

## DDLGN f2f follow up (2016)

### Country Case Studies on SDC support to Accountability Mali

#### 1. What is the context in relation to accountability

- ! Mali is considered to be a fragile state. There is a conflict in the North of the country since 2012. Generally there is a lack of accountability culture and lack of citizens' awareness. Citizens have little trust in the political authorities and there is widespread corruption which goes unpunished (impunity). The main challenges are the reconciliation of communities; more efficient public service delivery; increased citizens' participation in public management and elections; and the inclusion of youth, women, and minorities, in particular in a post-crisis context.

#### 2. Rational of our engagement

- ! SDC was present before the conflict, but now, two out of the three regions where SDC intervenes are affected by the conflict. Switzerland's intervention aims at contributing to the resolution of the conflict and supporting the conditions for peace and development, by supporting good governance processes.

#### 3. How do we intervene?

- ! SDC supports **local governments** in the areas of improving the transparency of public budget and local investments and promoting informed debates in the framework of local elections. To do so, SDC supports public hearings and public audits in the framework of the budget cycle and investment monitoring. Radio programs are also supported to increase transparency of public action.
- ! On the **civil society** side, SDC supports the capacity development of civil society (users committee, local NGOs, youth and women's groups, Community Based Organizations-CBOs) to implement and promote the principles of good governance. SDC helped establish effective collaborative links between civil society, local elected officials and technical services to ensure their participation in decision making. As it is better informed, civil society is now well prepared to negotiate the inclusion of its needs in development plans and has begun to exercise control over access to basic social services. For example, neighborhood associations defined their needs in terms of access to drinking water and used water evacuation and they were able to ensure the inclusion of their priorities in municipal plans. Local councilors are now more open and amenable to present their administrative accounts to communities. Local budgets are more transparent and published.
- ! SDC is also engaged in political dialogue with local and national authorities and supports political dialogue towards the central government on these issues.
- ! The target groups of SDC's support and dialogue are: Elected local bodies, technical services, political parties, civil society (users committee, local NGOs, youth and women's group), the media and indirectly the population as a whole. SDC is also interacting and coordinating with other donors.

#### 4. Success elements and challenges, bottlenecks?

- ! Success elements are the fact that the intervention (which resulted notably in better quality of public services infrastructure) contributed to increase the credibility of local authorities which eased their interaction with the population. In turn the population was more inclined to pay taxes.
- ! The recognition of the role of traditional authorities was also a key factor in the process. For example, successful partnerships were created between neighborhood associations (newly created structures) and neighborhood or village traditional authorities for the collections of taxes: the customary role of the traditional authorities in the matter was valorized and the younger citizen members of the neighborhood associations lent them a hand for the effective collection of the taxes.
- ! Another factor of success was the ownership of the accountability approach, which led to the institutionalization of public audits. This paved the way to the replication/scaling-up, which was then supported by the World Bank. In addition, the support given to traditional leaders in conflict management and involvement in local governance has been recognized by the state. Thus, in the new national decentralization policy, the state will scale up SDC's approaches.

#### 5. Key lessons learned and Way forward

- ! **With regard to the intervention:** Given the demographic situation in Mali and West Africa in general, targeting the youth and women is key. More should be done to address the issue of Gender sensitive budgeting.
- ! **With regard to the role of SDC:** SDC has been focusing on the local level, but in order to anchor these accountability practices and ensure their sustainability, it is felt that more should be done at the national level in a next phase, notably to work on national budget transparency.

**Reference:** Credit Proposal: «Partenariats pour l'exercice d'une gouvernance appropriée»; 7F-04179.04; 01.01.2015 – 31.12.2018; CHF 8'805'000.-