

Presentation of the evaluation of the EC support to decentralisation



On March 12th the EC presented the results of the global independent evaluation on its support to decentralisation processes in Brussels. DeLoG members were invited and the following development partners were present: Belgium, France, KfW, Spain, Sweden and GIZ/DeLoG secretariat. DeLoG is prominently featured in the report and it is recommended that the EC should further strengthen its efforts towards donor harmonisation mainly through its engagement in DeLoG. It further recommends that the EC should start to address the recommendations made in the DeLoG publication “Busan and Beyond”.

The evaluation team finds the provided support by the EC to decentralisation processes highly relevant. However the evaluation draws a mixed picture in terms of reaching the set objectives of the EC support, mainly contributing to improved local governance (democratic and accountable administration structures increased citizen participation) and to contribute to more effective and efficient local service delivery.

Click here for the full report:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/reports_by_year_en.htm

According to the report, EC support has been most effective in selected aspects of decentralisation reform – in particular development of decentralisation policies, development of intergovernmental fiscal transfer systems, strengthening capacities of local governments’ staff in areas of planning and public financial management, and in improving access to selected services in local governments. Support is seen less effective by the evaluators in achieving deeper legal reforms (in particular for the harmonisation of sector legislation), decentralisation of human resource management, building of central level capacities for reform management, and increasing the degree of local government autonomy (other than the management of discretionary grants). A limited or indirect impact on quality aspects of local services was also attested.

In terms of the used aid modality, which is a very important issue for DeLoG, the evaluators see a demonstrated capacity by the EC to adapt to local conditions by adopting a variety of aid delivery methods, including support through UN agencies, World Bank managed Trust Funds, or basket funding modalities. Thus the efficiency of EC support to decentralisation processes has improved with the use of joint funding modalities and the introduction of new aid modalities. It is stated that pursuing decentralisation-related objectives in sector interventions (sector budget support) or general budget support has proven to be difficult.

These objectives according to the report are actually best achieved when directly addressed through wide joint government and development partners supported programmes specifically focusing on decentralisation reforms.

Some of the main recommendations include:

- Clarify and strengthen the EU's global role in support to decentralisation by clearly anchoring that support within partner countries' wider public sector reform agenda, by acting proactively, and by clarifying the comparative advantages of the EU.
- Strengthen and broaden country ownership and coordination mechanisms for support to decentralisation reforms, but retain proactive EU advocacy role.
- Strengthen the EU country-specific and comprehensive response in all partner countries.
- Strengthen qualitative aspects of local government service delivery in EU support for decentralisation reforms.
- Prioritise EU support for inter-governmental fiscal transfers and local government fiscal reforms.
- Strengthen partner countries' monitoring of decentralisation reforms and EU monitoring and evaluation of decentralisation support.



Panel discussion: from right to left: Christophe Rouillon, Committee of the Regions; Per Tidemand, Team leader external evaluation team; JP Elong Mbassi, Secretary General UCLGA; Angelo Baglio, EC/DEVCO, Head of civil society and local authorities unit; Jean Bossuyt, ECDPM