipping the press relations officers within the responsible national political and administrative agencies to carry out modern PR work and communicate the content of decentralisation reforms (for example, by means of information and communication campaigns by the lead ministry, qualifications in the field of PR and by establishing IT-supported information portals).



Peru: Strengthening capacities for managing the state modernisation process

Context

Over the course of the last decade, development in Peru was characterised by economic recovery and the consolidation of democratic structures. Far-reaching reforms aimed at democratising and decentralising the state were launched during this phase. This allowed the modernisation of the state machinery to progress significantly. However, as was previously the case, different departments within the political and administrative system are still facing great challenges that need to be systematically addressed. These include, in particular, the lack of transparency of political and administrative action, corruption among public servants working in administration, inadequacies in financial management, a still-excessive level of centralisation of the political and administrative system, and the associated weaknesses in regional and local administration. All these factors result in an administration that lacks transparency, efficiency and citizen orientation.

GIZ approach and activities

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, GIZ has been advising the Peruvian Government since 2008 on the implementation of reforms aimed at modernising the state on all political and administrative levels. GIZ is supporting the political and administrative units in gearing their activities more strongly towards the principles of coherence, transparency, efficiency and gender equality, thereby improving their overall performance capacity. The Presidency of the Council of Ministers is playing a central role in these endeavours, being responsible for successfully managing and coordinating the various reform processes. GIZ is therefore supporting the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in developing exemplary approaches to reforms in close consultation with the various sector ministries, regions, cities and municipalities to ensure they can all benefit from the approaches and instruments that have been designed to modernise the political and administrative system.

Results achieved so far

With support from GIZ, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers was able to develop approaches for making political and administrative action transparent and efficient. These approaches were subsequently implemented by public institutions on both national and subnational level. For example, the Secretariat of Public Management of the Council of Ministers received advice on implementing a transparency and freedom of information law. A new internet portal with a uniform design was developed for all public institutions, which informs citizens about structural principles and current developments in policies involving the budget, manpower, investment and awarding of contracts. In 2012, 982 public institutions had launched the portal in their respective areas of responsibility. By mid-2013, the ministries had published 96% of the required information, with the regional governments having published 86% and the provincial capitals 52%. The internet portal had recorded 45 million clicks by November 2013. Meanwhile, an interactive category called INFObras has been integrated, which reports about the progress made in the progress of investment projects and records citizens' comments. GIZ's support allowed the Secretariat of Public Management to hold annual competitions from 2010 to 2012 that awarded prizes for innovative examples of ethical conduct by public servants. These competitions have proven to be highly successful in revealing practicable ideas for furthering and propagating transparency and integrity at the various levels of government and administration. The Secretariat of Public Management has therefore continued to hold these competitions since 2013, even without the support of GIZ. With assistance from GIZ, the Secretariat has also been able to develop methods for simplifying administrative processes and calculating the costs of public service provision. All municipalities are now able to employ these methods, whose successful utilisation is being promoted by a state incentive system.

③ Strengthening local democracy and citizen participation

The advisory services provided by GIZ in this field aim to improve local democracy and citizen participation in the regions and municipalities. The advisory services provided in this area focus mainly on the regional and local government levels (see point 3 in the diagram on page 14). Specifically, GIZ provides the following services in this advisory field:

- Support for the responsible state agencies in preparing and holding elections at regional and local government level (for example, by providing organisational support for the electoral commission or logistical support when holding regional and local government elections).
- Support for the state agencies responsible for developing and establishing practices for direct democracy and citizen participation in planning and decision-making processes (for example, by implementing ‘round tables’ for debating specific challenges faced by the municipalities, establishing information and consultation events for citizens, or by developing formats for accountability reporting by local decision-makers to citizens).
- Support for journalists and the local media in reporting about topics relevant to local government, local decision-making and developments (for example, by establishing local radio stations and online media, or by training journalists in topics related to municipal policy).
- Equipping citizens to participate actively in local decision-making and planning processes as individuals, in civil society organisations or in citizens’ initiatives (for example, by holding seminars on political and civic education, educating citizens about the structure, function and opportunities to participate in local democracy, or by establishing, consolidating and networking civil society organisations, including promoting the self-representation of disadvantaged population groups).



Tunisia: Strengthening local democracy and citizen participation

Context

Since the 'Revolution for freedom and human dignity' began in January 2011, Tunisia has been undergoing a far-reaching and protracted process of transformation to a free democratic basic order. On 23 October 2011, a constituent assembly was elected, followed by the formation of a transitional government. The Tunisian people have set a democratic revolution in motion in their own country – and triggered the 'Arab Spring' across the region. At the same time, however, it quickly became apparent that designing and applying the democratic order is a very arduous process. The transitional Government of Tunisia is accentuating the significance of local democracy for ensuring the success of the new, democratic Tunisia and the country's stability. The Tunisian municipalities are a focal point for economic, social and cultural development, with high expectations placed on them by the population. In particular, citizens are demanding increased opportunities for co-determination.

GIZ approach and activities

On behalf of the German Federal Foreign Office, GIZ has been promoting local democracy and citizen participation since 2012 as a component of the Maghreb-wide regional programme for strengthening municipal structures. GIZ is supporting eight municipalities in establishing a citizens' office that provides 'one-stop' municipal services and employs a streamlined idea and complaints management system in order to achieve a higher level of citizen satisfaction. GIZ is supporting the municipalities in promoting suitable processes to encourage citizen participation in the areas of transport, waste management and the municipal budget. Specifically, participatory formats have been developed that also allow young people to get involved. Supplementing these efforts, GIZ has supported the constituent assembly in incorporating appropriate international lessons learned into the constitutional debate. Five municipalities have already instituted partnership agreements with German cities. At the request of the Tunisian municipalities, GIZ is therefore supporting the transfer of knowledge and experiences from the German cities to their Tunisian partners – for example, within the scope of a German-Tunisian municipal dialogue or by means of study tours, network meetings and dialogue forums.

Results achieved so far

Supported by GIZ, eight cities have begun establishing a citizens' office. To do this, analyses in the areas of organisation, communication and IT were conducted, and citizens were surveyed about their level of satisfaction with local services and opportunities for participation. The range of services offered by the citizens' offices was then defined. Four cities have already begun to refurbish citizens' offices. GIZ's support allowed the Tunisian municipalities to systematically include their citizens in the planning processes. In seven municipalities, the authorities have drafted plans for regulating city traffic and improving waste collection services, with broad participation from the population. Young Tunisians are being empowered to actively share their ideas and suggestions with local politicians. Five municipalities have already held competitions inviting ideas for youth projects in the areas of journalism, election monitoring, municipal history, environment and civic education. Furthermore, municipalities in Tunisia and Germany have been expanding and consolidating their partnerships. Following a study tour on local democracy in Germany, the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior asked GIZ to develop a country-wide training programme for municipal staff, with a focus on citizen participation in cities and municipalities.

④ Improving local self-government and citizens' services

The advisory services provided by GIZ in this area aim to achieve an improvement in regional and local self-government and local provision of services to citizens. The advisory services provided in this area focus mainly on the regional and local government levels (see point 4 in the diagram on page 14). Specifically, GIZ provides the following services in this advisory field:

- Support for regional and local authorities in developing suitable organisational models and processes for regional and local self-government (for example, for the structural organisation and operational structure of local administration, local investment and development planning, local responsibility for construction and contract award, financial management and levying local taxes and fees, budget preparation, the disclosure of information and accountability towards the local council and citizens, archiving procedures or the provision of administrative services and services to citizens).
- Strengthening the organisational efficiency of regional and local authorities to achieve successful, methodical and citizen-centred self-government by the regions and municipalities (for example, by overseeing the introduction of citizens' offices as one-stop shops for citizens and businesspersons, or the introduction of e-government services).
- Equipping public servants at the regional and local authorities to provide professional and citizen-centred administrative services and services to citizens, such as the issue of birth, marriage and death certificates, personal identification cards and passports, electoral documents, construction permits and business licences (for example, by means of training courses and further training provided by a national educational institute or by supervising on-the-job training).



Palestinian territories: Introducing citizens' offices

Context

Until 2005, the local authorities in the Palestinian territories were characterised by a lack of transparency, efficiency and citizen services. There were no uniform processes for providing basic services locally, and there was no overview of the local services available, the responsibilities, costs and processing times. Citizens frequently had to approach many different offices and public servants to receive a given service. This made the submission of applications or the payment of fees highly time-consuming, and the processing time and outcome of proceedings were often highly dependent on personal relationships with influential politicians. These unclear structures provided ample room for corruption and injustice, which made citizens dissatisfied with their local authorities and reduced their willingness to pay taxes and fees.

GIZ approach and activities

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, GIZ has been helping the Palestinian Authority since 2005 to strengthen local authorities to ensure they can provide citizen-centred services in a way that meets demands. In doing so, GIZ involves the population actively in local decision-making and reinforces the local authorities' compliance with their accountability obligations towards citizens. GIZ has initiated a process with several local authorities to simplify the provision of all services. The objective is to realise efficient, fair and transparent service provision, and to reduce corruption and favouritism. The concept behind this innovative GIZ approach includes establishing citizens' offices that act as a 'one-stop shop' for all services: construction permits and planning documents, business licences, water and electricity, as well as social and cultural services. The citizens' offices are being established in three phases: in the first phase, more efficient workflows are being developed with the local authorities and local personnel, and their needs for IT and buildings are being identified. In the implementation phase, the new processes are put into practice, with reception staff – the face of the citizens' office – being trained, and internal cooperation being improved. The third phase involves making all services accessible through a portal, with a directory of services available as well as a complaints management system for all citizens.

Results achieved so far

The results are consistently positive: since activities in the 12 Palestinian local authorities began, the level of citizen satisfaction with the services has increased considerably, from 42% to 61%, within one year. The provision of all services in one location means the citizens need less time to obtain the information and documents they require. This has innumerable advantages for the local authorities: revenues from taxation and the payment of bills have increased by up to 20%. In addition, the work processes in the various local government departments are organised better, which results in a more efficient use of the available time. The mayor and local council members have more time to focus on strategic decisions, as the citizens are now aware of who is responsible for the provision of which services within the local authority. This has significantly improved the transparency of local government. In future, annual prizes are to be awarded to the local authorities that have been most successful at increasing the efficiency of citizens' offices. These advances have aroused the curiosity of the local authorities in Tunisia, and GIZ has therefore been helping local authorities there to set up citizens' offices too.

⑤ Improving local services and infrastructure

The advisory services provided by GIZ in this area aim at improving the basic public services and public infrastructure in the regions and municipalities. The advisory services provided in this area focus mainly on the regional and local government levels (see point 5 in the diagram on page 14). Specifically, GIZ provides the following services in this advisory field:

- Support for regional and local authorities, specialised sectoral authorities and the responsible national ministries in improving the framework conditions for rendering high-quality services at regional and local level (for example, by developing legal guidelines for inter-governmental and interregional cooperation in service provision; the development of suitable operational models for citizen-centred provision of services).
- Reinforcing the organisational efficiency of the regional and local authorities and their coordination with the specialised sectoral authorities, to improve customer orientation, efficiency and quality of the public services assigned to them (for example, by introducing methods for measuring customer satisfaction with the services provided; involvement in setting up special-purpose associations for water supply and sanitation management; the modernisation of municipal waste disposal).
- Equipping experts and managers in the regional and local authorities, as well as in the regional and local public utilities, to provide professional and citizen-centred basic local services and local public infrastructure (for example, by means of training at national educational institutes or by supervised on-the-job training in the areas of local construction management, contract award, project management and customer liaison).



Moldova: Modernisation of municipal services

Context

The Republic of Moldova has achieved remarkable successes in economic development and the reduction of poverty over the last decade. However, its rural areas are being increasingly outpaced by the urban centres, and living conditions there are much poorer. The administrative bodies in the rural regions and municipalities have very few qualified personnel, and very few financial resources, at their disposal. They are therefore experiencing great difficulties in improving the basic provision of local services by expanding, operating and maintaining local infrastructure. The situation is particularly precarious when it comes to the drinking water supply and sewage networks, waste disposal, transport infrastructure and the provision of social services. These circumstances result in many citizens continuing to subsist in poverty, migrating to other regions, lacking opportunities to earn a living and losing their faith in the state.

GIZ approach and activities

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Union, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, GIZ has been supporting the modernisation of municipal services in the rural regions of Moldova since 2010. The Moldovan municipalities are receiving targeted support in modernising their local waste management, the local water supply and wastewater disposal as well as the energy efficiency of municipal buildings. To achieve this, GIZ is working in close cooperation with regional and local governments and authorities in particular, as well as the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction and the Moldovan Congress of Local Authorities. GIZ is also advising the municipalities on project planning, implementation and financing, along with its parallel funding of pilot measures to improve infrastructure. To achieve this, GIZ is equipping public servants in the local authorities with technical and economic knowledge and skills, and training them in internal administrative processes, customer orientation and intergovernmental cooperation.

Results achieved so far

GIZ's support has allowed the local authorities in the three regions of the country to consistently expand their cooperation with each other, to significantly simplify their internal processes, to increase the level of transparency in the provision of local services, and as a result, to ultimately increase citizens' trust in the authorities. The regional authorities were put in a position to successfully implement their regional sectoral plans in the areas of water supply and wastewater disposal, waste management and energy efficiency in public buildings. In terms of waste management in particular, interw cooperation was improved dramatically. This has given around 100,000 citizens in 39 municipalities greatly improved access to local services since 2010 in the country's three development regions. To ensure the situation continues to improve in future, the planning capacities of the authorities in the three partner regions were strengthened: in the meantime, plans have been tabled for infrastructure projects valued at more than EUR 100 million. Demonstrating the quality of these efforts, EU standards and regulations are being complied with to the greatest possible extent during project planning and project implementation.

⑥ Strengthening local economic development and employment promotion

The advisory services provided by GIZ in this area aim to promote economic development and to create employment in the regions and municipalities. The advisory services provided in this area focus mainly on the regional and local government levels (see point 6 in the diagram on page 14). Specifically, GIZ provides the following services in this advisory field:

- Support for the state agencies, business associations and cooperative forums at national level that are responsible for designing and implementing a national strategy for promoting balanced and potential-based economic development in the regions and municipalities (for example, as a component of the national growth strategy).
- Supporting the state agencies, economic associations and cooperation forums in the individual regions and municipalities that are responsible for designing and implementing strategies for local economic development and employment promotion (for example, by identifying the competitive and location advantages, marketing the locations regionally, or improving the institutional and legal frameworks for local economic development).
- Support for the regional and local authorities in modernising their administration in order to improve service orientation towards companies and investors (for example, by supporting the setup of one-stop shops for investors; advisory services for new business start-ups; dismantling bureaucratic obstacles; expediting administrative processes, granting permits and issuing business licences).
- Support for companies, cooperatives and chambers of industry in realising the potential of particularly high-growth local industries and value chains (for example, by establishing agriculture-based value chains from production through to marketing; by promoting local tourism or by expanding economically relevant infrastructure).



Mali: Promoting regional economic development

Context

Until the crisis erupted in January 2012, the Republic of Mali was considered a steadfast and stable West African democracy. In the course of the decentralisation reform undertaken in 1992, the national territory of this huge, structurally weak and ethnically diverse state was subdivided into regions, districts and municipalities. These decentralised political and administrative units have since been responsible for providing citizens with public services close to their place of residence, allowing them to participate in local decision-making and planning processes, and for improving the framework conditions for economic growth in the areas under the responsibility of local authorities. Weak economic development in the regions has, however, resulted in many citizens migrating to the capital, Bamako, and in the regions therefore lacking the revenue from taxes and fees that would allow to finance public services.

GIZ approach and activities

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Union, from 2010 to 2014 GIZ provided support to the regions, districts and municipalities in Mali to help them become drivers of economic growth. In the regions of Ségou and Mopti, exemplary strategies and approaches were developed to strengthen the regional economy and create jobs. The concepts designed and tested here can be shared throughout the region and be adopted in other regions, allowing all regions across the country to benefit from them. The approach taken by GIZ consists of four points: the regional parliaments are receiving support in adopting strategies to promote regional economic development. The regional authorities are being encouraged to plan and oversee investments in economically relevant infrastructure. Businesses in the area – in particular micro businesses and small businesses run by women – are receiving support in harnessing the region's economic potential. GIZ is supporting the municipalities in managing their most important economic sectors – markets and fish rearing ponds – to produce higher yields.

Results achieved so far

GIZ's support has allowed the economic situation in the two regions of Ségou and Mopti to improve considerably, despite the crisis. The two regional parliaments adopted regional economic development strategies that include an analysis of the economic potential the regions offer and a blueprint for regional development. The number of micro businesses and small businesses listed in the local commercial registers and founded or run by women has increased from a total of 537 in 2009 to 792 in 2012. Taken together, the 188 micro businesses and small businesses that received advice from GIZ were able to increase their operating results by 27%. The model developed in collaboration with the communities of Ségou and Mopti for operating a local fish rearing industry has grown into a sure-fire success throughout the country: by December 2012, it had been adopted at least once in six of the seven regions in Mali, and by a total of 29 municipalities in the region of Ségou – with 18 of these providing their own financing. In the region of Koulikoro, three municipalities have financed and introduced this operational model in cooperation with the regional fisheries authorities. This allowed fish production to be increased to more than 120 tonnes per year, improving the population's access to adequate sources of protein, increasing the number of crisis-proof jobs and boosting the revenue from trade tax.

⑦ Strengthening fiscal decentralisation and local financial management

The advisory services provided by GIZ in this area aim to improve the financial base, financial management and financial checks and balances within the regions and municipalities. The advisory services provided in this area focus on all levels of government (see point 7 in the diagram on page 14). Specifically, GIZ provides the following services in this advisory field:

- Supporting the responsible national ministries, committees and commissions in organising a system of domestic fiscal relationships that enables the regions and local authorities to finance the responsibilities allocated to them (for example, by effective allocation or reorganisation of competencies for raising their own revenue locally; allocating funds in pro-portion to the cost of services assigned; introducing mechanisms for horizontal fiscal transfer payments between the regions; formulating national standards for financial management by regional and local governments).
- Strengthening the organisational efficiency of the financial and tax administrations in the regions and municipalities, as well as the state organs for overseeing and checking that the generation of income and utilisation of expenditure is undertaken correctly in the regions and municipalities (for example, by supervising the establishment of local tax offices or local financial supervision).
- Enabling the public servants in the regional and local authorities entrusted with financial matters – in particular, the treasurers and public servants in the local tax offices – to raise revenue of their own correctly from taxes and fees, and to make effective, responsible and citizen-centred use of public funds (for example, by means of training at a national educational institute or by supervising on-the-job training in the areas of financial management, budget preparation and budget implementation).



Rwanda: Increasing revenue raised locally by the districts

Context

Following the genocide in 1994, Rwanda faced the almost insurmountable task of rebuilding its state and society. The decentralisation policy adopted in 2001 aimed to promote this reconstruction process at local level. With immediate effect, local authorities were granted their own sources of revenue by law, and furnished with a share of the national budget in order to implement their own urgently needed development measures. Parallel to this, a larger number of state duties were assigned to the districts. Although this was followed by further laws consolidating the districts' own financial power, the districts remain largely dependent on financial allocations by the national government. Their role is largely limited to implementing national policies..

GIZ approach and activities

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, GIZ supported the Government of Rwanda from the very beginning in organising and implementing the national decentralisation reform. GIZ is the only development partner providing support for the implementation of the national strategy in the area of fiscal decentralisation. GIZ is aiming to increase the revenue raised by local governments, to reform the national transfer system and to improve financial management by local government. From 2010 to 2012, GIZ provided specific support to the Ministry of Finance with drafting a new law regulating local government revenue. This aimed to extend the local tax base without placing additional burdens on the impoverished population. In particular, the potential from real estate taxation was to be better exploited. GIZ supported the legislative process, from preparing the draft law through to its implementation, together with German, local and international experts.

Results achieved so far

With support from GIZ, a new law regulating local government taxes, as well as a presidential decree regulating the local government fee structure, entered force in 2012. The new regulations were able to considerably improve the efficiency, the revenue raised and the level of fairness in the local government tax system. A series of tax exemptions were abolished, the revenue base of the districts was broadened and administrative obstacles were removed. This in turn simplified the tax administration and closed tax loopholes. Further-more, regulations were introduced that eased the burden on the poor, imposed a higher share of taxes on the wealthy and ensured equal treatment for all taxpayers. In particular, tax revenue from real estate holdings – the local taxes paid by homeowners and wealthy people – have almost doubled. In the first year in which the new law had been fully implemented (2012/13), the districts were able to report around EUR 5,000,000 in revenue of their own. Compared to the previous year, this was an increase of 23%. With the income potential of the new law still to be fully exploited, the Government of Rwanda has already asked GIZ for further support. This will include training around 1,000 public servants working at local government tax authorities.

8 Education and training for local authority staff and elected representatives

The advisory services provided by GIZ in this field aim to establish a uniform national course of training for public servants working in regional and local authorities, as well as the representatives elected to the regional parliaments and local government assemblies. Advice is provided at all levels of the political and administrative system (see point 8 in the diagram on page 14). Specifically, GIZ provides the following services in this advisory field:

- Supporting the national ministries, educational institutions and local government associations in setting up and expanding a national system of further training for public servants working in regional and local authorities and for the qualification of representatives elected to the regional parliaments and local government assemblies (for example, by setting up national training institutes and their decentralised training centres; the introduction of standardised curricula and degrees, or the publication of manuals and reference works for local government employees).
- Enabling experts and managers in the regional and local government authorities to perform their duties correctly and with a citizen-centred approach (for example, by means of on-the-job training courses to introduce newer approaches to a citizen-centred administration and procedures for participation-oriented local development planning, or utilising digital media, including social media, in administrative work).
- Equipping the elected representatives in regional parliaments and local government assemblies – in particular mayors, deputies and chairs of the local council committees – to perform their duties professionally and with a citizen-centred approach (for example, compact training courses and on-the-job training to provide information about citizen-centred governance, citizen participation and direct democracy, as well as utilising digital media, including social media, in politics).



Sri Lanka: Training for local office-bearers and members of parliament

Context

After more than 25 years of armed conflict between the Sri Lankan armed forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka have found themselves dealing with the aftermath of war following the military victory of the Sri Lankan armed forces in March 2009. Large sections of the population continue to suffer acute misery. Many women and children have lost husbands or fathers, and their houses and settlements have been destroyed. The provincial and district governments in the northern and eastern provinces have reached the limits of their capacity to provide the destitute population with urgently needed public services and to promote reconstruction together with the population under the prevailing conditions. Among other factors, this is also because the experts and managers at the provincial and district governments lack the qualifications necessary to perform their duties professionally, in a citizen-centred manner and in close collaboration with public servants from other administrative units.

GIZ approach and activities

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Australian Agency for International Development, from 2011 to 2013 GIZ supported the provincial and district governments in the northern and eastern provinces in providing pro-poor, citizen-centred and conflict-sensitive public services. To achieve this, GIZ is promoting the training of experts and leaders in the provincial and district governments under the Skills Through English for Public Servants (STEPS) programme. This programme enables both Sinhalese and Tamil-speaking public servants in the provincial and district governments to obtain key skills for local governance, citizen participation and conflict resolution within the scope of an English language course. This also allows the public servants involved to learn a common language and to acquire the technical wherewithal to solve practical challenges in the provincial and district governments. The STEPS programme is being carried out by the British Council on behalf of GIZ.

Results achieved so far

GIZ's support has allowed more than 6,500 Sri Lankan experts and managers in the provincial and district governments, especially in the war-torn north and east of Sri Lanka, to improve their English-language skills in local governance, citizen participation and conflict resolution since 2011. The graduates were able to improve their knowledge of English by an average of 30%, and their knowledge of local governance by an average of 35%. In their everyday work, 57% are able to use conflict resolution skills, and 63% have been regularly using English as a lingua franca between Sinhalese and Tamil public servants since attending the course. It therefore comes as no surprise that STEPS has evolved into a widely-recognised trademark in administrative circles in Sri Lanka. To ensure that public servants can continue to profit from the STEPS programme in future, GIZ has supported the foundation of a STEPS institute in Jaffna, the capital of the Northern Province. The ministry of education in the Northern Province has been financing the institute, its employees and teachers since its foundation with funds from the province's regular budget. At present, training courses can be held for up to 100 persons per month.

9 Strengthening national associations of the regions and local governments

The advisory services provided by GIZ in this field aim to strengthen the national associations of regions and local governments. The advisory services provided in this area focus mainly on the national level (see point 9 in the diagram on page 14). Specifically, GIZ provides the following services in this advisory field:

- Supporting the regions and local governments in organising and positioning their national associations to represent members' interests vis-à-vis higher-level political and administrative levels (for example, by formulating the statutes for the local government association; strengthening the regional chamber of parliament; peer-to-peer-learning by exchanging information with local government associations in other countries, or introducing the associations' rights to hearings and participation into national legislative processes).
- Strengthening the organisational efficiency of the national associations of regions and local governments to ensure they can successfully perform their function as special interest groups, service providers and networks (for example, by promoting the exchange of exemplary approaches and lessons learned within the associations; establishing information portals and regular newsletters).
- Equipping members of the national associations of regions and local governments to actively advocate their associations' interests within national forums and processes for formulating ready-to-implement reform proposals (for example, by training association members to represent their interests, in PR work and public relations as well as in the use of digital media, and active involvement of the associations in all national legislative, policy-making and strategy formulation processes that concern the development, consolidation or modernisation of the decentralised political and administrative system, and on all topics that are relevant to the regions and local governments).



South Africa: Strengthening the national association of local governments

Context

Since abolishing apartheid, South Africa has found itself well on the way to democratic consolidation, a process which has, however, been accompanied by considerable social and economic challenges. The country continues to struggle with establishing efficient and effective administrative systems. 278 municipalities were established in 1994 to assume responsibility for the most important tasks involved in the social, economic and democratic development of the country. However, they often lack a sufficient number of qualified administrative employees and the necessary financial means to be able to work with and for the citizens. Above all, deficits have become apparent in areas involving strategic and multilevel development planning and investment planning, the provision of social and economic infrastructure and services, promotion of the local economy and citizen participation.

GIZ approach and activities

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, in the period from January 2013 to December 2016, GIZ is supporting the central, provincial and local governments in South Africa in improving the procedures and expanding the capacities necessary to provide citizen-centred services. One of the main partners involved is the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). GIZ is assisting this local government association in professionally representing the interests of the South African municipalities vis-à-vis the central government, to promote cooperation between local governments and to exchange experiences with local government associations in other regions of the world. To achieve this, GIZ also supported the initiation of a cooperation arrangement between SALGA and the German Association of Cities. This has since resulted in an intense dialogue between the two local government associations, and has seen them exchanging information, and learning from each other about suitable models for representing local government interests or about approaches to local government financing. Along with this, GIZ is also supporting two SALGA projects that aim to modernise the member municipalities: a network of municipalities to strengthen promotion of local economic development, and a network of municipalities for introducing information and communication technologies into the local authorities.

Results achieved so far

Over the last few years, support from GIZ has allowed SALGA to establish the structures required and gain the experiences needed to represent the interests of the municipalities and to promote the exchange of information between them. The networks newly founded by the South African municipalities seem to fully satisfy their demands for coordination of their modernisation efforts and a mutual exchange of information: the number of member municipalities has grown to more than 6,000 and 7,000 respectively in the two networks. Within the scope of a model project involving GIZ and SALGA to introduce e-participation, the working relationships between SALGA, the Ministry of Local Government and the municipalities has also been placed on a firmer basis. A text-messaging system for more citizen participation was developed in the process, which allows citizens to send free-of-charge texts to the local authorities with suggestions, criticism or notifications about current events – for example, power outages. The local authorities, for their part, can use this system to send out current news to their citizens, for example about planned municipal council meetings or restrictions due to construction work.

10 Strengthening international platforms for learning and innovation

The advisory services provided by GIZ in this field aim to promote an international exchange between reform-oriented states, key organisations of decentralised political and administrative systems and international partners in reform. The advisory services provided in this area focus mainly on the global or international level (see point 10 in the diagram on page 14). Specifically, GIZ provides the following services in this advisory field:

- Support for experts and managers from politics and administration in creating international networks, sharing their reform experiences, in collaborative learning about exemplary approaches to reform and in the mutual development of standards and principles to strengthen decentralised political and administrative systems (for example, by strengthening the position of the Secretariat of the All-Africa Ministerial Conference on Decentralisation and Local Development (AMCOD)).
- Supporting the associations and networks of regions and local governments in creating international networks, sharing experiences and in collaborative learning about exemplary approaches (for example, by supporting a pan-African local government association, an association for local government associations in South-Eastern Europe, or city networks in the Maghreb and the Caucasus).
- Supporting think tanks and scientific institutes in creating international networks, sharing scientific insights into reform processes, and in collaborative learning about trailblazing approaches to reform (for example, by establishing national observatories to monitor decentralisation processes; by distributing publications on the status of decentralisation reform or on the situation of local governments, or by organising specialist conferences).
- Supporting bilateral and multilateral international reform partners in creating international networks, sharing their approaches to supporting reform, in collaborative learning from exemplary approaches and in contributing to the international discussion about the reform of political and administrative systems (for example, by acting as the secretariat of the global Development Partners Working Group on Decentralisation and Local Governance).



Global: Donor dialogue in the area of decentralisation and local self-government

Context

Decentralisation reforms are deep-reaching state reforms that restructure the organisation and the distribution of competencies between different levels of the political and administrative system. In many countries, up to 20 different international partners are supporting these reform processes. Their advisory approaches are often based on the experiences gained while structuring their own states. These do, however, vary considerably from each other. This is why it is of decisive importance for all international partners to harmonise and coordinate their support measures and work in close collaboration. This is the only way to ensure that the various building blocks used to effect reform fit together and complement each other optimally, and that the political and administrative systems receiving their support become fully operational. In 2006, the donor platform Development Partners Working Group on Decentralisation and Local Governance (DeLoG) was founded to ensure that the effectiveness of development cooperation in this area continues to improve.

GIZ approach and activities

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, GIZ was appointed secretariat to the international working group of donor organisations. As the secretariat to the donor forum, GIZ helps the member organisations to learn both from each other and with each other based on the experiences gained from support for previous reforms in this area, to develop new approaches for supporting future reforms, and to continue to learn more together. DeLoG also contributes to positioning this topic in international debates by producing studies and reports of its own, for example, at the Busan High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, or with the consultation mechanisms for the Post-2015 development agenda. GIZ maintains an internet portal with a literature database (www.delog.org) and publishes a regular newsletter for the network. Furthermore, it organises annual conferences, events on related subjects and meetings of working groups. It also coordinates the preparation of joint publications and organises further training courses for its members.

Results achieved so far

GIZ's support has helped the donor organisation forum DeLoG to grow into an internationally well-established and highly regarded network for decentralisation and local self-government over the last few years, whose events, publications and training courses have integrated the topic prominently and professionally in the international debate, and which can promote coordination and collaboration among the member organisations in their partner countries. In 2013, 28 national ministries, development banks and agencies, as well as international organisations, were members of this forum. The forum has held a conference every year since 2006, at which the donor organisations can share and coordinate their approaches to supporting decentralisation and local self-government. The internet portal maintained by the forum has evolved into a widely used knowledge resource. In 2013 alone, the portal was accessed by almost 7,000 visitors. The members of the forum are kept up-to-date with the international discussion by a quarterly newsletter. In 2013, there were around 500 subscribers to the newsletter.

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