

Local Governance Assessments: A Capitalisation of SDC Experience

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February 2011

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1. List of Acronyms

AMMC	Afghanistan Management and Marketing Consultants
AMUNIC	Asociación de Municipios de Nicaragua – Association of Nicaraguan Municipalities
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CBO	Community Based Organisation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EDA	Enterprise Development Agency, BiH
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
GOFORGOLD	Good Governance for Local Development (LGA tool)
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IC	Intercooperation
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa
IDLG	Independent Directorate for Local Governance (Afghan ministry level body)
INIFOM	Instituto Nicaraguense de Fomento Municipal – Nicaraguan Institute for Municipal Promotion
ISO	International Standardisation Organisation
LGA	Local Governance Assessment
LGB	Local Governance Barometer
LGSA	Local Governance Self Assessment
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDP	Municipal Development Project in the Dobo Region
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSF	Open Society Foundation
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SIRDEM	Sistema de Reconocimiento al Desempeño Municipal en Nicaragua
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UP	Union Parishad

2. Introduction

Intercooperation (IC) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) have been mandated by SDC to carry out a **capitalization of SDC experience in conducting Local Governance Assessments** (LGA) in the frame of SDC's "Decentralization and Local Governance Network" (dlgn).

The objective of the **dlgn** is to enhance knowledge and to improve SDC practice related to decentralisation and local governance by consolidating and gradually developing quality standards for impact. This shall be achieved by linking individual, collective and organisational learning to bring in new ideas and approaches and create a dynamic of continuous improvement.

Local Governance Assessments (LGAs) have been identified as one of the main topics of interest among the dlgn members and a specific "**Learning Project on Local Governance Assessments**" was launched. This document is part of this broader learning project.

The **main objective** of the mandate is to capitalize SDC experience in conducting Local Governance Assessments. The main expected result is to generate learnings from the different SDC experiences – with a focus on the purpose of the LGA tools – in order to offer guidance to SDC and its partners on conducting LGAs in the future.

As next steps, the main findings will be presented and discussed at the "Face to Face" workshop of the dlgn members to be held in Sarajevo in March 2011. The findings shall also be linked to a broader roster of LGA tools, currently being developed and based on the UNDP publication "A Users' Guide to Measuring Local Governance".

2.1. Methodology

The paper features five case studies - all of them SDC supported projects and initiatives - representative of different regions. Each case relates to a particular LGA tool, developed by different organisations and institutions. The case studies were compiled by Intercooperation and the Institute of Development Studies in close cooperation with SDC (dlgn members and learning group owners, Swiss Cooperation offices in the SDC partner countries) and their partner organisations, who have conducted the local governance assessments in their projects.

The capitalization was mainly done through written semi-structured interviews (followed by phone/skype conversations) with one or two key informants from the "LGA implementer" in each of the selected projects. The key informants responded to the questions after consulting among project staff/partners/stakeholders. The interviews were complemented by a review of documents related to the specific LGA conducted.

The following sections provide the 5 case studies, followed by general reflections and conclusions based on a comparison of learnings in practice. The paper should be understood as input to trigger discussions among the dlgn members, particularly at the workshop in Sarajevo.

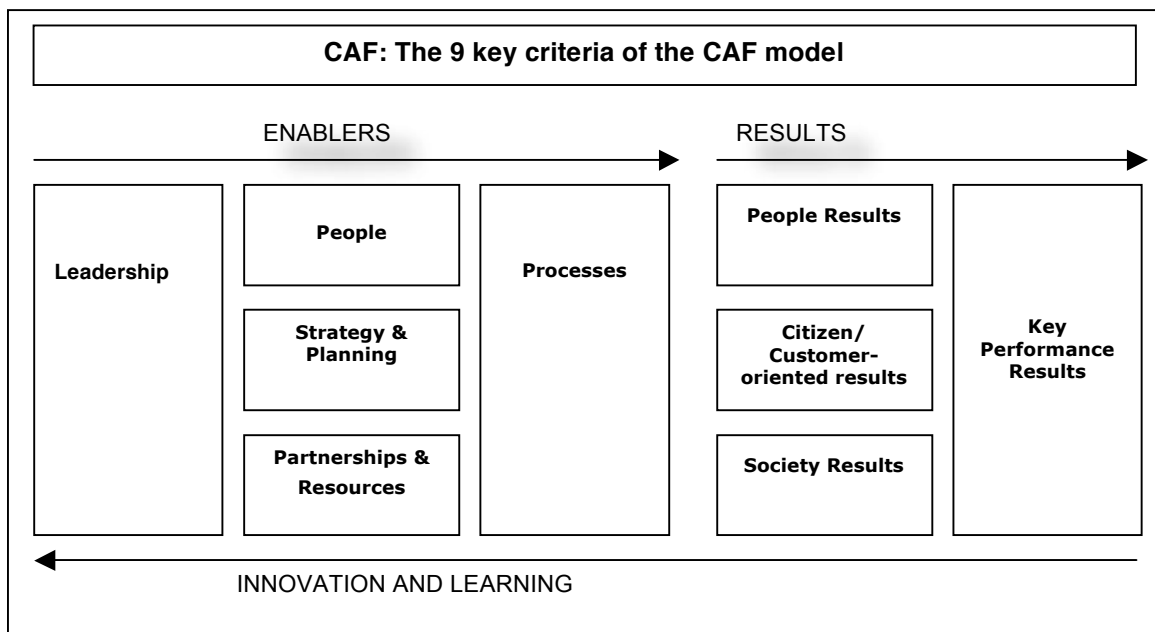
3. Common Assessment Framework, Bosnia and Herzegovina

3.1. Introduction and background

The tool: The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a self-assessment tool developed for assisting public sector organisations across Europe to use quality management techniques and improve performance. It is based on the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). The CAF provides a simple, easy-to-use framework looking at the organisation with a holistic organisation performance analysis. CAF has been applied at all levels of administrations (for the overall administration and for specific sectors like health, education etc.) in EU member states and in transition countries.

The CAF has three main purposes: 1) to serve as a self assessment tool for public administrations who want to improve their performance, capturing the unique features of public sector organisations; 2) to act as a "bridge" across the various models used in quality management; 3) to facilitate benchmarking and learning between public sector organisations.

The following aspects are assessed: Leadership, Strategy and Planning, People, Partnerships and Resources, Processes, Citizen-/Customer-Oriented Results, People Results, Society Results, Key Performance Results. The relationships between the criteria are shown in the table below:



The project: CAF has been introduced with the support of the Municipal Development Project (MDP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in municipalities in the Doboj region. Since 2001 MDP supports a group of partner municipalities situated along the border between the two entities of BiH with the objective to continuously upgrade their capacities, foster inter-municipal cooperation and actively contribute to improvement of development, in conformity with the principles of good governance and human rights. The institutional and legal situation in BiH is characterized by a complicated and costly 4 level state structure (central state, 2 entities, one of them divided into 10 cantons; municipalities), that was introduced in 1994 by the Dayton Peace Agreement as instrument to mediate and balance ethnic and religious tensions and cleavages and to respond to demands for self-government expressed by different groups.

3.2. Application of the tool

When was the tool applied, for what purpose?

CAF was introduced for the first time in BiH in 2005 in 6 small to mid size MDP partner municipalities¹ with a total number of approx. 140'000 inhabitants. The self-assessment was repeated one year later in the same municipalities.

The main purpose applying CAF in MDP was to:

- support municipalities to identify local government performance and public services strengths and gaps and develop an action plan on how to address them;
- reinforce the capacities of partner municipalities for self-assessment and quality management;
- facilitate horizontal dialogue between the participating municipalities
- introduce the tool for benchmarking between the participating municipalities and possibly in the whole country ;
- contribute to policy developments related to the BiH Public Administration Reform process and the EU integration process.

The results were also used for project planning purposes, to define MDP support activities (e.g. capacity-building of administrative employees and municipal management; development of municipal human resource strategies). CAF criteria were also used for project monitoring purposes to design indicators to measure progress at partners' level. The diagram below shows the nine criteria assessed in the CAF.

Methodology

Four main steps were followed:

1. Introduction, commitment of leadership and adaptation of the tool to the local context: To identify motivated partners and to validate the tool, MDP introduced the tool to the leadership (mayors, heads of municipal assemblies) of different municipalities. Together with national experts and committed partners, MDP adjusted the existing tool and questions to the specific context, mainly by rephrasing and adapting some of the questions and criteria to the local context in BiH municipalities.

2. Designation and training of CAF teams: Each mayor of the participating municipalities designated a so-called "CAF-team" with specific terms of reference, composed of 5 to 10 experienced municipal employees from the different municipal departments. Workshops and trainings were organized for these CAF teams to get familiar with the methodology.

3. Facilitation of CAF self-assessment: The CAF teams conducted the self-assessment following the questions and indicators along the 9 pre-defined areas. CAF teams were supposed to collect data and information about the different CAF criteria. The answers and scoring are based on this information and data, focus groups discussions organized with civil society and private sector representatives as well as the personal opinion of the CAF team members. The project organized coaching and exchange sessions with the CAF teams to resolve the bottlenecks in the process. An evaluation meeting took place at the end of the process to identify strengths and weaknesses of the process as well as its results.

4. Elaboration and approval of final assessment report and action plan: Based on the results of the analysis, a concrete action plan for improvement has been elaborated, which was officially approved by the municipal leadership (mayor, municipal assembly), together with the self-assessment report.

¹ CAF was introduced by MDP in co-financing with OSF BiH; implementation support was provided by EDA.



Municipality and MDP staff discuss the self-assessment (Photo: MDP)



Municipality and MDP staff discuss zoning and land use maps (Photo: MDP)

Resources and duration

The CAF self-assessment in the municipalities took two months to conduct, excluding the preparatory work by the project to translate and adjust the tool and criteria to the local context.

From the municipality, each CAF team member invested 10-12 working days, including the preparation and evaluation of the results. Municipal management was engaged at the beginning to approve the tool and to designate the CAF team and at the end of the process to approve the self-assessment report and the action plan for improvements. Other municipal employees were in contact with CAF team members during the process to support them in information and data collection.

The project's role was to introduce and adapt the tool to the specific context, to facilitate and coach the municipal CAF teams and support them in the elaboration of the final report and the action plan for improvements. For this primarily coaching and facilitation work, the project invested 10-15 expert days per municipality, partly by MDP team members and partly by national consultants. During the second CAF round in 2006, the CAF teams were familiar with the process thus less coaching and facilitation support was required.

Outputs and results

Each municipality prepared a CAF self-assessment report, containing the municipal performance findings (strengths and weaknesses) according to the main CAF criteria, with a ranking by the CAF members for each criterion. In addition, each municipality developed an "action plan for improvements", which was officially approved by the municipal leadership (mayor and municipal council).

As part of the facilitation support, the MDP project supported the development of a web-platform with an e-tool to enable participating municipalities cross-learning and benchmarking with other municipalities. This tool was however not sufficiently used by the municipalities (they didn't see a direct benefit) and therefore not continued.

The adapted CAF manual has been translated into the local language and broadly disseminated (other municipalities, associations of municipalities, higher levels of government), together with specific forms and a list of the main lessons learned while piloting CAF in MDP partner municipalities. MDP project thus served as pilot and promoter of the tool, with concrete results at individual municipality level and limited inter-municipal cross learning achievements. In the meantime, OSCE has decided to support another 30 municipalities in introducing the CAF as self-assessment and quality management tool in BiH (2010-2012).

3.3. Lessons learned

What can this tool be used for?

The CAF's main purpose is a holistic self-assessment of local public administrations (or also at regional or even national level) focusing on the functioning of administration and citizen-oriented public service delivery in line with the good governance principles. One of its strengths is the elaboration of an action plan for improvements, committing the leadership to take action. It is thus a tool for quality management, serving the leadership and the staff to improve their performance. CAF is also an adequate instrument for strategic planning and policy making, if it is regularly repeated and linked to the government planning, budgeting and monitoring cycle.

CAF can be applied in complement to other quality management instruments of local governments and public administrations (e.g. ISO).

CAF can also promote dialogue and learning, inside an administration between the different departments but also between the policy makers and the administration, as they jointly assess their own performance and internal processes and discuss about solutions to overcome gaps and bottlenecks.

The standardized framework, criteria and questions and the existing international (and partly country specific) e-platform make CAF also a good instrument for horizontal benchmarking (between different municipalities in a same country/region). In many countries, CAF is promoted by the central government for this purpose, with the establishment of national CAF resource centres (e.g. Germany, Denmark, Portugal).

CAF can also serve for country programming and project planning purposes: The assessment reports can provide baseline information on the status of local governance in a specific municipality/region/country. The "action plans for improvements" can guide a donor/project to define cooperation priorities and/or to design a need-based and demand-oriented support programme/project. In addition, CAF criteria and indicators can be directly linked to a project or a country monitoring and reporting system on local governance and decentralisation.

Last but not least, CAF has the advantage to be recognized as a low-cost tool with an "EU label". Its standardized form and the broad application in public administrations in many countries makes it attractive for countries in transition with an EU integration perspective and agenda, which is an important argument to raise the interest and commitment of the partners.

Which elements of local governance are (or are not) considered? Where is the focus?

The focus of the CAF self assessment is on local government performance and citizens-orientation in public service delivery, with the following main dimensions: Strategic planning and monitoring, service delivery, change management and innovation, modernization of administration; operating within the legal and regulatory framework; democratic responsiveness/accountability; involvement of citizens; value for money (efficiency and effectiveness); information and communication.

The methodology combines hard facts (existing data and information, mainly at the municipal level) and individual appreciations by the CAF team members. Reporting includes a CAF assessment report on main results per criterion to be prepared by the CAF team members as well as an action plan for improvement.

It has a direct link to the local government legislation and policy implementation, as action plans are supposed to be officially approved by the political leadership. Power questions are not particularly assessed; it is therefore not adequate to make a power analysis.

Poverty reduction, gender and other social inclusion questions are not particularly addressed, they are an integral part of the overall assessment (e.g. criterion 3 people: human resource management policy; criterion 4 partnership and resources: group targeted budgeting processes; criterion 6 citizens' oriented results: access to service by all citizens). Specific poverty and/or

social inclusion related sub-criteria and questions can be added to emphasize their importance in a particular situation.

If applied broadly in a region/country, the CAF can identify structural gaps related to decentralisation and local governance, to be used as input for national policy discussion and debate. This is especially the case in countries where CAF is broadly supported by the central government or even an international organisation or donor agency, as is the case now in BiH with OSCE.

What are the conditions required to successfully apply the tool?

Commitment of the political leadership; which must own and steer the process and express its commitment to integrate the proposed actions and measures for improvements in municipal strategies, budgets and policies;

Basic capacities of local government administration and an adequate composition of the CAF team in terms of experience and representation of the different departments. CAF members must be able to do appropriate time management and planning, with a good level of commitment and self-discipline;

Good relationship between the leadership and the CAF team in an atmosphere of free thinking and mutual trust. CAF team members must feel at ease to express their opinion without suffering any consequences for their work (important condition to conduct the self-assessment and do a scoring);

Existence of basic information and data, which is regularly updated to enable progress monitoring and which is comparable with others to enable benchmarking. CAF team members need to have easy access to all documents and resource persons;

Regular internal communication and information inside the assessed institution on the methodology, results, measures for improvements, towards all employees;

Process facilitation by externals is highly recommended, at least in a first CAF application, in order to get familiar with the tool and to guide and coach CAF team members. External facilitation might also help to minimize subjectivism in scoring of criteria;

Periodical replication and broad application at regional or country level is a condition to serve as instrument for learning and benchmarking and to provide inputs for national policy discussion and development.

Replication and sustainability

CAF is a standardized tool already applied in many EU and transition countries, thus replication potential is high. Experience has shown that a coordination role/unit at national level is important to ensure countrywide application sustainability, enabling bench-learning and monitoring of the local governance and decentralisation for national policy inputs. The above-mentioned conditions must however be fulfilled to successfully apply CAF. The existence of handbooks and other tools in different languages makes application easier, although external facilitation is still recommended.

3.4. Additional information

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www.caf.eipa.eu User guide, CAF manual in different languages, CAF users contacts, CAF resource centres, good practices, movies, publications etc

4. Local Governance Barometer, Botswana, Malawi and Zambia

4.1. Introduction and background

The tool: The Local Governance Barometer (LGB) was developed in 2006 by the Impact Alliance Network made of the Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa (IDASA), Pact and SNV, Netherlands Development Organization.

The overall objective of the Local Governance Barometer is to describe, analyze and understand local governance situations, in order to develop the capacity of local actors to promote and sustain good governance and improve service delivery. By applying the instrument in a participatory manner, it is both an assessment and capacity building tool for local level democratic dialogue. In particular, the Local Governance Barometer aims to:

- Arrive at quantitative measures for good governance indicators to enable a comparative analysis between different situations, an understanding of the evolution of factors of governance, and to evaluate the impact of interventions;
- Ensure the participation of principal actors during the design of governance models, as well as the collection, processing, and analysis of the information collected;
- Create a starting point for dialogue between various stakeholders at local level on important topics related to governance like corruption in tender procedures.

The LGB model introduces 22 assessment sub-criteria grouped under five main criteria of good governance: effectiveness, transparency and rule of law, accountability, participation and equity. This model and its specific indicators are then to be adapted to specific local contexts. This enables on the one hand comparability (over time and space) and on the other hand localization to increase ownership.

The LGB has been applied in more than 10 African countries, such as Cameroon, Ghana, Madagascar, South Africa, Tanzania and in South America, for instance in Ecuador.

The project: The LGB has been developed and tested during the second phase of the project “Capacity Building of Organizations dealing with decentralization in the SADC Region” (2006-2008) in Tanzania, Lesotho, Malawi, Botswana and South Africa (two districts per country). Currently the LGB is being applied in Botswana, Malawi and Zambia (third project phase). The project aims at promoting and strengthening good governance in Southern Africa with specific focus on decentralization of fiscal, political and administrative functions. The application of the LGB constitutes an integral stage of the project. It allows for the identification of priority support activities to be undertaken. After an initial application in each country the application of the LGB will be repeated in 2012 in order to monitor progress.

Botswana, Malawi and Zambia officially have a process of decentralization in place and have approved relevant policies. Political willingness to implement the reforms is however still weak and varies over time and progress has been relatively slow. The project focuses on analyzing the performance of the district level, which is the lowest level of governance formally recognized in all three countries. The districts are generally further divided in administrative sub-units, “areas” and villages, which are however not endowed with formal decision-making and budgetary powers. Villages have elected representatives who represent the interests of the communities at the district level.

4.2. Application of the tool

When was the tool applied, for what purpose?

The LGB is being applied in 15 districts of Botswana, Malawi and Zambia (5 per country). The main purposes of applying the LGB are the following:

- Produce a quantitative assessment based on qualitative observations of the capacity needs and gaps of institutions;
- Promote an understanding of good governance at the district level, its impact on services delivery and the role of each stakeholder group for promoting it;
- Identify governance gaps;
- Start a dialogue between various actors about important governance issues and generate consensus on priority actions and capability development activities;
- Produce a baseline and monitor progress through repetition of the LGB.

Methodology:

1. Contextualization and Preparation²:

Identification of local partner organization: IDASA relies on a partner organization to conduct the on-site assessments, which is identified as a result of an analysis of the local context. This technical partner should have a sound knowledge of governance and a deep understanding of the local government sector. A team of about five facilitators from the partner organization is trained by IDASA on the methodology of the LGB.

Identification of stakeholders and adaptation of the tool to the local context: together with a national reference group of representatives of all stakeholder groups, the universal LGB model is adjusted to the local context using indicators that are meaningful to ordinary citizens, while this also defines which stakeholder group should be included in the assessment at the local level³.

2. Application of the LGB:

Data collection: The method of assessment consists of separate focus group discussions with local government officials, councilors, area/village development committees, traditional leaders, business sector and civil society organizations. An entire day is dedicated to each stakeholder group, organized and moderated by the facilitator. During these focus group discussions, each participant is asked to fill in a questionnaire reflecting his/her satisfaction about municipal performance and the quality of governance, while major real life issues are identified and discussed (e.g. corruption). Both the scoring and the discussions on real issues focus on the link between governance and service provision.

Compilation of data and analysis: All data collected are processed by the facilitators through a software programme (produced by the LGB technical team) and presented in a scoreboard. Facilitators also work on identifying the major issues that were raised and that are to be presented and discussed in the plenary.

Plenary session: Facilitators present the scores in absolute and comparative terms (outlining convergence and divergences observed between stakeholders groups) and provide an overview of issues raised. Major issues are discussed and prioritized focusing on what the collective group of stakeholders themselves can resolve. Participants are then split in working groups according to stakeholders divisions in order to address the identified issues. A last plenary session should validate the results and agree on capacity development needs and priorities and on the respective responsibilities of each stakeholder group.

² In the case under study the preparation of the LGB application was eased by the fact that it forms an integral part of a broader project. In this sense, contacts with relevant central and local level authorities and commitment of leadership were already secured through earlier consultations presenting the broader project. In this context, implementers of the project insist on the importance of planning sufficient time for this preliminary phase. Getting the support of relevant central or local level authorities takes time.

³ Various methods can be used and combined in order to understand the local context and issues that are of particular relevance in the targeted local government (direct consultations, surveys, relevant literature). For instance, in the above case, a citizens' survey on access to basic services is conducted ("citizens' score card") and serves identifying major issues in the targeted district.

Resources and Duration: The LGB can be implemented in practice in two weeks time. Three to five days are devoted to preparation and one week for the implementation (3 day for 2 parallel stakeholders' workshops, 1 day for data analysis and 1 day for the plenary session).

IDASA relies on a team of about five facilitators recruited from the partner organization, who are trained on the LGB methodology. It further employs an in- country coordinator to assist, ensure continuity of the process and provide expertise on the LGB. One LGB (staff salaries, meals, venue, transport, etc.) costs on average 4000 Euros.

Outputs:

- A LGB assessment report including the results of each stakeholder group. The latter proposes a quantitative expression of the degree of stakeholders' satisfaction regarding local governance and public services delivery.
- Identification of gaps and capacity development needs with recommendations about areas to be strengthened and capability development activities to be undertaken. For instance, the application of the LGB in South Africa resulted in identifying problems of communication between local authorities and communities in some districts (communities expressed they were not enough informed about the functioning of the district, of its finances and the services to be delivered). This created tensions. IDASA organized activities in order to improve transparency and supported the introduction of communication mechanisms between the local authorizes and communities about their mission and their rights and responsibilities.
- Baseline data on governance situation, actors' constellation, processes and mechanisms for service delivery in the relevant districts
- Dissemination through several formats. In South Africa, Idasa published a booklet on the local governance situation and started a newsletter on topics related to it.



4.3. Lessons learned

What can the tool be used for?

Adaptable facilitated self-assessment tool: A key strength of the LGB is its adaptability and its ability to translate the complex concept of local governance into practical, locally specific and easy to understand indicators. It can thus be applied in contexts where limited knowledge on good governance standards is available.

Baseline and monitoring tool: It provides a structured model for assessing and analyzing local governance issues. It produces a detailed picture of the governance situation in a particular area and can serve as a baseline for monitoring progress. The repetition of the exercise allows to monitor changes and impact of governance strengthening activities.

Input for capacity development activities: Findings of the exercise can serve as input for defining support activities and/or specific programmes (e.g. in the concrete case, the focus was laid on capability development activities).

Awareness and capacity building: The LGB helps create awareness, a better understanding and commitment to the principles of good local governance by the key concerned actors. It provides the involved local governments with a concrete understanding about the standards to be attained. People interviewed after their participation in a LGB assessment underlined that they had gained a better understanding of what is meant by good local governance and the various aspects the notion covers. This allows the capabilities of local governments and NGOs to be strengthened in addressing governance issues at the local level and to develop their capabilities for self-assessment.

Internal dialogue: The platform provided by the LGB encourages local stakeholders to start a dialogue and agree on what governance problems they face and what problems need to be addressed as a matter of priority. Thus the organization of such platforms can also serve as a way to create or strengthen interactions between local actors.

Benchmarking: The replication of the LGB in many districts or countries (and the expression of the assessment results in quantitative data) enables comparison / benchmarking between local governments in the same region/country or even at a broader regional level (SADC states in the concrete case).

Horizontal and Vertical Dialogue: The application of the tool and its findings can promote both horizontal and vertical dialogue. In this case, it is planned to organize a national workshop gathering central level authorities, all local governments, NGOs and donors active in this field to disseminate and discuss the conclusions of the LGB. A similar event could be organized at the regional level (SADC level).

Which elements of local governance are (or are not) considered? Where is the focus?

The questionnaire ensures that key dimensions of good governance are clarified, discussed and assessed on the occasion of the focus group discussions.

- *Effectiveness and Efficiency*, with focus on the existence and implementation of development plans, effectiveness in services delivery, performance of local administration and capacities of its staff, efficient use of resources and quality of local leadership.
- *Transparency*, with focus on the level of information available on laws, budget and planning;
- *Accountability*, with focus on administrative, political and social accountability, i.e. the respect for the separation of powers, the existence of adequate checks and balances, of financial audits, adherence of municipal officials to a code of conduct, local elections and interactions between elected officials and their electorate.
- Under the subheading *Rule of Law*, the assessment also investigates whether relevant policies are in place to fight against corruption.
- *Participation*, with focus on created space and agency, i.e. the existence of relevant procedures and structures to ensure citizens' participation, of regular consultation meetings with citizens, civil society organizations and the business sector, on their ability to express their opinion and influence policy processes and on the existence of an organized and active civil society capable of representing the interests of citizens and holding the Local Council accountable.

- *Non-Discrimination (under the title “Equity”)*, with focus on equal rights of all citizens, equal actual access to public services, on the existence of pro-poor policies and on the promotion of gender equality and affirmative policies in this domain.

The tool addresses issues relating to social inclusion. Section 5 of the questionnaire focuses on the notion of equity (equitable access to basic services, power, resources and livelihoods / existence of pro-poor policies, etc.). Second, given its methodology and the inclusion of a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the discussion, the tool allows potentially marginalized groups to express their difficulties. In how far they really manage to strongly express their opinion was not evaluated. The promotion of gender equality is addressed as a “transversal theme” in the questionnaire and with specific gender-related questions in section 5.

As concerns power relations, the contextualization phase allows identification of actors and their relative weigh. While the assessment does not include a precise mapping of actors and their relative positions, the strength of the LGB is to start a dialogue about political realities at the local level and about the causes of problems in a depersonalized manner (separate stakeholder groups allowing everybody to speak freely, while observations are presented in a depersonalized manner during the plenary session).

Issues relating to the institutional context and related potential constraints are to be captured in the contextualization phase of the exercise. The LGB is mostly a perceptions based exercise. It is not designed to provide a comprehensive overview of existing legislation and of its effective implementation but rather to promote a dialogue on the reasons for and remedies to particular identified needs and gaps.

What are the conditions required to apply the tool?

Experience has shown that sufficient time is needed for the effective implementation of the LGB. Although it may depend on the specific country context, the preparation of the exercise takes time as the support and commitment of the relevant ministries and local stakeholders is a necessary precondition. Preparation and consultations are important steps in order to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are included in the exercise and adapt the tool to the local context.

The implementation of the LGB requires the support of a facilitating organisation, which is familiar with the LGB methodology and endowed with sufficient knowledge to adapt it to the local context. Previous experiences have underlined the key role of the facilitators for the success of the assessment given the limited knowledge of participants on good governance related standards. In this respect, time needs to be devoted to the training of the staff in order to ensure that the latter will be able to introduce the LGB methodology to local stakeholders, to moderate the focus group discussions and synthesize the information gathered.

Another important success factor is the involvement and participation of the local authorities and local stakeholders during all stages of the project (finalization of the questionnaire, identification of the governance gaps/issues, definition of the needs and capacity development activities).

Publicizing the results should form an integral part of the LGB. Organizing the dissemination of the results and findings of the LGB assessment needs to be planned in advance. The public debate about local governance issues should happen in parallel to the implementation of the assessment and not only at the end for the publication of the findings.

Replication and Sustainability:

- The logic of the LGB is to propose a universal model, organized along key governance indicators and questions, and a methodology to be applied, which needs to be adapted and refined to a specific local governance context. The LGB offers a high potential of transferability.
- Given its methodology, it can be applied in a context where limited data are available beforehand.

- Its methodology can be applied at all levels of governance (local, regional, national). It can also be applied to specific sectors (e.g. health, etc.)⁴. Again, the core model of the LGB would need to be adapted to the specific sector it is applied.
- The methodology as such is not sustainable. IDASA aims to institutionalize it either as part of local government performance management or as a service provided by local government associations in each country. The latter option is preferred in order to promote the self-assessment character of the tool.

4.4. Additional information

Contact Addresses:

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⁴ SDC is for instance currently testing the relevance of applying the LGB in assessing the governance mechanisms in the field of HIV/AIDS in the region.

5. Local Governance Self Assessment, Bangladesh

5.1. Introduction and background

The Local Governance Self-Assessment (LGSA) tool has been developed by Intercooperation and Care Bangladesh in the frame of the SDC financed “Sharique” local governance support project, working since 2006 in the regions of Sunamganj and Rajshahi in Bangladesh. The main project goal is to improve well-being and economic, social and political participation of the poor and poorest people and especially women by improving local governance. The approach is to empower poor and marginalized segments of the society to claim their rights and entitlements from local government, and to benefit from responsive and inclusive services from the local governments.

The LGSA has five purposes:

1. Awareness raising and education of citizens and local government officials on the functioning and tasks of local governments with special reference to their practices related to transparency, downward accountability, pro-poor service delivery and the inclusion of women;
2. Awareness raising and education of citizens and local government officials on their mutual rights and responsibilities;
3. Participatory identification of gaps and needs and monitoring of progress related to local governance; followed by joint elaboration of priorities and actions in a so called “Union Parishad Governance Improvement Plan (GIP)”;
4. Promotion of dialogue among the rural citizens and their local governments;
5. Create a basis to define project support activities and contribution to the project monitoring system (baseline, indicators, regular progress monitoring).

The tool was particularly developed for rural areas facing extreme poverty and social exclusion, and with an average low level of formal education. The tool was designed and applied for the lowest government level, the Union Parishad (UP, 4501 UPs in total in Bangladesh, which have limited competences and resources, their average annual own budget is only 30'000 US\$). Each Union is sub-divided into 9 Wards, administrative units at village(s) level. Civil society is mainly organized along traditional structures (male dominated local leaders), as well as community based organisations (CBOs) and local/regional NGOs, which are mostly linked to development programmes.

5.2. Application of the tool

When and where was the tool applied?

The LGSA has been introduced with the support of the Sharique project in 128 UPs with the involvement of 2400 CBOs and the direct participation of about 90'000 citizens. Special emphasis was put on the participation and involvement of marginalized groups (women, poor people, ethnic minorities). The LGSA were first conducted in 2007 and since then has been constantly further developed and repeated on a bi-annual basis.

Methodology

Two types of LGSA were introduced:

1. “Community LGSA” (Ward level with an average of 3000 inhabitants)

Community LGSAs were organized as public meetings in the village squares, gathering around 40 persons from different sections of the civil society (CBOs, local business people, youth, traditional

leaders, farmers, “ordinary citizens”) with a particular involvement of extremely poor people. Special emphasis was also laid on adequate women participation. UP members participated as observers.

The meeting is facilitated by 1 or 2 representatives of an NGO trained by the project, supported by 4-5 trained community volunteers, mostly from local CBOs. The community LGSA is organized around 19 questions; 7 about citizen’s duties/functioning for good local governance and 12 about the functioning of the UP. The community LGSA aims at getting a comprehensive perception of the community and ends with the participatory elaboration of priority issues to be addressed. A community LGSA meeting takes 3-4 hours and is conducted in several locations in one ward.



Women participating in a LSGA exercise. (Photo: Sharique)

2. “Union Parishad (UP) LGSA” (average 25-30’000 inhabitants)

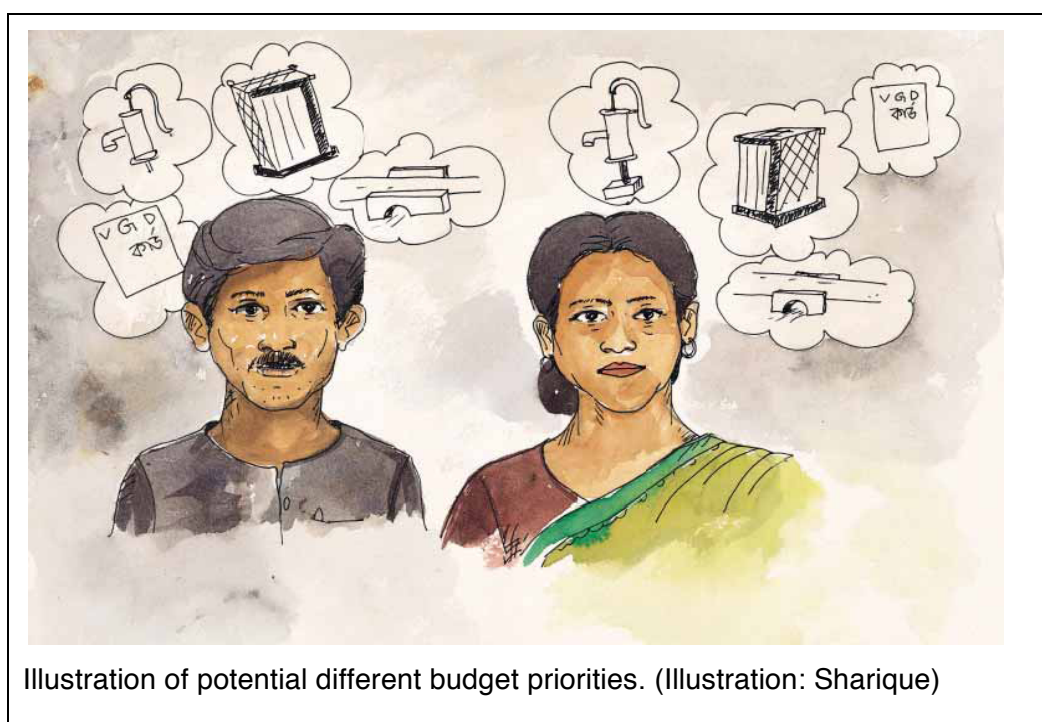
The UP LGSAs were conducted in the UP premises with the participation of approx. 35 persons; the UP officials (13 elected UP council members including the UP chairperson, UP secretary), local government committees (made up of UP council members and citizens), selected representatives from government line departments (e.g. health, education, agriculture), representatives from community organizations, the private sector and traditional leaders. Adequate representation of marginalized groups (in particular women and extremely poor people) was promoted and ensured.

The meeting is chaired by the UP chairperson and is facilitated by 1-2 trained NGO representatives, supported by 3-4 community volunteers. The UP LGSA is organized around 28 questions; 24 about the UP functioning and performance (as main focus, also for the improvement plan) and 4 about citizens’ participation. The last part of the UP LGSA is dedicated to the elaboration of a UP governance improvement plan (GIP), which is submitted for official approval to the UP council. A UP LGSA takes 4-5 hours.

Both types of the LGSA follow 5 main steps:

1. *Introduction and agreement on the objectives and rules* by the UP chairman/community leader, supported by the facilitators and community volunteers;
2. *Identification and understanding of main local governance actors and their roles:* through facilitators’ inputs and a plenary discussion using pictures, venn diagram etc (mainly for awareness creation and education);

3. *Facilitated self-assessment along the LGSA key questions:* The participants are divided into groups. This provides the possibility to establish separate groups for women or other participants, who might not feel at ease to speak up and express their opinion in the plenary. Each group responds to the LGSA questions (UP 28, Community 19), based on a rating system (4 options for community LGSA, 5 options for the UP LGSA). Once all questions are addressed, the group re-discusses the scoring and decides on a maximum of six issues that they would like to see improved;
4. *Agreement on six priorities for improvements:* The main findings and priorities of all groups are shared in the plenary, followed by the definition of the six main priorities to be addressed for improvement. This step normally provoked most debates and discussion.
5. *Elaboration of action plan:*
 - a. In the UP LGSA, a draft UP governance improvement plan (GIP) is elaborated, listing the priorities, actions, responsible persons/groups, need for external support (if any), budget, timeframe and comments. This GIP is submitted to the UP council for official approval.
 - b. In the community LGSA, the group designates the responsible persons (mostly CBO leaders) to forward priorities to their organization for incorporation in their annual plan and/or to transmit the issues related to the local government tasks and performance to the respective UP.



Resources and duration

As the LGSA is conducted as a public meeting, the main resource is the time and contribution of the participants during a half-day LGSA meeting. The primary resources are the inputs and opinions of the LGSA participants, complemented by some data mostly made available at the UP offices. Preliminary discussions by the project and/or partner NGO with the UP chairman/representatives are needed to ensure their ownership and commitment.

The project was involved in the tool elaboration, testing, adaptation, training of partner NGOs and facilitation of LGSA meetings. The facilitation was mainly done through local partner NGOs with

the support of community facilitators (2 project/NGO facilitators and 3-5 community facilitators investing 1 working day per LGSA). Additional material (papers, pens, posters, questionnaire, printed guidelines) was supplied by the project with an average cost of 7 US\$ per LGSA.

Outputs and results

The immediate result of the UP LGSA was the UP Governance Improvement Plans (GIP), which were officially approved by the UP councils and integrated in their annual plan of operation and annual budget. The community LGSA resulted in identified priorities, either integrated in local CBO action plans and/or transmitted to the UP officials for implementation (mostly through the respective UP representative from the concerned Ward).

In addition, each UP got the compiled result of the assessment (including scoring), which has been used for UP monitoring on an annual basis. The same is valid for the community LGSA on Ward level.

An important educational result of both LGSA is the increased understanding and awareness on the rights and duties of citizens and UPs around local governance.

The results of the LGSA were also used by the project for planning its activities and elaboration of manuals and handbooks (e.g. training manual for UP planning, training manuals on roles and responsibilities, tax revenue training manual). The assessment was also closely linked to the project monitoring system, providing a comprehensive baseline and systematic progress indicators related to the status of local governance in the project area.

The LGSA also provided the main information for a Sharique report on “the state of local governance in Rajshahi and Sunamganj”, which was broadly disseminated to raise awareness among higher level government and donors.

5.3. Lessons learned

What can the tool be used for?

The main purpose of the LGSA is to assess the status of local governance in rural areas at a grass roots level, and the elaboration of officially approved local governance action plans for improvement, with a specific pro poor and social inclusion focus. If regularly repeated it can be used as participatory monitoring tool for local governments.

Besides this “immediate” purpose, the tool served to raise awareness and educate citizens and local government officials on their tasks, rights and responsibilities. In this concrete case, citizens have started to better understand the local government’s roles and responsibilities; they got more active and took concrete steps to get involved in local governance issues (higher participation in citizens meetings, committees...). The tool also served to raise knowledge and awareness of the local government officials on their roles and functions as well as on the needs and priorities of the citizens.

The LGSA also served as basis to launch new processes like more participatory planning processes, open budget sharing, participatory tax assessment and improved office management (opening hours, record keeping).

As the LGSA can easily be replicated in broad area, it can also be used for benchmarking among the local governments (in Bangladesh, the tool is currently being replicated by an EC funded project aiming at reaching 250,000 citizens). However, benchmarking has certain limitations: as the results are based on a self assessment, results are more subjective and cannot always be used as fact-based comparison of the local governance situation in different Unions.

The LGSA can also serve for demand oriented project and programme planning. It is a useful tool for projects starting to engage in local governance. Results can be used as baseline information on the status of local governance. The identified main gaps and priorities can help projects and/or donors to define support programmes and activities. In addition, it can easily be linked to a project

monitoring system and provide important inputs for country strategy monitoring, if it is broadly applied.

Which elements of local governance are (or are not) considered? Where is the focus?

The LGSA addresses the status of local governance primarily at the lowest local government and community level, framed around the legally defined rights and responsibilities of the demand (citizens) and supply (local government) side of governance. Its focus is on the daily governance-related problems of people in rural areas, with special consideration of social inclusion questions. Eleven out of 28 questions address the issue of participation/benefits of excluded groups such as women, poor people and minorities.

As the LGSA mostly relies on qualitative sources of information gathered in half a day meeting, the tool does not result in an in depth analysis on the local governance situation of a specific location. The tool has limitations in terms of completeness of the information and data. It gives an overview of the general situation identifying the main gaps and problems, whereas hard facts (e.g. number of households served with specific services, budget and expenditure details) are not directly addressed.

The LGSA is also not intended to capture power relations, although its inclusive set up provides an environment for addressing questions relating to the reduction of exploitive power relations. In this sense it rather can serve as entry point to start a dialogue among the local governance actors, to be complemented with other tools (power mapping, tax assessment, participatory budgeting etc).

As the number and nature of questions can be adapted, the tool is flexible and open to integrate context specific elements or contemporary issues (e.g. additional questions regarding disaster risk reduction were added in the flood-risk region of Sunamganj).

What conditions are required to apply the tool?

The tool has been designed for *rural areas with a low level of formal education* (literacy is not required from all participants). Extensive understanding on local governance is not needed, as the LGSA implies an education and awareness-raising component;

Basic commitment of the local government leadership is required, as the meeting requests their participation, contribution and commitment to integrate priorities in their work plans and budgets;

Facilitation by external support: Facilitators need to be trained on the tool and must have good knowledge on local governance and the respective institutional and legal framework. Although the tool is relatively simple and could easily be replicated by the partners without external support, certain facilitation (e.g. by community facilitators) is suggested, as the LGSA mainly builds on participants' inputs;

The participants must be well selected, to ensure representation of the most important local governance actors, with a special focus on the involvement of marginalized groups, as the tool particularly addresses social exclusion;

The meetings must be well organized with good facilitation to ensure a constructive and effective meeting, giving voice to marginalized groups (e.g. through separate group work). An appropriate timing and location should be organized to enable and encourage participation and the maximum availability of poor people, women and other marginalized groups.

Resources required are modest, as the LGSA mainly builds upon and relies on the inputs and feedbacks of the participants during the meeting (no need for extensive data collection).

The LGSA can be organized in a flexible way; questions can be adjusted to the specific situation and context. However, it is important to fix the main rules at the beginning of the meeting, having agreed them beforehand with the local government officials (setting, agenda, main results and commitment of their approval).

Replication and sustainability

Due to the user friendly and low cost methodology, the LGSA has high potential for replication and transferability. The questions and methodology can easily be adjusted to another context and/or to specific thematic focus areas or sectors. Under the lead of a national institution/coordination unit, the tool could be used for country-wide application for bench-marking and monitoring purpose. Good introduction and training of facilitators would however be required to ensure coherence in application.

5.4. Additional information

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[http://www.intercooperation-bd.org/PDF/sharique%20doc%20-%20local%20governance%20self-assessment%20\(english\).pdf](http://www.intercooperation-bd.org/PDF/sharique%20doc%20-%20local%20governance%20self-assessment%20(english).pdf) : LGSA guidelines for facilitators

www.intercooperation-bd.org/publication.php: complementary tools and guidelines: Tax Revenues Training Manual, The State of Local Governance in Rajshahi and Sunamganj, Training Manual on up Roles and Responsibilities, Compendium of Laws Regarding Union Parishads (UPs), Flashcards - UP Gender Analysis, UP Gender Analysis 2009, UP Planning - Trainer's Manual, UP Planning Guideline

<http://www.intercooperation-bd.org> : information about Sharique

6. SIRDEM (Municipal Performance Assessment Tool), Nicaragua

6.1. Introduction and background

The tool: The “Sistema de Reconocimiento al Desempeño Municipal en Nicaragua” - System of Assessment of Municipal Performance in Nicaragua (SIRDEM) has been running since 2005. The initiative for developing SIRDEM came from GTZ Nicaragua. The tool was first developed in 2005 and is being implemented by INIFOM (Instituto Nicaraguense de Fomento Municipal – Nicaraguan Institute for Municipal Promotion), which is a governmental body, and by AMUNIC (Asociación de Municipios de Nicaragua – The Association of Nicaraguan Municipalities). It was co-financed by GTZ and SDC.

SIRDEM is designed to assess the performance of all municipalities in the country (153). Its methodology implies the collection of municipal information (self-assessment) and interviews with municipal officials. At current, the instrument proposes a wide spectrum of indicators which are organized along 11 thematic clusters: administrative and financial management, municipal services, municipal planning, cadastre, civic participation, local economic development, environment, gender, municipal management, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and municipal investment policy. Municipalities are then ranked according to these criteria and financial rewards are granted to the best performing municipalities.

The Project: SDC is active in supporting decentralization in Nicaragua through its regional programme “Local governance and public finances”, which is implemented in 40 municipalities of Nicaragua and Honduras (about 20 municipalities supported in each country). The objective of the programme is to strengthen municipalities and develop capacities of their functionaries. It is organized along 3 priorities: efficient local governance, civic participation and local economic development.

SDC participates in the application of SIRDEM since 2006. The purpose is to integrate SIRDEM as one component of its regional programme “Local Governance and Public Finances” and to use the results of the assessments as inputs for the selection and definition of the activities to be conducted in the 20 municipalities included in the program and as baseline information for monitoring progress.

Nicaragua’s decentralization process started and developed in the 1990s, with municipalities being given increased competences and resources. Since then, municipalities enjoy a substantial degree of self-government, mayors are directly elected by their citizens and 10 percent of the central level fiscal returns are directly transferred to municipal budgets⁵.

However, the process of decentralization has stalled since 2006 with the change of government. The new government stopped previous decentralization reforms and displays a willingness to recentralize power. Due to political differences between the main donor (GTZ) and INIFOM the financing of future assessments is not yet guaranteed.

6.2. Application of the tool

When was the tool applied, for what purpose?

SIRDEM aims at covering all the 153 municipalities of Nicaragua⁶, with a total of 5.7 million inhabitants. Three assessments have been carried out so far in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

The main purposes of its application are the following:

- Providing municipalities with an analysis grid to assess and improve their performance
- Providing criteria for channelling support and cooperation of institutions⁷

⁵ These transfers are not tied to particular expenses. The Law on Budget only prescribes what proportions should be allocated to running costs (salaries, etc.) and investments.

⁶ Only a very limited number of municipalities refused to participate in SIRDEM in the end.

- Improving transparency in the management of municipalities through publication of the results
- Strengthening the public practice of assessing their leaders according to their achievements and the fulfilment of their government programs
- Generating dynamics of comparison between municipalities and municipal practices, the granting of awards highlighting good practices and creating incentives to better perform
- Promoting horizontal dialogue between municipalities and vertical dialogue with central government through AMUNIC.

Methodology:

Implementing structure and Preparation:

SIRDEM is the result of a large coalition of partners (AMUNIC INIFOM, SDC, GTZ and the Secretariat of Municipal Affairs of the North Atlantic Regional Government). An agreement between the parties sets the different rules to be applied for the operation of SIRDEM, and is open for third parties to join. An "Executive Directorate" (Grupo Decisorio), composed of representatives of all of the partners, is in charge of the steering of SIRDEM. Its main responsibilities include setting up the concrete procedure of the assessment, approving the final indicators, setting up the rules relating to the award process and granting them. The Executive Directorate is responsible for nominating a technical secretariat which coordinates all operational issues in close cooperation with AMUNIC. The technical secretariat appoints and trains the team of 10-12 professionals (one week training on SIRDEM's methodology and on the information to be gathered) that collect the data and assist the municipalities in the self-assessment exercise.

Data collection:

As concerns the nature of data, the approach of SIRDEM rather focuses on collecting observable



The data collection process (Photo: SIRDEM)

“hard” and quantitative facts as evidences of municipal performance in service delivery. This means that SIRDEM focuses less on citizens’ perceptions or their level of satisfaction with the performance of their respective municipalities but rather concentrates on municipal achievements (e.g. are roads maintained (in km and percentage), are there investments related to the implementation of the MDGs, what is the coverage of drinking water supply in rural areas, what is the percentage of municipal own sources of revenues, what is the level of education of municipal officials? Etc.)

The collection of information then relies on two main methodologies. First, an important part of the information is collected through self-assessment by the municipalities. The Ministry of Finance of

Nicaragua and the AMUNIC are also expected to provide certain specific information. Municipalities can provide the required data on paper or by using the online system provided by INIFOM. Second, SIRDEM teams visit each municipality and interview municipal officials in order to validate and complement submitted data. SIRDEM teams usually spend an entire week in a municipality. While the self-assessment part of the exercise currently gathers about 40 per cent of the necessary information and the surveys complement the remaining 60 per cent, the objective of SIRDEM is to gradually increase the self-assessment part of the exercise. The e-tool is expected to play a facilitating role in this respect.

⁷ Its results for instance serve as input for the activities of the SDC programme “Local governance and public finances”

Compilation of Data and Ranking:

Data are then compiled and organized in a scoreboard. As concerns the ranking, municipalities are divided along 9 different categories (from A to I) according to their size and revenues. This categorization is the same as the one applied in the Nicaraguan Law on Budget. Rankings thus integrate the different capacities and features of municipalities. In the last instance, SIRDEM's executive directorate is responsible for approving the final ranking and for granting the different financial awards. Awards are granted by categories of municipalities for best performing municipalities as well as for the ones having achieved the biggest progress. "Incentive awards" are also granted to municipalities displaying great progress in particular fields such as local economic development, environmental management, MDGs or gender equality.

Resources and Duration:

The total budget to conduct a country-wide assessment is around 100 000 US dollars. The overall exercise, from planning to results, takes about 6 months. This involves the recruitment of about 12 professionals responsible to collect the data over a period of 3 months. SIRDEM team is trained by the technical secretariat (one-week training),

Outputs and results:

The final SIRDEM report includes a scoreboard of the performance of municipalities for all the dimensions of local governance assessed. This allows a comparison of municipalities and also to monitor the progress achieved by each of them as compared to the previous report.

Furthermore, the Executive Directorate rewards best performing municipalities with financial awards to be invested in projects to enhance municipal management. At present, this "award system" is the only systematic follow-up process of the results. Municipalities are not (yet) required to react to the results of the reports or to propose an action plan to remedy the identified problems. This is because SIRDEM does not have sufficient resources to discuss its observations with all the municipalities under scrutiny. Action plans and the definition of relevant capacity building activities are therefore left to the initiative of each municipality and/or other donors, as this the case for the collaboration of SDC with the 20 Nicaraguan municipalities included in the program "Local governance and public finances".

The dissemination of the results is ensured through the publication of the report and several booklets presenting the results of the assessments distributed through partner institutions. Several press conferences were held to disseminate the results countrywide and the report is accessible on the internet⁸. SDC also participated in the dissemination efforts through the publication of a booklet on the performance of the municipalities of its programme in 2007

6.3. Lessons learned

What can the tool be used for?

SIRDEM enables a country-wide and detailed assessment of the performance of the municipalities in Nicaragua in a wide array of issues and services (administrative and financial management, municipal services, spatial planning, cadastre, local economic development, civic participation, gender equity, millennium development goals and investment policy). It thus provides the municipalities, the national government and the donor community with an overview about where they stand, what are the achievements and remaining challenges.

For the donor community, SIRDEM can be used as a *baseline* on the situation including the question of whether problems appear as regular patterns or rather as specificities. Furthermore, the assessment and identification of gaps can serve as an *input for planning/prioritizing* projects and support activities. The regular replication of the assessment can be used as an instrument for monitoring progress.

⁸ <http://www.inifom.gob.ni/programas/sirdem.html>

For the targeted local governments, the assessment implies a *capacity development component*. Their active involvement in the assessment process promotes a better understanding and possibly an internalization of the concepts and standards to be achieved.

Public Awareness: The publication of the results allows the public to be informed about the performance of their municipality and to communicate on the general standards to be attained.

Benchmarking and Dialogue: The national scope of the study further allows for comparison between municipalities and regions. The granting of awards should not only create incentives for improvement but also help identify and promote good practices and dialogue among the municipalities. However, experience shows that dialogue is not an automatic process and results of SIRDEM in terms of promotion of horizontal dialogue between municipalities and vertical dialogue between municipalities and the government have so far been limited. Specific facilitation and support by donors could be useful in this respect.

Fact based approach: SIRDEM focuses on identifying “hard facts” and concrete achievements at the municipal level, such as local revenues, land register or the provision of municipal services. It thus focuses on identifying and analyzing what is the level and content of legislation and whether it is implemented. While the compilation of objective data serves the comparative purpose of the tool, the latter concentrates less on identifying processes taking place within the municipality and whether “interactions” prescribed by the legislation do actually take place. The tool is thus less effective and reliable in measuring topics such as civic participation, environmental protection, gender and natural risk issues. The target groups of the analysis are clearly defined, as only municipal officials are interviewed. Perceptions of the civil society or of the members of the business community are so far not included in the model.

Which elements of local governance are (or are not) considered? Where is the focus?

SIRDEM is a useful tool to review what legislation is currently in place within a municipality and whether it is being implemented.

Fundamental standards of good governance are given attention. *Transparency* is considered but not in all of its aspects, for example municipal contract awards are not considered. *Efficiency* is dealt with a clear focus on budget execution and use of finances. Questions relating to *participation* are captured by considering it in municipal planning (local development plans, investment plans, participatory budgeting), but the functioning and role of the civil society is not really considered. As concerns *accountability*, SIRDEM captures aspects of communal organization dynamics and investigates the compliance of municipal actions with respective laws. The allocation of financial resources is scrutinized through financial statements. Social inclusion and poverty reduction are considered as transversal themes. However, they are addressed from a legal point of view rather than in terms of their effectiveness and impact.

While SIRDEM is useful to provide a picture of the “state of legislation and service provision” in municipalities, the tool does not focus on municipal internal dynamics and processes. One gets an assessment of “what is/isn’t available” but no concrete understanding of the quality of processes taking place at the municipal level. For instance, one knows whether principles of “participatory budgeting” are provided but not whether citizens actually participate in and influence budgeting.

As the focus is on quantitative data collection, the tool is not designed to address political realities and power relations characterizing the municipalities and their governance patterns.

What are the conditions required to apply the tool?

The assessment relies on data collected and provided by the municipalities. This method implies first a political willingness and commitment on the part of the national government and targeted municipalities⁹.

⁹ In Nicaragua, the change of government caused some difficulties in implementing the tool, as the new government did not entirely share the objectives of SIRDEM.

An additional condition to operate SIRDEM relates to the ability of local governments to provide reliable data. Municipalities need to have minimum capabilities for gathering and processing data.

If the assessment aims at creating a dialogue between municipalities or between the local and central level, the case underlines the need to plan in advance a methodology and to identify appropriate channels for dialogue to effectively take place.

Currently, follow-up capability development activities are not included in SIRDEM except for municipalities being granted an award and for municipalities involved in other local governance projects/initiatives related to SIRDEM's donors. Methods to help SIRDEM's assessment translate into concrete capacity building activities need to be thought of, for instance by coordinating with other donors present in the targeted country.

Some of the objectives of SIRDEM (for instance creating incentive for progress through financial rewards and increasing the self-assessment proportion of the exercise) are clearly linked to the fact that assessments are repeated over time and that actors know in advance about it.

Replication and Sustainability:

The tool has for the time being only been applied in Nicaragua. The possibility to apply it in Honduras is currently under study by SDC.

The logic of the exercise (country wide assessment repeated over time with a system of rewards, implying comparison between municipalities and over time) offers transferability potential. The exercise and its indicators would need to be adapted to the specificities of the target country. The setting-up of a national steering body appears important to ensure consistency and coordination in the application of the tool. The creation of a coalition of partners seems most efficient for conducting and financing the application of the tool on such a wide scale and most importantly ensuring results of the assessment are used for follow-up capacity development activities.

6.4. Additional information

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INIFOM webpage (including reports of previous of implementations of SIRDEM): <http://www.inifom.gob.ni/programas/sirdem.html>

7. Good Governance for Local Development, Afghanistan

7.1. Introduction and Background

The tool:

GOFORGOLD (Good Governance for Local Development) is a local governance assessment tool developed by UNDP in partnership with the Afghan Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG – ministry level). It has been applied for the first time in 2010 in the framework of the Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Programme (ASGP) in order to provide a baseline for monitoring progress and strategic planning of the second phase of the programme.

The overall aim of the tool is to provide an overview of the governance situation at the sub-national level: provinces, districts, municipalities, and villages¹⁰. The GOFORGOLD model assesses the performance of sub-national governments along governance and context indicators that are organised along 7 clusters: Representation, Participation, Accountability, Transparency, Effectiveness, Equity and Security.

The specific objectives of the tool are the following:

- Provide a “snapshot” of governance at the sub-national level with a focus on performance of local government units
- Provide baseline data for planning of programme activities and monitoring progress
- Promote central, regional and local level awareness on decentralisation and good governance principles.
- Support the capacities of relevant ministries to monitor regional and local governments’ performance.
- Improve resources allocation of relevant ministries and international donors
- Identify good local governance practices.

The Project:

The GOFORGOLD is applied in the framework of the Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Programme (ASGP), which results from a signed agreement between the Government of Afghanistan and UNDP in November 2006. The programme is implemented by UNDP in close cooperation with the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG). It is supported by multiple donors: Canada, the European Commission, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland. The first phase of the programme was completed in 2009/2010 and the second phase is planned for the next three years.

The central objective of ASGP is to strengthen the development of a democratic state in Afghanistan. In a context where informal structures still play a crucial role in organising public life, the role of ASGP is to support government institutions at all levels in their administration and support the improvement of public services delivery. Through its first phase of implementation, the programme has focused on the following activities: support the formulation and adoption of a comprehensive sub-national policy framework, increase local revenue collection at province level, develop capacities of elected councils. In this context, the overall goal of phase II of ASGP is to continue strengthening both national and sub-national government institutions to ensure the delivery of quality public services, including security, with specific attention to marginalized groups. At the sub-national level, this implies enhancing regional and local public administration and governments’ capacities for delivering services in a more equitable, efficient and effective manner.

¹⁰ Afghanistan’s administrative structure comprises provinces, districts, municipalities (for urban areas) and villages, which respective councils are to be directly elected. At current, Afghanistan is nevertheless a highly centralized state. The Constitution provides for “deconcentrating” powers and for central level ministries to delegate functions to lower levels.

7.2. Application of the tool

When was the tool applied and for what purpose?

The GOFORGOLD has been applied in Afghanistan since 2010. The decision to apply the tool resulted from the observation that no baseline data were available for monitoring the progress of ASGP and that existing reporting systems did not allow for the analysis of sub-national performance and for local governments to be held accountable on their activities.

The primary purpose of applying the GOFORGOLD methodology in Afghanistan is therefore to establish a baseline assessment of performance of all regional and local governance institutions. The results should be used as input for the second phase of the programme and provide baseline indications against which progress and success will be assessed and challenges identified.

The tool is also used to assess the relevance of dimensions of good governance such as representation, participation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness/efficiency and equity. This relates to the specific context of Afghanistan, which is characterized by nascent institutions. As well, given the situation of Afghanistan, the tool is specifically adapted to assess issues relating to security.

Furthermore, developed in partnership with IDLG, the tool should allow the ministry to better monitor local performance. It should thus strengthen the capacities of IDLG to accomplish its mission and endow it with a relevant tool to design and direct its policies.

So far, the exercise has been conducted for all 34 provinces¹¹ of Afghanistan. The programme however encountered difficulties for implementing the assessment at district, municipal and village levels for security reasons. The tool has so far only been applied at the regional level and no local application has been possible yet.

Methodology:

Implementing structure: The implementation of the GOFORGOLD is planned and managed by ASGP and IDLG. The Independent Directorate for Local Governance plays a key role in the implementation of the project. IDLG has first been the key interlocutor to adapt the tool to the specific context. It is furthermore responsible for preparing the ground for the exercise to take place. This means liaising with provinces (and possibly local governance units) and informing them on the purpose of the exercise. Both implementing partners then rely on a consulting company, the AMMC (Afghanistan Management and Marketing Consultants) for creating performance measurement teams and for collecting the primary raw data. AMMC performance measurement teams are trained on the GOFORGOLD methodology and provided with technical and logistical support by ASGP.

Nature of Data and Collection: GOFORGOLD is mainly a survey-based exercise aiming at collecting both facts and perceptions. It focuses on collecting information and opinions of both regional/local government officials and members of the civil society on the governance and security situation of a particular area. The assessment relies on two different types of data: 1) data collected *directly* in the field by the AMMC through interviews and focus group discussions and 2) Data collected *indirectly* and extracted through available reports.

1. Primary sources – Data collected directly:

On site survey is the key method to collect the necessary data. Questionnaires designed by ASGP and IDLG serve as the basis for AMMC to conduct these surveys either through face-to-face interviews or specific focus group discussions.

The questionnaire focuses on principles of good local governance such as representation, participation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness, equity and security. These dimensions are addressed through very concrete questions, for instance: *Are there formal mechanisms to*

¹¹ The size and population of a province can importantly vary, ranging from 100 000 to 1 million inhabitants.

ensure participation of citizens in local decision-making? Does the population have access to basic services such as water or electricity? How do interviewed people assess the security situation? How do they assess the capacities of the provincial staff? How do they perceive the available legal framework for addressing their needs? How important and present is corruption? Etc.

The GOFORGOLD methodology further implies that these sets of questions are asked to both members of the local government / administration and to citizens. The survey thus includes officials from provincial governors' offices, mayors, provincial councils, and other segments of Afghan society, such as members of the civil society and representatives of the private sector. The perception of international stakeholders present in the area under study is also included in the survey.

In total 377 officials (average 11 per province) from sub-national government were interviewed. A wide range of positions within the government hierarchy were taken in the sample so as to make the responses as objective as possible: the provincial governor, the chair of the provincial council, the executive director and representatives of different provincial departments. In addition, eight focus group discussions were organized per province: with members of the civil society; members of the business community; women from urban areas; men from urban areas; women from rural areas; and men from rural areas. Only in few cases were the groups composed of both men and women.

2. Secondary sources – Compilation of already available data:

The use of secondary sources is used to reflect on data directly collected and verify their reliability. ASGP mainly relies on data collected by the "Asia Foundation Annual Survey – Afghanistan"¹² and on the World Bank Report on Worldwide Governance Indicators¹³.

Resources and Duration:

The assessment was initially planned to be conducted over a period of about 2 ½ months. The difficult and rapidly changing context of Afghanistan extended the timeframe of the exercise to about 8 months.

The on-site collection of information is to be done by measurement teams recruited for this specific purpose. In a context of limited knowledge about governance and of limited experience on how to conduct surveys, the first round of assessment has underlined the importance of sufficient training and of ASGP support during implementation in order to collect useable data.

Outputs and results:

- Report presenting the governance performance of provinces along 7 clusters of indicators. Collected data are aggregated and averaged. Some indicators are disaggregated by sex (e.g. number of civil servants, voter participation)
- Baseline data for ASGP strategic planning and monitoring

The first full report concerning provinces was submitted in December 2010. Primary users of the report are IDLG, ASGP and its partners and other donors. It is not yet clear whether the report will be officially published, translated and disseminated in order to be used for broader awareness raising activities on good governance.

7.3. Lessons Learned

¹² *Afghanistan in 2010 – A survey of the Afghan People*: The Asia Foundation undertakes an annual survey in Afghanistan. The publication presents an overview of national perceptions in a number of key policy areas, including security, economy, governance, democratic values, and women and society. See: <http://asiafoundation.org/country/afghanistan/2010-poll.php>

¹³ The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) covers 212 countries and territories and measures six dimensions of governance between 1996 and 2008: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence / Terrorism, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption. See : <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp>

- What can the tool be used for?
- The tool allows to conduct a governance assessment in a difficult context where limited information is available.
 - Taking into account the limited knowledge of both Afghan officials and population on governance, the GOFORGOLD provides with an easy to use analysis grid and tool. The questionnaire is simple and focuses on very concrete and easy to understand issues from which the local situation can be understood.
 - Given that limited information on regional/local governance performance is available and stored, the collection of data mainly relies on direct interactions with regional/local stakeholders.
 - The assessment further integrates local security as one of the issues to be considered during the exercise.
- It is thus useful for providing a project with baseline data for strategic planning (prioritise programme activities according to the needs / gaps identified) and monitoring.
- The repetition of the exercise allows for monitoring progress of project's implementation.
- As a by-product, the implementation of the exercise leads to increase awareness of central, regional and local governments as well as of members of the civil society on principles of good governance and the objectives to be achieved. It further strengthens central level understanding and capacities to monitor performance of regional/local level governments.
- Given its national ambition, it could be used for benchmarking / comparing provinces' performance between them and over time (this is not a priority in the case under study)
- The exercise is not (yet) used in a way to promote dialogue, either at the horizontal or vertical level.

Which elements of local governance are considered?

The exercise covers the various dimensions of good governance¹⁴, this is done in a rather simple way, but already allows to assess how trusted and transparent local governments are and what actions they are able to implement.

- *Representation*: Are the provincial councils elected? Participation rate? Number of women included in the provincial council?
- *Accountability*: Are provinces controlled by central level government? Is there an actual separation of power? Is there an anti-corruption policy? What percentage does consider corruption as a serious problem? Is there a code of conduct for provincial officials?
- *Efficiency, Effectiveness*: What are the resources available at provincial level? How much does it receive from the central level? Do citizens have access to basic services such as electricity or water? What are the capacities of provincial staff?
- *Participation*: Existence of a civil society? Are there formal mechanisms to ensure citizens participation in local decision-making? Are women, the youth and persons with disabilities included in policy consultations?
- *Transparency*: Public information to citizens about laws, budget, financial reports, etc.?
- *Security*: Protection against crime and violence? Security of land tenure? Clarity and security over territorial boundaries?
- *Equity*: Affirmative action(s) for the poor? Affirmative action(s) for promoting gender equality?

Social inclusion is addressed through several channels:

¹⁴ The list of indicators / questions given in this case study was established using the general presentation of the GOFORGOLD model provided in the UNDP's Guide on Measuring Local Governance and through discussions with SDC Cooperation Office in Kabul. Due to the fact that the report on the first application of the exercise is not available yet, it is not yet clear whether information could be collected on all of these questions and whether this list will need to be adapted.

- The exercise comprises a set of gender specific indicators (percentage of women councillors, presence of affirmative actions for women, existence of a policy for the protection of women against violence, etc.). The methodology further provides for disaggregating indicators by sex where possible.
- Some indicators target poverty (e.g. inclusion of persons with disabilities into policy planning, existence of affirmative actions for the poor).

The exercise does however not directly analyse the political context and power relations. While it comprises certain indicators to measure the relationship between the centre (Kabul based power) and the periphery (provincial based power), the assessment does not allow for a direct understanding of the role and weigh of informal structures. Their impact can only be deduced from indicators referring to citizens' trust and participation in local government structures.

What are the conditions required to apply the tool?

The tool is especially designed to be implemented in fragile and post-conflict states, where institutionalisation processes are taking place and where there is still limited knowledge on governance. The inclusion of security related indicators (which is not frequent for LGAs) underlines the particular contexts in which the tool can be applied.

The first implementation of the GOFORGOLD has underlined some key conditions to be fulfilled in order to implement the tool and collect usable data.

- Central level government commitment and leadership come as pre-conditions for the application of the tool.
- The conduct of the first round drew light on the lack of a common understanding among the main stakeholders about governance principles and measurement indicators. Given this particular context, the first implementation has showed the importance of adequate training of the teams that will collect the data. They need not only to get familiar with the GOFORGOLD approach but need to be trained to interviewing / surveying techniques.
- A possible limitation of the tool is the need for physical interaction with stakeholders at national and sub-national levels. This may pose a problem in a post-conflict context (like Afghanistan). Due to security constraints it is difficult to meet with relevant actors at the local level.
- Again the context has an important impact on the length / duration of the exercise. This underlines the need to plan sufficient time for implementation.

Replication and Sustainability:

- The tool provides a simple method to extract key information about performance of sub-national government units. The purpose is further to allow the ministry to easily replicate the exercise.
- Its methodology is thus easily replicable and can be applied at all levels of governance.
- Given the key role played by performance measurement teams, the conduct of the exercise is however resource-intensive. Sufficient staff needs to be employed and trained for successfully conducting the assessment.
- The difficult and rapidly changing environment of the country in which it is applied may negatively impact on the sustainability of the tool.

7.4. Additional information

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- United Nations Development Programme, "A User's Guide to Measuring Local Governance", from p.67, available at: http://www.dpwg-lgd.org/cms/upload/pdf/A_users_guide_to_measuring_local_governance.pdf
- UNDP in Afghanistan: <http://www.undp.org.af/index.htm>

- Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Programme (ASGP):
http://www.undp.org.af/WhoWeAre/UNDPinAfghanistan/Projects/sbgs/prj_asgpII.htm
In particular: project documents and progress reports.

8. Reflections and conclusions

The following chapter contains reflections and main findings/recommendations based on the five assessed SDC experiences in conducting a LGA, with a particular look at the

- main purpose(s) of the LGAs;
- main dimensions addressed; and
- the specific methodologies applied

At the end, an attempt is made to identify common pre-conditions to be fulfilled in conducting a LGA, followed by a first “check list” to be answered when developing/selecting an appropriate LGA tool. This should be understood as input to trigger discussions among the dlgn members, particularly at the next F2F event in March 2011 in Sarajevo.

8.1. Purpose of LGAs

In all five case studies, the LGA served multiple purposes: sometimes it was even difficult to clearly define one main purpose, or an initially marginal purpose became more important during the process. The LGA always served at the same time for specific purposes at partners’ level as well as the project/donor level:

At the level of SDC/project partners (i.e. local government, central government, community): the main purpose of conducting a LGA include local government performance measurement; local government quality management; identification of gaps related to local governance and action plan for improvement; dialogue among local governance actors; awareness creation and education on rights and duties of local governance actors; benchmarking among local government units, local governance situation assessment for policy dialogue (to a limited extent)

At the level of the project/donor itself: the objectives include collecting baseline information on local governance situation in a municipality/region/country; overview/information for project/programme planning purposes; baseline information for policy dialogue; local governance context monitoring; project outcome monitoring

Although classification is difficult and includes a risk of simplification, the five case studies can be classified into 2 groups on the basis of their objectives and applicability:

1. The focus of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), GOFORGOLD and SIRDEM is primarily to assess the *performance of local governments*, emphasising internal processes in the local government administration/executive, their main functions and tasks, their internal functioning, processes and outputs, local government “achievements” and quality of public service provision, aiming at *optimizing the functioning of the existing local government system*.¹⁵
2. The focus on the Local Governance Barometer (LGB) and the Local Governance Self Assessment (LGSA) is primarily on promoting *dialogue, awareness and learning*; emphasising citizens’ empowerment, awareness on local governance actors’ rights and duties, feedback from the demand side, aiming at *identifying gaps to improve or even change the local government system*.

Horizontal and vertical dialogue¹⁶ elements (benchmarking and policy dialogue to launch/influence national reforms) were objectives in all of the five LGA methodologies assessed. The LSGA and

¹⁵ The focus of CAF is rather on internal management. SIRDEM’s focus is more on effectively provided services. GOFORGOLD assesses the performance of local governments, and also includes component of raising awareness with citizens.

¹⁶ Horizontal dialogue being understood as dialogue between local governments (e.g. municipalities, districts) and/or different stakeholders at local level, whereas vertical dialogue refers to dialogue and cooperation between the local and higher levels of governance (e.g. local level policy coordination with national level ministries).

the LGB were successful in initiating horizontal dialogue among the different stakeholders as well as partly among assessed local governments (both tools were developed to create such a dialogue). However, consolidating such a dialogue, and the willingness and ability to tackle major governance issues collectively, depends more on the objective and approach of the wider project/initiative. Regarding effective vertical dialogue in terms of national policy influence, the results were in all cases rather modest. Different reports/papers/newsletters have been produced and widely shared, it was however not possible to evaluate their impact. All interviewed persons have confirmed that it is important to plan benchmarking and policy dialogue measures from the beginning in a systematic manner with adequate channels and resources.

Another lesson related to the reporting/output of a LGA is the importance of the participatory definition of improvement measures (e.g. by an action plan/improvement plan) as part of the LGA. This created ownership and launched a process of transforming gaps and weaknesses into opportunities and challenges to be addressed. In most cases, these plans served the involved stakeholders and the project/donor to define concrete improvement and/or support measures.

Purpose of the Local Governance Assessment:

- All LGAs served multiple purposes, combining purposes at partner and project/donor level; it is important to clarify and agree with the partners on the main purpose(s) at the beginning and to communicate it to the involved stakeholders.
- The 5 capitalized SDC experiences can be divided into 2 groups: CAF, GOFORGOLD and SIRDEM primarily aim at assessing the performance of local governments; whereas the LGB and the LGSA primarily aim at promoting dialogue at the local level as well as raising the awareness and learning of stakeholders.
- Assessments should be complemented by the participatory elaboration of (if possible, binding) concrete action/improvement plans and commonly defined measures to address identified gaps and challenges.
- Benchmarking/policy dialogue purpose and measures need to be planned during programme design so that the adequate resources and instruments are deployed.

8.2. Main dimensions addressed

The main dimensions addressed are closely linked to the main purpose of the LGA. Whereas the LGSA, the LGB and GOFORGOLD focus more on questions of citizens' involvement, inclusiveness, transparency and downward accountability; the performance-oriented assessments (CAF, SIRDEM) look at issues related to efficiency (e.g. internal organisation and processes) and effectiveness (e.g. quantity and quality of local public service provision, planning and monitoring instruments) instead. *(More details on how and to what extent the different dimensions of good governance were addressed are provided in chapter 10)*

The dimensions of social inclusion, poverty and gender have been addressed in all assessments. Whereas inclusion is considered to be an "integral" part of CAF and SIRDEM without particular highlighting, the LGB, the LGSA and GOFORGOLD put special emphasis on these dimensions. This was mainly done by seeking the specific involvement of excluded groups in the assessment and by having a specific cluster of questions as part of the assessment.

It was difficult to establish how far the SDC experiences directly address power relations and political realities. All interviewed persons stated that they were an integral part of the assessment. Looking at the results however, it appears the tools address power relations and political realities only partially. In particular, the LGB and LGSA aim at initiating a dialogue about power relations and political realities in a depersonalized manner (e.g. by asking "why do we collectively allow

people to be corrupt" instead of "the major is corrupt") to explain governance performance. The tools did not provide a coherent and complete picture serving for baseline, planning or monitoring purposes. It was rather at the occasion of the "contextualisation" of the specific tool, that a mapping of actors and power relations was conducted, but not directly during the application of the tool.

The dimensions addressed also depend on the chosen methodology, whether in the form of staff intensive involvement or short/large events. For example, the duration and time and resources invested: It is obvious that a 1 week (SIRDEM) or a 10 days investment of 4-6 administration members (CAF) allows for more dimensions to be addressed, and those in greater depth, than a 4 hour participatory workshop involving a group of 25-40 persons (LGSA).

Main dimensions addressed:

- In line with their main purpose, CAF and SIRDEM rather focus on the dimensions of effectiveness and efficiency, whereas the focus of the LGB, the LGSA and GOFORGOLD is on transparency, participation, inclusiveness and downward accountability.
- Policy issues of specific importance for the project/partners (like poverty, gender, social inclusion) need to be particularly planned as part of the original design and assessment.
- In all five case studies, power relations are only partly addressed. In case a project/donor wants to get a clear picture of power relations for baseline/planning/monitoring/evaluation purpose, other complementary tools and assessment instruments would be needed (e.g. power cube).

8.3. Selection/development of the tool

All projects/cooperation offices have selected/developed the tools based on their project and context specific needs and demands, which should definitively be the main "criteria". The LGSA was particularly developed by a project for assessing grassroots local governance in rural areas with low average formal education. The LGB and SIRDEM were both developed as multi-donor/organisation initiatives for situations with a certain level of capacities and organisational complexity. The LGB and GOFORGOLD are however also applicable in contexts where only limited local governance capacities are available. The latter was particularly developed for situations with high security risks. CAF is designed for public administrations with good capacities and a considerable level of complexity aiming to gradually introduce EU standards.

According to our information, there was no or only limited direct interaction among the different SDC projects/initiatives. This can be explained by the context differences, but also by the fact that there seem to be little knowledge and awareness about other SDC supported LGA initiatives, which confirms the importance of launching a learning project on this topic.

8.4. Methodologies followed

The LGA is in all cases part of a broader project or initiative. It is important to mention that the 5 capitalized SDC experiences stressed the importance of planning enough time and resources to prepare and introduce the tool to the partners and other stakeholders involved (potentially during an inception phase).

To ensure ownership and commitment, the political leadership of the assessed local government(s) must be involved from the beginning, possibly also local government associations.

If a LGA is conducted in a broader region or even countrywide, close cooperation and involvement of the regional or national authorities is needed to reach the intended objectives in terms of policy dialogue at the national level.

Much time and resources were invested in all cases to adapt the tool to the specific local context. This has to be done in very close cooperation with the local partners and local governance experts, as they know best the specific context and related challenges. This local adaptation is important in terms of specific issues/questions to be addressed, but also in terms of timing, the way of conducting interviews, facilitation of group exercises to ensure consideration of the main elements and voice of all stakeholders (e.g. special working groups/meetings for women).

All experiences contain self-assessment elements¹⁷, basing the results upon main local governance stakeholders' opinion and perception along a set of specific questions. This is done by facilitated self-assessment exercises, interviews of local governance stakeholders or focus group discussions. In all cases, this qualitative information is complemented by quantitative information and hard facts (only very limited in the LGSA, only partly in LGB).

The involved stakeholders are primarily the local government authorities (mostly executive/administration). In most cases, citizens and the private sector are also involved in the exercise. The LGB appears to be the most inclusive tool as it aims to include all relevant local actors in the assessment. An exception is the community LGSA in Bangladesh, which is specifically designed for and addressed to communities. External facilitation was done in all cases, with considerable time investment. All projects stressed the importance of good facilitation and adequate trainings to LGA facilitators. In most cases, national organisations were mandated and particularly trained to take over this coordination and facilitation.

The questions are grouped around thematic clusters, either along the good governance principles (LGB, GOFORGOLD, partly LGSA and SIRDEM) or the EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) quality management model (CAF).

The duration and time invested differs considerably among the different tools, ranging from a 4-5 hours facilitated exercise by 30 persons (LGSA) to more labour intensive methodologies like the CAF, SIRDEM, GOFORGOLD and the LGB (e.g. the time investment for CAF in one municipality is 40-60 person-days from the municipal administration plus 10-15 days for external preparation and facilitation).

¹⁷ The self-assessment part in SIRDEM is limited to the interviews with the LG officials.

Methodologies followed:

- It is important to plan sufficient time and resources to prepare and introduce the tool to the partners and other stakeholders involved.
- The involvement of the political leadership of assessed local government(s) is crucial (also regional and national level, if it is conducted in a broader area).
- Each tool must be adapted to the local context (process, meeting, form, questions etc). This adaptation and adjustment process must be done in close cooperation with partners (e.g. municipalities, municipal associations, ministries, national experts, civil society representatives)
- All cases contain self-assessment elements, complemented by hard facts and quantitative data (only limited in the LGSA and LGB)
- While supporting local government actors to conduct self-assessments, external facilitation was important and needed in all cases.
- All LGA followed a structured list of questions, in most cases organized along the principles of good governance (with the exception of CAF)
- The resources and time invested differ considerably, ranging from efficient low cost exercises (LGSA) to more labour intensive methodologies (SIRDEM, GOFORGOLD, LGB, CAF)

8.5. Pre-conditions for conducting a LGA

Although the contexts differ considerably in the assessed SDC experiences, some common pre-conditions can be identified, which must be fulfilled to conduct a LGA:

Minimum favourable political context and support of the national government towards decentralisation and local self-governance: In fully centralistic/autocratic states, where local governments are completely dependent from central governments without any downward accountability and democratic control mechanisms, a participatory LGA involving partners and stakeholders does not make sense. If people do not feel free to speak and give their personal opinion, the results will in any case not reflect the reality.

Basic legal and institutional framework: The basic legal and institutional framework must exist to set a clear frame for the LGA. The main rights, duties and tasks of the local governance actors and the rules in terms of processes must be clear, serving as required and binding “standards”.

Commitment of political leadership: the political leadership of the assessed local governments must be committed to the main objective and the results of the LGA. Local ownership and a serious follow up on agreed actions for improvement can only be achieved through their commitment. If a LGA is conducted in a broader region or even countrywide, the commitment of the regional or national authorities is also a pre-condition to reach the intended objectives in terms of vertical dialogue.

Shared understanding of good local governance: All involved stakeholders must have a minimum shared understanding of the principles of good governance, setting – combined with the legal and institutional framework – the frame and standards for the assessment and the main questions and issues to be addressed.

9. (Draft) check list for selecting a LGA tool

a) Pre-condition to conduct a LGA

- ✓ Commitment of the leadership of participating local governments (and if possible national authorities)
- ✓ Sufficient resources and capacities from donor/project and from local government partners and other involved stakeholders
- ✓ Minimum favourable political context and support of national government
- ✓ Minimum security standards to conduct on site visits and assessments
- ✓ Existence of basic legal and institutional framework
- ✓ Shared understanding of good local governance principles

b) Purpose

- ✓ Clarify and agree with partners on main purpose(s) of the LGA
- ✓ Benchmarking/policy dialogue purpose and measures need to be planned from the beginning with adequate resources and instruments
- ✓ Assessments should be complemented by the participative elaboration of (if possible binding) concrete action/improvement plans

c) Main dimensions

- ✓ Clarify and agree with partners what dimensions should be particularly addressed
- ✓ Issues of specific importance (e.g. gender, social inclusion) need to be particularly addressed and planned
- ✓ If you want to assess power relations and political realities, the application of additional complementary tools and assessment instruments might be required

d) Methodology

- ✓ Plan sufficient time and resources to prepare and introduce the tool to the partners and involved other stakeholders
- ✓ Each tool must be adapted to the local context (the list of issues and questions, process, meeting form etc) in close cooperation with the partners
- ✓ Even if a LGA follows a self assessment methodology, external facilitation might be needed and should be planned accordingly - Plan time and resources to introduce and train facilitators
- ✓ Cross check if hard facts/information are available and how reliable they are
- ✓ Regular monitoring and review is needed
- ✓ Ensure and plan from the beginning a regular application with a gradual hand over of tasks and responsibilities to the partners to ensure ownership and sustainability

10. Good Governance Dimensions

The following chart summarizes, to what extent the main dimensions of good governance are addressed by the different LGA tools, in particular
 ⇒ **The main indicators/questions addressed** by each LGA tool, directly relating to the 5 main dimensions of good governance; and
 ⇒ **A rating, how extensive each dimension is addressed** (the rating is done by the authors, based on their analysis of the tool and the case)

	Accountability	Transparency	Efficiency and Effectiveness	Participation	Non-Discrimination
CAF Bosnia and Herzegovina <i>Methodology:</i> Combination of hard facts/data and individual appreciations (CAF team members), following the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (not structured along good governance principles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Citizens orientation / customer-orientation of LG administration – In how far LG operates within the regulatory framework – List of questions regarding democratic responsiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Citizens orientation / customer-orientation of LG administration – Level of communication and information of citizens on LG strategies, plans and resources (e.g. budget) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quality of LG Leadership, quality of processes inside the administration, quality of strategy and planning, quality of human resources – Quality of local service delivery – Efficient use of resources – Level of modernization – Installed processes for change management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Level and quality of involvement of stakeholders and balancing of stakeholder needs in local planning, citizens feedback mechanisms, public private partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery to all citizens – Equal access to services – Equal opportunities in LG human resources management (e.g. gender, disability, race and religion)
	• 3	• 3	• 5	• 3	• 3
LGB South Africa <i>Methodology:</i> Mainly perception-based exercise (facts/evidences collected in the contextualization phase of the tool); structured along good governance principles	<i>Focus on administrative, political and social accountability:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Respect for the separation of powers – Existence of adequate checks and balances – Existence of financial audits – Adherence of municipal officials to a code of conduct – Local elections are held – Interactions between elected officials and their electorate – Existence of an anti-corruption policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Level and quality of information available on citizens' rights, laws, budget, decision-making and planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Existence, quality and level of implementation of a local development plan – Effectiveness in services delivery – Performance of local administration and capacities of its staff – Efficient use of resources – Quality of leadership 	<i>Focus on created space and processes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Presence of mechanisms that ensure citizens' participation – Existence of regular consultation meetings and interactions with citizens – Existence of an organized and active civil society – Ability of civil society to express opinions and influence policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Existence of a legal framework recognizing equal rights for all citizens – Equal access to services – Existence of pro-poor policies – Positive actions to reduce gender imbalances – Equal chances of women to participate in public life – Existence of a gender quota for the local parliament.
	• 4	• 4	• 3	• 4	• 4

<p>SIRDEM, Nicaragua</p> <p><u>Methodology:</u></p> <p><i>Collection of objective “evidences” of municipal performance in order to compare municipalities nation-wide. Analysis of governance dimension is less systematic. Fact-based approach – no perception based elements – consultations with municipal officials only</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect for the separation of powers - Compliance of municipal actions with respective laws - Existence and quality of financial audits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information and publication of official documents - Information of citizens on municipal initiatives - Existence and quality of consultation processes with citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality organization and internal procedures of the municipality - Quality of key services (roads, waste management, water supply, etc.) and access to it - Capacities of municipal staff - Existence and quality of municipal planning process - Effective budget execution and allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence of regulatory framework to ensure participation in the definition of local development plans, investment plans and budgeting (<i>no systematic control of implementation and quality of participation however</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-discriminatory and social inclusive legislation (transversal theme of the tool) - Access to services
<p>LGSA, Bangladesh</p> <p><u>Methodology:</u></p> <p><i>Perception based exercise (no hard facts), framed around the legally defined rights and responsibilities of the demand (citizens) and supply (local government) side. Focus on the daily governance-issues in rural areas, with special focus on social inclusion</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of satisfaction of citizens with UP services - Level of satisfaction of citizens with village court decisions - Level of recording UP meetings and their dissemination - Level of monitoring of UP projects implementation - Existence and regular update of UP notice board for the public - Existence of annual audit and sharing of results with the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of awareness on UP expenditure and incomes (incl. budget) - Level of transparency of UP procurement processes - Level of awareness on rights and duties and feedback on provided services (as main purpose of the tool) - Existence and regular update of UP notice board for the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of LG service provision - Existence and performance of UP standing committees - Existence and performance of project implementation committees - Level of monitoring of UP projects implementation - Functioning of village courts according to rules - Opening hours of UP offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of participation of citizens in public meetings - Level of participation of citizens, especially the excluded section in the UP’s decision making process - Level of participation of community in elaboration of a UP improvement plan - Effectiveness of CBOs in addressing demands to UP - Existence of regular meetings between UP and NGOs/CBOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voice of women UP members in public meetings - Voice of poor/marginalized in public meetings - Level of participation of women in coordination meetings - Level of participation of poor/marginalized in coordination meetings - Participation of women in decision making of the village court
	• 3	• 3	• 4	• 3	• 3
	• 4	• 4	• 2	• 4	• 5

**GOFORGOLD,
Afghanistan**

Methodology:

Combination of facts and individual perceptions collected through on site-site interviews and focus group discussions. Participation of both government representatives and citizens. Provides an overview of the governance situation at regional/local levels. Includes security related indicators.

- Relationship and controlling mechanisms of regional/local level by central government
- Respect for the separation of powers
- Regional/local elections for council and heads of the executive are held.
- Existence of a code of conduct for officials
- Existence of an anti-corruption policy
- Perception as concerns corruption

• 3

- Availability of information to citizens on laws, budget, finances, etc.

• 3

- Level, origin and predictability of resources available at regional/local level
- Capacities of regional/local staff
- Access of citizens to basic services / infrastructures (water, electricity, etc.)

Security addressed as a specific cluster:

- Protection against crime and violence
- Security of land tenure
- Territorial boundaries

• 4

- Existence of an organized and active civil society
- Existence of mechanisms to ensure citizens' participation in decision-making
- Voter turn-out (disaggregated by sex)

• 3

(Addressed both as a transversal theme for and through a specific "equity" cluster.)

- Percentage of women councilors, women participation in regional/local elections
- Inclusion of women, the youth and persons with disabilities in policy consultations
- Existence of affirmative actions for promoting gender equality
- Existence of affirmative actions for the poor.

• 4

11. Factsheets on Local Governance Assessment Methods

Case study 1		Common Assessment Framework (CAF), Bosnia and Herzegovina
Developed by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Institute for Public Administration (EIPA), for at all levels of administrations in EU member states and in transition countries. 	
Applied in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 mid size municipalities in BiH, supported by the SDC financed Municipal Development Project (MDP) in the Doboje region, total of 140'000 inhabitants 	
Purpose / Utility of the Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-assessment and quality management tool for local public administrations Dialogue and learning between LG Benchmarking between LG (if broadly applied) Identification of structural gaps for policy discussions (if broadly applied) Project/SDC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline information Country programme and project planning Monitoring and evaluation (progress at partners level, project monitoring, country monitoring) 	
Outputs/ Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self assessment report with scores for each LG, prepared by CAF team members Action plan for improvements, officially approved by LG council Web platform for benchmarking 	
Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holistic organisation analysis of local government performance and public service delivery Clear focus on public administration Poverty, gender and social inclusion not particularly addressed, but integral part of the CAF Power relations not particularly addressed Combination of hard facts and individual appreciations 	
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated self assessment: Introduction to leadership ⇒ establishment of CAF team (4-6 LG staff) ⇒ facilitated self assessment and elaboration of action plan ⇒ approval of report and action plan Questionnaire and scoring along 9 dimensions of the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) 	
Inputs and time required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 months period for whole exercise in a LG 10-12 working days for each CAF team member 10 working days facilitation per municipality Basic data and information must be available 	
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local population (<i>better services, higher transparency</i>); local authorities (<i>quality management and benchmarking tool</i>); national authorities (<i>monitoring of LG and D, if broadly applied in LG</i>); donors/project (<i>baseline, planning, M&E</i>): 	
Most appropriate use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public administration with good capacities and management understanding Countries with EU integration agenda (EU standard label) Atmosphere of trust and free thinking Periodical replication for monitoring purpose LG benchmarking (if broadly applied) 	
Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment of LG leadership to steer the process and endorse action plan as key success factor External facilitation is highly recommended 	
Replication, Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High potential, if basic conditions are fulfilled (capacities and resources, basic data available, leadership commitment), national coordination increases chances for broad application and sustainability 	
Further Info and contact	Website: www.caf.eipa.eu , Email: Snezana Mistic snezana.mistic@mdpincijative.ba	

Case study 2 Local Governance Barometer (LGB), Southern Africa	
Developed by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Impact Alliance Network made of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), Pact and SNV, Netherlands Development Organization.
Applied in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15 districts of Botswana, Malawi and Zambia (5 per country)
Purpose / Utility of the Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Partners</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitated self-assessment tool ▪ Instrument for dialogue between stakeholders at the local level ▪ Identification of local governance and service delivery gaps ▪ Awareness raising and capacity development on local governance standards ▪ Horizontal and vertical dialogue promotion • <u>Projects/SDC</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baseline information + monitoring tool ▪ Input for planning of programmes and/or capacity building activities
Outputs Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LGB report including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contextualisation (political and legal background) - quantitative expression of citizens' satisfaction with local government's performance - identification and prioritisation of capability development activities ▪ Dissemination through local and national workshops, booklets and newsletters
Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key dimensions of governance are assessed: effectiveness and efficiency, transparency, rule of law (focus on anti-corruption measures), accountability and participation. ▪ Poverty and social inclusion as an entire cluster of the questionnaire. ▪ Gender equality promotion as a transversal theme. ▪ No mapping of power relations or comprehensive overview of available legislation. ▪ <i>Mainly a perception-based exercise. Collection of objective data to be done in the contextualisation phase of the exercise.</i>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitated self-assessment through staff members of a national partner organisation. Facilitators (about 5) are trained by IDASA on LGB. ▪ The LGB is made of a model which needs to be adapted to the specific context of its application ▪ Several phases in the application of the tool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contextualisation: identification of stakeholders, adaptation of the LGB to the local context and identification of major local governance related issues. - Data collection through the filling-in of a questionnaire and separate focus group discussions for each stakeholder group. - Data are processed and discussed in a plenary session. Allows the identification of governance gaps and recommendations for capacity development activities.
Inputs and time required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff per country: about 5 facilitators from partner organisation + 1 in-country project coordination from lead organisation. ▪ Takes about 2 weeks to be conducted in one district (+ adaptation of the tool beforehand at national level) ▪ Focus group discussions + plenary session take place within the same week
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local population (<i>increased dialogue on their needs and improved services</i>); local authorities (<i>better understanding of governance, dialogue with civil society, identification of intervention priorities, accountability</i>); national authorities (<i>limited involvement</i>); donors/project (<i>baseline, planning, M&E</i>):
Most appropriate use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adaptability and ability of the tool to translate the complex concept of LG into practical, locally specific and easy to understand indicators and questions ▪ Can be applied in contexts where limited knowledge on LG is available ▪ Useful for participatory identification of capacity development activities.
Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key role played by facilitators ▪ Importance of planning sufficient time for the preparation of the exercise and getting the support of relevant central authorities. ▪ Dissemination of results needs to be planned in advance.
Replication, Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High replication potential given its approach. Core model can be adapted to various contexts and applied at different levels (local, regional or central) or to different sectors (health, etc.). ▪ Key role of the facilitator for adapting the tool and conducting the exercise.
Further Info and contact	<p>Ephrem Tadesse: ephrem.tadesse@sdc.net , Paul van Hoof: pvanhoof@idasa.org.za Website: http://www.impactalliance.org/ev_en.php?ID=12698_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC</p>

Case study 3 Sistema de Reconocimiento al Desempeño Municipal en Nicaragua (SIRDEM)	
Developed by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ INIFOM (the Nicaraguan Institute for Municipal Promotion / governmental body), and AMUNIC (the Association of Nicaraguan Municipalities) with the support of GTZ Nicaragua (2005). SDC has contributed to the further elaboration of the instrument.
Applied in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 153 Municipalities of Nicaragua (about 5.7 mio peoples) in 2005, 2006 and 2007
Purpose / Utility of the tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Partners</u> ▪ Performance assessment and identification of governance gaps ▪ Country wide assessment allows for benchmarking between LGs ▪ Inform citizens about performance of their municipalities in absolute and comparative terms and about standards to be attained ▪ Awareness raising and capacity development of municipal officials on LG standards ▪ Promotion of horizontal and vertical dialogue • <u>Project/SDC</u> ▪ Baseline information ▪ Input for programme and/or projects planning ▪ Monitoring and evaluation
Outputs Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SIRDEM report - including a scoreboard of the performance of municipalities for all the dimensions of local governance assessed. ▪ Financial awards granted to best performing municipalities to be invested in capacity development. ▪ Dissemination of results through publication of the reports, booklets and website
Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basic standards of good governance are addressed ▪ Useful to understand what legislation is in place and what services are provided or not. ▪ Social inclusion and poverty reduction as transversal issues ▪ Not designed to address political realities or power relations ▪ <i>Fact based approach (indicators of performance - what is/isn't available) ≠ processes and interactions</i>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indicators organized along 11 thematic clusters. ▪ 2 methods of data collection: 40% through (self-assessed) data provided by municipal authorities – 60% through interviews between SIRDEM team and municipal officials. ▪ Data are processed and municipalities ranked (performance in general, specific fields) ▪ The “Executive Directorate” of SIRDEM grants awards to best performing municipalities.
Inputs and time required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SIRDEM relies on a team of 10-12 professionals for its implementation ▪ Technical secretariat coordinates operational issues and trains the professionals (1 week) ▪ Budget for one round: around 100 000\$ ▪ 6 months from planning to results (including 3 months for data collection)
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local population (<i>increased transparency and awareness on local governance through results publication</i>); local authorities (<i>main beneficiaries of the tool, increased understanding on governance and standards to be achieved, identification of priority areas of intervention</i>); national authorities (<i>monitoring of LG and Decentralization</i>); donors/project (<i>baseline, planning, M&E</i>)
Most appropriate use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Municipalities with sufficient capabilities to provide the required data ▪ LGA for understanding what is available or not / fact-based ≠ perception-based survey ▪ LG benchmarking ▪ Promotion of vertical and horizontal dialogue
Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment of LG leadership to steer the process as a key success factor ▪ One objective of SIRDEM is to increase self-assessment capacities of LG ▪ No systematic follow-up process of the results was planned. Only municipalities being granted a financial award automatically receive funds for capacity development activities. ▪ Additional donor support to promote horizontal and vertical dialogue could be useful
Replication, Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to adapt the exercise and its indicators to the specific context ▪ Should be repeated over time in order for the reward logic to bear fruits ▪ Wide coalition of local and international partners as most suitable for applying the tool on such a wide scale
Further Info and contact	<p>Rudi von Planta: rudi.vonplanta@sdc.net Website: http://www.inifom.gob.ni/programas/sirdem.html</p>

Case study 4 Local Governance Self Assessment (LGSA), Bangladesh	
Developed by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intercooperation and Care Bangladesh in the frame of the SDC financed Sharique local governance programme in the Sunamganj and Rajshahi regions 2 types were conducted: a) Union Parishad (UP) LGSA and b) Community LGSA
Applied in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 128 Union Parishads (lowest LG level, average 30'000 inhabitants), involvement of 2400 CBOs and direct participation of 90'000 citizens; conducted on a bi-annual basis
Purpose / Utility of the Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising & education of citizens and LG on tasks, special reference to transparency, downward accountability, pro-poor service delivery and the inclusion of women and poor; Identification of LG gaps and needs and monitoring of progress Promotion of dialogue between citizens and local authorities in rural areas Elaboration of priorities in a "Union Parishad Governance Improvement Plan (GIP)" Project/SDC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline information on LG in a broad area Input for programme and/or projects planning, monitoring and evaluation
Outputs and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) UP Governance Improvement Plans (GIP), officially approved by the UP councils and integrated in their annual plan of operation and annual budget b) Identified priorities, integrated in local CBO action plans and/or transmitted to the UP Assessment results reports for each LGSA (incl. scoring) prepared by facilitator Results were used for the elaboration of manuals and handbooks (e.g. training manual for UP planning, training manuals on roles and responsibilities, tax revenue training manual) Results provided key information for a report on "the state of local governance in Rajshahi and Sunamganj", disseminated to raise awareness among government and donors
Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of local governance in rural areas, framed around the legally defined rights and responsibilities of the demand (citizens) and supply (local government) side Focus on the daily governance-related problems of people in rural areas, special consideration of <i>social inclusion questions</i> (gender, extreme poor, ethnic minorities) Not designed to capture power relations <i>Mostly relying on qualitative data and perception of participants, few hard facts</i>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UP LGSA: half-day meetings of 35 participants (UP officials, local government committees selected line departments, CBOs, private sector and traditional leaders) Community LGSA: half-day public meetings of 40 participants from different sections of the civil society, UP officials as guests Organized around 24 (UP LGSA) / 29 (community LGSA) questions, facilitated by 1-2 trained NGO representatives, supported by 3-4 community volunteers 5 steps: 1. Introduction and agreement on the objectives and rules by the UP chairman/community leader; 2. Identification and understanding of main local governance actors and their roles; 3. Facilitated self-assessment along the LGSA key questions; 4. Agreement on six priorities for improvements; 5. Elaboration of action plan
Inputs and time required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly opinions of the participants, complemented by data from UP offices Project: tool elaboration, testing/adaptation, training of NGO facilitators 1-2 facilitators 1 day per LGSA Material (papers, pens, posters etc), average cost of 7 US\$ per LGSA
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local population (<i>education and awareness, transparency, voice</i>); local authorities (<i>awareness, dialogue with citizens, monitoring, accountability, GIP</i>); national authorities (<i>limited, only if it would be applied country wide</i>); donors/project (<i>baseline, planning, M&E</i>)
Most appropriate use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the status of local governance in rural areas at a grass roots level, with a specific pro poor and social inclusion focus Awareness raising of citizens and local government officials on their rights and responsibilities
Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic commitment of the local government leadership is required Meetings must be well organized with good facilitation
Replication, Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High replication potential (user-friendly, low cost, number/nature of questions adapted to context) National coordination for country wide application (benchmarking, monitoring, policy inputs)
Further Info and contact	<p>info@intercooperation-bd.org (Tirtha Sikder, Jens Engeli) Website: www.intercooperation-bd.org/publication.php.</p>

Case study 5		Good Governance for Local Development in Afghanistan (GOFORGOLD)
Developed by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP and the Afghan Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG – ministry level body) in the framework of the Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Programme (ASGP). The project is supported by multiple donors (Canada, the European Commission, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland). 	
Applied in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 34 provinces (regional level) of Afghanistan in 2010 - application at district, municipal and village levels was planned but could not be carried for security reasons. 	
Purpose / Utility of the tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Partners</u> Allows IDLG to dispose of an easy to use tool to monitor regional and local governments' performance. Awareness raising on decentralisation and good governance principles at all levels Allows for informed choices on priority policies and resources allocation <u>Project/SDC</u> Provides an overview of the governance situation at sub-national level Baseline data for monitoring progress of the ASGP Input for the second phase of the programme 	
Outputs Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report presenting provinces' performance along 7 clusters of governance indicators. Data are aggregated and presented in quantitative terms (for instance in the form of an easy to read dashboard) – some data gender disaggregated Baseline data for ASGP 	
Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic principles of good governance are addressed Specific focus on security (forms one cluster of indicators) Gender as a transversal theme + social inclusion / pro-poor policies addressed through a specific "equity" cluster. Not designed to analyse political realities or power relations <i>Collects both facts and perceptions through direct interactions with regional/local actors</i> 	
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators organized along 7 thematic clusters (<i>representation, accountability, efficiency-effectiveness, participation, transparency, security, equity</i>) 2 different sources of information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected directly by performance measurement teams recruited by the ASGP through on site surveys (interviews + focus group discussions) Available literature and reports on Afghanistan (mainly: "Asia Foundation Annual Survey – Afghanistan" + World Bank Report on Worldwide Governance Indicators) 	
Inputs and time required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data are to be collected by "performance measurement teams" recruited and trained by ASGP. The difficult context in which it is applied (unstable political environment + limited knowledge on governance) implies that sufficient time needs to be planned for all activities (including preparation, training of performance measurement teams). First round of the exercise carried in 8 months for the 34 provinces 	
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local population (<i>directly consulted, increased awareness on role and duties of regional/local governments</i>); regional/local authorities (<i>main actor consulted, increased understanding on governance standards and identification of gaps</i>); national authorities (<i>monitoring of LG and decentralization, needs identification for planning</i>); donors/project (<i>baseline, planning, M&E</i>) 	
Most appropriate use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tool designed with a simple methodology to be applied in fragile contexts and post-conflict states Provides an overview on the governance situation of nascent institutions with limited information available Useful to gather data on security situation Provides baseline data 	
Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tool has been applied for the first time in 2010 at provincial level only. The report is not yet available. Some observations therefore remain to be confirmed, especially as concerns the range of applied indicators and nature of data collected. 	
Replication, Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GOFORGOLD provides an easy-to-use methodology. It addresses governance through concrete issues. The model can be adapted and replicated at all government levels Of specific relevance for fragile and post-conflict states Importance of close cooperation with central level that should develop leadership/ownership 	
Further Info and contact	<p>Abdul Bari: abdul.bari@sdg.net Website: IDLG: http://www.idlg.gov.af/IDLG</p>	