

Supporting Decentralisation as a Contribution to Good Governance (DGG)

Strengthening the capacities of local governments in Rwanda to plan and deliver services which meet the needs and priorities of citizens

The challenge

Since 2000, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) has steadily pursued an ambitious decentralization reform to enable broader local and national development. The major objective focused on strengthening local service delivery as well as improving citizen participation in governance processes. At the same time, decentralization is seen as an important effort to restore social cohesion, reduce poverty and improve citizen satisfaction and socio-economic well-being.

Guided by 'Vision 2050' as well as the National Strategy for Transformation 2017-24 (NST), the government of Rwanda revised its National Decentralization Policy (NDP) in October 2021. While progress was initially anchored on the territorial reorganization of decentralized state entities, challenges persist. Notably, the responsibilities of districts to cater for the needs of their citizen are increasing. At the same time, the financial means available to them to fulfill these responsibilities are insufficient. The decision-making autonomy of districts to sufficiently incorporate the priorities of their constituencies is also limited.

Our approach

The Decentralization and Good Governance (DGG) programme is jointly implemented by GIZ and its Rwandan partners, including among others the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning as well as several civil society organizations (CSOs) like Never Again Rwanda and Transparency International Rwandan.

At the core of DGG programme is the support to partners in improving the districts' ability to effectively, efficiently and transparently deliver public services to its 13.6 million (est. 2022) Rwandan citizens. Supporting local governments directly in their capacity to deliver on their mandate in an increasingly accountable, citizen-centric way is achieved through capacity building of both district authorities and CSOs aiming to strengthen their ability to fulfill their responsibilities in a participatory manner. Critical to the advancement of the decentralization effort is also the ability of districts to generate and effectively manage their limited financial resources. This is accompanied by technical advice on policy reform processes and guidelines on the national level.

Project name	Supporting Decentralisation as a Contribution to Good Governance (DGG)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Rwanda
Lead executing agency	GIZ
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The programme provides technical advisory services through international and national long- and short-term experts, funding for capacity development measures as well as equipment to a certain extent.

The programme structured alongside three intervention areas, which are strongly interlinked, informing and complementing each other:

Left to right:

- Concerned Citizen Committees (CCCs) are volunteers dedicated to fight against corruption in their communities. There are 472 CCCs in 11 districts and they monitor service delivery through data collection from suggestion boxes (2019).
- Feedback session to citizens on Imihigo in Kivu Sector, Nyaruguru District (2018)



1. Local Planning and Service Delivery
2. Local Public Financial Management (PFM) and revenue enhancement
3. Citizen Participation and Accountability.

In the area of Local Planning and Service Delivery, the programme aims to ensure that local governments are equipped with the knowledge and tools to effectively develop local plans taking into consideration both national priorities, but also the needs of the citizens. In terms of service delivery, the goal is to ensure that services are available, accessible and delivered in an increasingly professional, citizen-oriented and gender sensitive way. A sub-area of this intervention area extends to ensuring that climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, as outlined in Rwanda's NDCs, are integrated in a participatory manner in local planning documents.

The goal of the second intervention area is to enhance local revenue collection with a particular focus on strengthening the

role of local governments in their existing mandate and by improving the overall functioning of the relationship between the national and sub-national levels of governments. Complementarily, the intervention area aims at improving the capacities of local councils to effectively control and approve their budgets through an increased capacity in PFM.

The intervention field Citizen Participation and Accountability focuses on the role of citizens and civil society in having the necessary skills, tools, methods and fora to effectively hold local leaders accountable. It parallelly enables local leaders to ensure local plans reflect the needs of citizens. Particularly important here is to strengthen downward accountability, ensuring that there is a noticeable improvement in the degree to which local governments consistently and systematically provide feedback to citizens on how their interests are (or are not) being taken into account.



Interviewing Emmanuel Niringiyimana, a resident of Murambi Sector in Karongi District, who single handedly built a 7km road in his community, at the Social Accountability Symposium, which explored how to enhance social accountability in Kigali (2019).

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