

Decentralisation and Good Governance in Rwanda

The challenge

Guided by the Vision 2020 and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS II, 2013-2018), the Rwandan government has started the third phase of its comprehensive and ambitious decentralisation reform. While progress was initially achieved through strengthening the capacities of districts and the territorial reorganisation of decentralised state entities, challenges still persist, including the lack of clear definitions of roles and functions of local and central government, insufficient revenues of local governments, unsatisfactory quality of public services and a lack of citizen participation in local planning. The third phase of the decentralisation program running from 2016 until 2018 aims to make a contribution to resolving these challenges.

Our approach

The German contribution to the decentralisation reforms in Rwanda date back to 2006. Today, the Decentralisation and Good Governance (DGG) programme is jointly implemented by GIZ and its Rwandan partners, which are, among others, the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda Governance Board, Rwanda Revenue Authority as well as a number of civil society organisations (CSO). The overall objective of the national decentralisation strategy is to strengthen the districts in providing public services for the 11.3 million (est. 2015) Rwandan citizens in an efficient and transparent manner in collaboration with civil society. The programme offers technical support in the following four intervention areas:

- Local Service Delivery
- Fiscal Decentralisation and local Public Financial Management (PFM)
- Citizen-oriented Local Governance
- Institutionalization of Capacity Development as a crosscutting issue

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 limited extent.

Project name	Decentralisation and Good Governance in Rwanda (DGG)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Rwanda
Lead executing agency	GIZ
Duration	01/2016 – 12/2018

All interventions in the area *Local Service Delivery* are focused on supporting district authorities in improving the quality of their citizen-oriented local administrative services. This is mainly done through the development and country-wide rollout of the “Standard Service Charters” that transparently define the procedures of and quality requirements for administrative service delivery. Complementarily, local public officials are trained in the application of the charters.

Through the *Fiscal Decentralisation and Local Public Financial Management (PFM)* intervention field the program supports the review and implementation of the legal framework and guiding policies for local revenue management as well as the assignment of fiscal responsibilities between central and local government. The PFM-capacities of the 30 districts and the City of Kigali are strengthened and the efficient collection of local revenues supported.

The intervention field *Citizen-oriented Local Governance* focuses on strengthening the ability of districts and CSOs to implement mechanisms of citizen-oriented good local governance. It aims at improving participatory, gender-sensitive and accountable local governance.



L. to r.: Mobile Advocacy and Legal Advice Center in June 2014 in Burera District. GIZ supports the Rwandan country chapter of Transparency International in this project to foster accountability and citizen participation.

SOS School Nyamagabe district, November 2013: A workshop to enhance pupils' awareness on citizen participation and their role and rights as citizens was conducted jointly with Never Again Rwanda.



Capacity Development is implemented as a crosscutting issue and focuses on strengthening the individual and institutional capacities of governmental and non-governmental organisations. One of these efforts is the establishment of a Local Government Institute (LGI) that will provide systematic capacity development services for local governments.

Our Impact

In the area of *Local Service Delivery*, the development of the “Standard Service Charters” has clarified the responsibilities, conditions and costs of administrative service delivery at the local level. By publicly displaying the Charters, both public servants as well as citizens are aware of legally defined standards and how service delivery is organized. The training of local government staff ensures the timely implementation and the correct application of the charters. Based on the enhanced transparency through the Charters, citizens are empowered to monitor the performance of local governments in delivering services in a timely, effective and efficient manner.

Through the program’s contributions in the area *Fiscal Decentralization and Local PFM* the collection of locally-owned revenues of the districts has been enhanced by more than 60 % over the last 3 years and the districts’ PFM related weaknesses have been reduced considerably. As a result of supported information campaigns, tax payers are aware of their rights and duties. The development and dissemination of software, handbooks and guidelines have improved the quality of PFM at the district level. An easy-to-use accounting and financial reporting system for subsidiary entities and entities without their own budget, was developed and implemented countrywide with support of the

program. Through the training of district internal auditors and audit committees the district internal audit and oversight function is strengthened.

Under the *citizen participation* component, public accountability has been increased through the support to CSOs that encouraged greater public participation in planning and monitoring of local government service provision. The programme has successfully supported the participation of citizens in the districts Nyamagabe and Nyaruguru in designing and monitoring civil servants’ performance contracts, the so-called ‘Imihigo’. As a result, about 80% of their priorities were integrated. By supporting Transparency International Rwanda in setting up suggestion boxes, the programme contributed to a consistent monitoring of local public service delivery and local public procurement. The programme also supported public dialogue by linking citizens and local leaders around key planning issues through the facilitation of radio debates.

The activities in the area of *Capacity development* have strengthened the districts’ administrative capacities but also those of CSOs to improve public service delivery for all Rwandan citizens. These activities initially concentrated on making services more oriented to citizens’ demands. All 30 districts have been supported in the formulation and subsequent implementation of district capacity development plans. Trainings for more than 3.000 Local Government staff have been conducted. The support to the LGI, which is mandated to serve as central service provider for local government capacity development, contributes to a better coordination and demand-oriented provision of individual and institutional capacity building. As a result of these initiatives the programme is making a strong contribution to the implementation of Vision 2020 and the EDPRS II in general and the financing and improvement of public service delivery to the citizens of Rwanda in particular.

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