Guidelines for the international relations of local governments and decentralised cooperation between the European Union and Latin America

VOLUME 1

Practical Manual for the internationalisation of Cities

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Acronyms

ABONG / Brazilian Association of Non-Governmental Organisations

ACB / Association Capacity Building Programme

AHCIET / Hispanic-American Association of Research Centres and Telecommunication Companies

AMUNIC / Nicaragua Association of Municipalities

ANCI / National Association of Italian Municipalities

APCI / Peruvian International Cooperation Agency

APEC / Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

ARRICOD / National Association of Local Governments International Relations and Decentralised Cooperation Authorities and Professional Staff (Francia)

ASC / Hemispheric Social Alliance

ATO / Arab Town Organisation

C2C / City-to-City Cooperation

CAN / Andean Community of Nations

CEMR / Council of European Municipalities and Regions

CIDEU / Ibero-American Centre for Urban Strategic Development

CIFAL / International Training Centre for Local Authorities and Stakeholders

CLAD / Latin American Centre for Development Administration

CNCD / National Commission for Decentralised Cooperation (France)

CNFPT / National Territorial Public Duties Centre (France)

CODENOBA / Consortium for the Development of the Northeastern Region of the Province of Buenos Aires

CUF United Cities of France

DFID / Department for International Development (United Kingdom)

EC / European Commission

ECLAC / Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

ECOSOC / United Nations Economic and Social Council

EDA / Environmental and Development Agency (United Kingdom)

EMCODEL / Partnerships for Local Development

EU / European Union

FAO / United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation

FAL / Forum of Local Authorities for Social Integration

FEMICA / Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus

FEMP / Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces

FITS / International Forum on Fair Tourism and Fair Trade

FLACMA / Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations

FTAA / Free Trade Area of the Americas

FUNDEMUCA / Foundation for Local Development and Municipal and Institutional Reinforcement in Central America and the Caribbean

GEII / Global Economic Internationalisation Index

GOLD / Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralisation

GTZ / German Technical Cooperation Agency

HIC / Habitat International Coalition

ICLEI / International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives

IDA / International Downtown Association

IFAM / Institute of Federal Municipal Affairs (Argentina)

IHEAL / Institute of Higher Studies on Latin America (France)

INIFOM / Nicaraguan Institute of Municipal Promotion

IULA / International Union of Local Authorities

LGIB / Local Government International Bureau (United Kingdom)

LIFE / Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment

LOCAL / Observatory on Changes in Latin America (France)

MAE / Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MDG / Millenium Development Goals

MFTF / Municipal Finance Task Force

NALC / National Association of Local Councils

NGO / Non-Governmental Organisation

OAS / Organisation of American States

OCB / Base Community Organisations

OCD / European Union-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation

OICS / Inter-Regional Observatory on Development Cooperation for Development (Italia)

OLAGI / Latin American Organisation of Intermediate Governments

OSC / Civil Society Organisation

RAC / Andean Network of Cities

RIAD / High-Level Inter-American Network on Decentralisation, Local Government and Citizen Participation

SOLACE / Society of Local Authorities, Chief Executives and Senior Managers (United Kingdom)

SWOT / SWOT Matrix ("Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats")

TLCAN / North American Free Trade Agreement

TWN / Third World Network

UCLG / United Cities and Local Governments

UIM / Iberoamerican Union of Municipal Professionals

ULPGC / University of Las Plamas de Gran Canaria (Spain)

UN / United Nations

UNACLA / United Nations Advisory Committee on Local Authorities

UNDP / United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO / United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture

UNEP / United Nations Environment Programme

UNGL / National Union of Local Governments (Costa Rica)

UNHCR / United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UN-HABITAT / United Nations Human Settlement Commission

UNIFEM / United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNITAR / United Nations Institute for Training and Research

UNPAHO / United Nations Pan American Health Organi–sation

UNPAN / United Nations online Network in Public Administration and Finance

UOC / Open University of Catalonia

VNG / Association of Netherlands Municipalities

WACAP / World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty

WACLAC / World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination

WB / World Bank

WFUC / World Federation of United Cities

WHO / World Health Organisation

Institutional Presentation

Local Governments' International Responsibility

W WSF / World Social Forum

E AT THE OBSERVATORY are pleased to present the first volume of the Practical Manual for the internationalisation of City. This is one of our key publications as it has been designed as a tool for the direct beneficiaries of the project, particularly the elected authorities and technical staff of the sub-national governments in Latin America and the European Union who are responsible for international cooperation, international relations and related areas. However, it can also prove useful for central governments, international institutions and individuals interested in the phenomenon of decentralised cooperation. Thus, this Manual has a two-fold purpose: on the one hand, it provides advice and recommendations to help local governments "go global", and on the other hand, it aims at raising awareness amongst the different readers about the political timeliness and practical feasibility of heading towards new international relations and cooperation horizons.

The analysis of these issues raises many questions on the nature of international relations: Can decentralised coopera-tion help transform international relations? Is a local government's foreign action an option or a requirement? Is it a way of exercising local competence or a political stance on world problems? When a local authority "goes global", is it just to satisfy local needs?

Whilst the first volume of this Manual will certainly not answer all these questions, it will provide helpful clues to sub-national governments about their reality and chances in the international arena. Today it is absolutely evident that the globalisation of the city should not be fortuitous or circumstantial, nor should it lack a broader politically-oriented framework. Local authorities should necessarily build on, and aim at, a global political goal, e.g. the construc-tion of a fairer, more supportive and inclusion-oriented world society.

With that goal in mind, we insist on stressing the idea that cooperation should go beyond welfarism and humanitarian aid. While these are undoubtedly necessary and even essential to mitigate the consequences of an inadequate model of development, they fail to address its actual causes. Today it is absolutely clear that the reasons for inequality

within the countries and between the different regions of the world stem from structural and political causes.

Therefore, if local governments wish to make their way into the world, they should address the causes of these problems and approach solidarity differently, thus contributing to the development of all the parties involved. This new form of solidarity cannot be based on good intentions or circumstantial sensitivity to hurtful or outrageous images. Rather than just reacting against episodes of misery and hunger or collect food and medicine, public opinion should analyse the causes of such poverty and, more importantly, actively seek to find the answers.

Building a new development model that may help eliminate injustice and inequalities is neither an ideological nor a utopian objective. It is a common challenge faced by every citizen and institution, and local governments face a mission of the utmost importance in this respect. Indeed, they have a major role to play, especially as key actors of a new kind of international cooperation. This new cooperation is not to be considered as a modality of any national official cooperation, nor is it to be subordinated to the foreign policy of a national government.

We at the Observatory understand that decentralised cooperation can significantly contribute to the construction of alternatives for a fairer society. By means of instruments such as the Manual you have in your hands, we hope to advance in that direction.

■■■ **Agustí Fernández de Losada i Passols**
General Coordinator of the Observatory

Foreword

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HIS MANUAL is intended to provide local governments in Latin America and Europe with a simple and user-friendly practical guidebook to help them build a long-term strategy for professional international relations and decentralised cooperation.

This is not an analytical or descriptive study on the phenomenon of decentralised cooperation. In fact, this approach has been thoroughly addressed in other documents published by the European Union-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation (OCD) and other institutions. Rather, it is a working paper designed as a useful tool to be applied directly in local practice. Its contents are inspired on the contents of the distance training course "Specialist in Europe-Latin America Decentralised Co-operation" offered jointly by the OCD and the Open University of Catalonia (UOC).[1]

The advice and recommendations provided in this Manual are intended for elected authorities or government officials who wish to create or reinforce an international strategy for a local government. The proposed approach goes beyond the traditional international cooperation distinction between "donors" and "beneficiaries" and suggests a more balanced vision of mutual interest for the long term.

Furthermore, it should be stressed that the scope of this Manual is not limited to providing local governments with guidelines to design a decentralised cooperation or development cooperation policy. The Manual assumes that whilst decentralised cooperation (direct partnerships between local governments from different countries) and aid for development (aimed at mitigating the unfavourable conditions of the poor) are two important aspects of a city's international relations, these are not the only ones.

Thus, while this Manual undoubtedly focuses on decentralised cooperation, it encompasses a wider scope of initiatives that include foreign policy, international recognition and promotion, visibility abroad, attraction of investments, trade and tourism, advocacy, lobbying, incidence in international politics, etc.

This manual does not intend to provide universal recipes or "prefabricated" models. Its recommendations are drawn on the basis of a wide array of practices and experiences in the internationalisation of cities in Europe and Latin America.

This is the first of two volumes. It provides with an introduction to the topic, as well as advice and guidelines for local government decision-makers who wish to "go global". The aims of this first volume are as follows:

1. Present the new challenges faced by local governments and the interest for them to "go global", particularly in Europe and Latin America;

2. Provide them with the basic elements to make their

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1 For more information on the course, go to: <http://www.observ-ocd.org/act_formacio.php>

way into the international arena by presenting the existing types of partnership between local authorities in both regions, as well as the programmes and actions underway;

3. Help them design an strategy for international promotion and global positioning, based on the specific, capacities and expertise found at local level;

4. Provide them with practical tools for accessing international cooperation and making the most of it.

In order to meet these objectives, the Manual suggests possible directions and guidelines to help cities address the following questions according to their local context:

Why should a local government pursue international relations? How can it planify and build an effective and long-lasting international strategy? Who takes part in the globalisation of local governments? How can a city acquire international visibility and renown? How to establish decentralised cooperation partnerships? Where to obtain support, information and contacts? On what issues is it possible to establish decentralised cooperation relations? What are the main qualities of a successful international practice?

This first volume will help local governments to initiate or reinforce their globalisation strategy in the context of an adequate framework. The second volume, to be published later, will address in more detail the various ways to implement international actions and how to make the most of decentralised cooperation. To that end, it will go further into the possible legal instruments, the different forms of institutional organisations and procedures, the project cycle management and logical framework of decentralised cooperation and the available sources of funding, among other issues.

At the OCD we are confident that both volumes of this
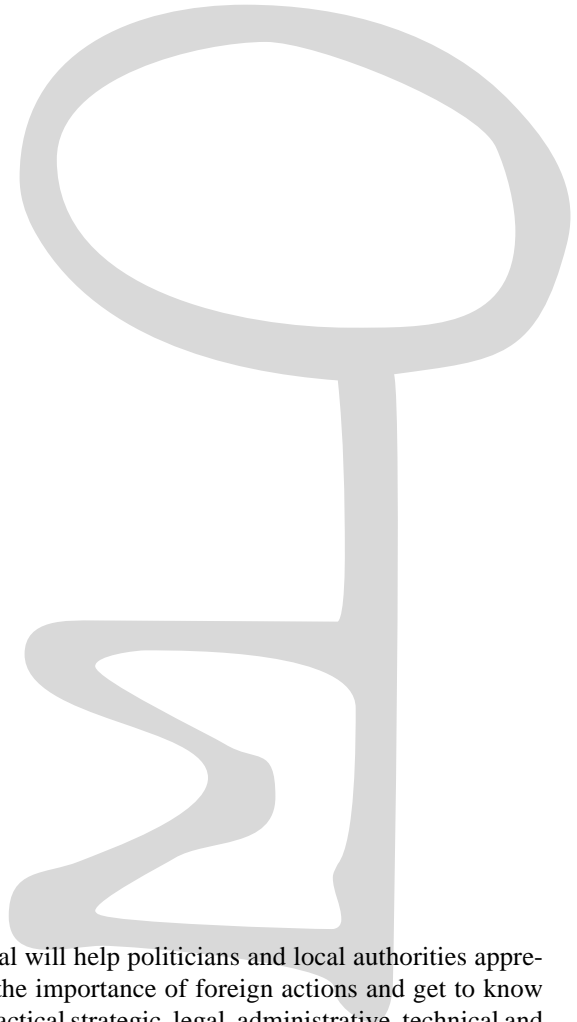
Manual will help politicians and local authorities appreciate the importance of foreign actions and get to know the practical strategic, legal, administrative, technical and financial instruments required to provide the city with a professional, long-term international policy.

This Manual should not be read as if it were completely finished or fixed. Rather it should be considered as a living document or working notebook. It is intended to help local authorities open a window to the world beyond their territory and national borders, thereby reinforcing their capacity to respond to citizens' expectations in a more professional and sustainable way.

1. Why should local government implement international action?

i N THE WORLD of today, we all know that the influence of a city goes far beyond the political and administrative boundaries of its geographic or fiscal territory.

That local governments establish relations with other countries is not new. After all, the first states were actually city-states, and town-twinning has existed since the first half of last century.

It is important to remark that the foreign action of a local government has not always been necessarily determined by the international context. The existence of a foreign action in the city depends upon decisions adopted at local level. This means that, unlike states, local governments can deliberately and discretionally decide whether or not to establish international relations.

What is new today is the unprecedented expansion of international relations at the local level and the multiple cooperation modes and mechanisms created. Over the past few years, terms such as "world cities" or "global cities" have gone beyond merely conceptual denominations to become an explicit political objective of those local leaders who wish to place their city "on the world map".[2]

1.1. The context is favourable

What is currently known as "paradiplomacy" is a very old phenomenon that has expanded enormously over the past years. An increasing number of cities are placing great importance on foreign action, even to the point of making it a top priority and including it in their government programmes.

However, experience demonstrates that, in order to globalise the city, the local government practice has been subject, to a great extent, to trial and error and to the whim of the political circumstances of the time.

2 SANCHEZ CANO, Javier. *Contexto general: la acción internacional de las autoridades locales* (General Context: Local Authorities' International Action). Contents of Module 1 of the online training Course "Specialist in Europe-Latin America Decentralised Cooperation" offered by the EU-LA Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation jointly with the Open University of Catalonia, 2006.

Table 1 / Conceptual accuracy: What do we mean by "local governments"?

The term "local governments" is a widely used generic expression comprising a broad range of institutions whose denominations vary from country to country. For the purpose of this Manual, "local governments" are:

1. Municipalities and **cities**, regardless of their size, whether **urban or rural**, with their distinct socioeconomic realities and varying levels of autonomy, though always with a democratic representative base;
2. Urban areas or **metropolitan areas** comprising a central municipality and the surrounding human settlements;
3. Departments or **provinces**, territorial levels above municipalities ranging from merely administrative divisions to autonomous local governments;
4. Regions or **federated states**, which represent the level immediately below that of the National State.[3]

While it is true that the generic term "local government" has been adopted in practice, it is evident that the local governments within a single country and in different countries **do not represent a homogeneous group of entities** as they have different sizes, characteristics and interests. However, it is clear today that, as public entities within the political, legal and administrative framework of a nation State, **the problems and challenges faced by local governments are very similar, even though their local contexts may vary significantly.**

The advice and recommendations in this Manual are intended for all local governments as per the description above. However, on the pages of this Manual the different generic meanings will be used indistinctly when giving examples or tackling specific cases. The idea is to familiarise the reader with the various terms used in European and Latin American day-to-day practice.

Below is the array of words used for the different types of institutions commonly referred to as "local governments:

- Commonly used generic terms

Nouns

Cities
Governments
Authorities
Administrations
Powers
Councils
Communities
Entities
Institutions

Adjectives

Local
Regional
Metropolitan
Non-central
Sub-national
Sub-state
Territorial
Autonomous

Types of specific institutions and legal-administrative denomination

City Councils, town councils or municipalities, communes, city halls, town halls, prefectures, municipal chambers, departments, provinces, regions, federated states, autonomous communities, commonwealths, districts, urban communities, councils, autonomous governments, general councils, regional councils, metropolitan governments, built-up urban areas, etc.

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3 ROMERO, María del Huerto. *Introducción a la cooperación descentralizada* (Introduction to decentralised cooperation). Module 2 of the online Training Course "Specialist in Europe-Latin America Decentralised Co-operation", offered by the EU-LA Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation jointly with the Open University of Catalonia, 2006.

In spite of the many constraints and hindrances, local governments have managed to make their way into the international arena and play an increasingly important role by forging institutional bonds and working on joint projects with partners beyond their national borders.

Moreover, despite the different national regulatory frameworks and practices, it is clear today that the vast majority of cities in Europe and Latin America are not only capable of establishing international relations but also wish to do so.

Rather than a mere anecdote,
the internationalization of local government
is becoming a demand and a need.

Up to now, the largest and most prosperous cities, or those with greater economic diversification have proved to play a more active role as far as international relations are concerned. It is therefore not surprising at all that major stakeholders include capital cities and governments of regions and provinces.

However, amongst medium-sized cities and small municipalities –including rural ones– international relations are becoming an invaluable instrument for achieving recognition and playing an increasingly important political and economic role in the national and world scenario.

Considering the current favourable context and "fertile soil", this opportunity should not be missed.[4]

Strengthening of global citizenship

Nowadays, most citizen groups do not conceive themselves anymore as isolated entities. There are an increasing number of citizen groups scattered around the world who work jointly for common causes. This new mode of citizenship is going global, particularly through the creation of networks.

Examples of this new mode are the international movements for peace and anti-war activism, the so-called "globalcritics" who oppose the prevailing neoliberal economic model, the new citizens' networks for environmental protection, human rights, freedom of expression, minority rights, etc.

New information and communication technologies have played a major role in the development of such international citizens' activities characterised by active participation and solidarity.

As a result, even though this is not a completely new reality, over the past few years citizen groups have reinforced their capacity to play a part in international affairs, especially through non-governmental organisation (NGOs). Organised citizens have managed to actively participate in the international political agenda, thereby influencing State policies.

No doubt the clearest example of such activism is the **World Social Forum (WSF)**,[5] founded in Porto Alegre, Brazil as a democratic platform for debating ideas, bringing forth proposals, exchanging experiences and coordinating social movements, networks, NGOs and other civil society organisations opposing the neoliberal economic model. After the first world conference held in 2001, the WSF consolidated itself as ongoing global process of seeking and building alternatives. Such definition is included in the Charter of Principles, the main WSF document.

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4 Various studies have addressed the general context of local government globalisation. In particular, please refer to Chapter 1 of BODEMER, Klaus. *La cooperación descentralizada Unión Europea-América Latina frente a los desafíos del siglo XXI* (European Union-Latin America Decentralised Cooperation facing the challenges of the 21st Centruy), Document of the 1st Annual Conference of the EU-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation. Montevideo, March 2006.
5 <www.forumsocialmundial.org.br>

Another example of citizen groups collaborating from different corners of the globe is the **Third World Network (TWN)**[6], an international civil organisation with members in Asia, Africa and the American continent. As a global network for civil organisations, TWN works in practically every area of the international agenda by organising debates and carrying out demonstrations before governments and international bodies.

In Latin America, the **Continental Social Alliance (ASC)**[7] stands out and is worth a mention. It is a forum for social organisations and movements created for the purpose of exchanging information, to define strategies and promote joint actions aimed at finding a democratic alternative development model that may benefit the poorer sector of the population. The ASC is a space open to organisations and movements interested in changing hemispheric integration policies and fostering social justice throughout the continent.

The growing urbanisation of human settlements

The growing urbanisation of human settlements and the ensuing deterioration of the standard of living in the cities has placed local governments at the centre of world concerns.

This is by no means a coincidence. In fact, the urbanisation of poverty and social exclusion will be amongst the main characteristics of the 21st Century: according to estimates, 72% of the population in Africa, 37% of the population in Asia and 26% of the population in Latin America are deprived of adequate dwellings, waterworks and sewerage services.[8] In 2006 more than 1,000 million people will live in urban ghettos or slums. Should this trend continue, only 25 years from now this figure is likely to double.
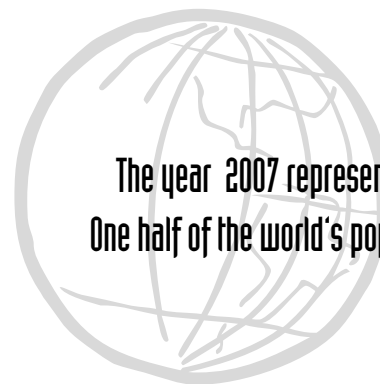
The year 2007 represents a milestone in history: One half of the world's population will live in cities.

Besides, until not so long ago, city dwellers were thought to enjoy a higher standard of living than their rural counterparts given the fact that in the cities it is easier to access education and health care services and that, in general, those families residing in urban areas are more affluent. However, the rapid urbanisation of the past few years has caused a dramatic change in this respect.

Today no-one denies the fact that the city is the territory where socioeconomic transformations hits the hardest, bringing about the mushrooming of marginal areas.

The above has brought great pressure to bear on local governments, which play a key role in the supply of public services. As a result, the city is becoming a laboratory for discovering new modes of political action which go well beyond national borders.

Table 2 shows a not-very-promising outlook for the hyper-urbanisation of the planet.

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6 <www.twnside.org.sg>
7 <www.asc-hsa.org>
8 *Local governments and international development cooperation: a European survey on strategies and policies.* UN-Habitat best practices centre for city-to-city cooperation. May 2006.

Table 2 / Hyper-urbanisation of the planet: Where are we heading for?

At present one third of the population in the cities –nearly 1,000 million people– live in ghettos or slums.

In 2005 the urban population of the world was 3,170 million out of a total of 6,450 million inhabitants. Current trends suggest that the number of city dwellers will continue to grow, and that by 2030 it will amount to approximately 5,000 million out of 8,100 million, that is to say, 62 per cent of the total population of the globe.

Between 2005 and 2030 the world's urban population is expected to increase at an annual average rate of 1,78%, nearly twice as much as the overall global population annual growth rate. From 2015 on, as more and more people move to the cities, the population in the rural settlements around the world will begin to shrink, decreasing at an annual average rate of -0.32%

until 2030. This means that more than 155 million people will leave the countryside over a 15-year period.

In Europe, North America and Latin America, urban population increased sharply from the mid-20th Century up to now, when this phenomenon has expanded to the developing regions in Asia and Africa. Immigration, recharacterisation and natural population growth are rapidly transforming the urban patterns of these regions.

In the future the small (less than 500,000 inhabitants) and medium-sized cities (1 to 5 million inhabitants), rather than the mega-cities (ten million inhabitants or more), will continue to absorb most of the urban population in the world.

Source: UN-Habitat, 2006

Decentralisation

The level and speed of the decentralisation policies implemented in a large number of countries have had a significant impact on the development of local governments' international relations. While the degree, pace and results of the decentralisation process vary significantly from country to country, it is true today that there is a generalised tendency to assign local territories an increasingly important role in the implementation of any kind of development policies.

Within this context a new local government culture is coming to life. Rather than mere administrators of a territory, mayors and local politicians are beginning to be considered the actual leaders of the communities and their converging social forces.

Besides, decentralisation has paved the way to the application of the so-called "subsidiarity" principle whereby decisions with regard to public policies should be taken as

near as possible to the place where such policies are to be implemented.

This has entailed a remarkable increase in both the competence and authority of local governments, who have been vested with new, unprecedented duties and responsibilities. The trouble is, in most cases, the decentralisation policy has been "centrally" adopted, that is, it is the State that has transformed itself –basically through legislative reforms– in order to get rid of some of its duties.

Faced with these new responsibilities, local governments have been forced to redouble their efforts to obtain the resources and capacities needed.

They are basically battling on two fronts. On the one hand, they have had to deepen their search for financial resources. To that end, they have asked the central government to transfer more funds or otherwise let them enhance their local capacity by levying taxes or accessing national or foreign financial markets. Yet on the other hand, the new challenges have forced local governments to review their own government and administration processes. The pressing need to reinforce all their capacities has led local governments to seek assistance and find partners both within their country and beyond their national borders.

Regional integration

Local governments have had to deal with the threats and opportunities associated with the regional integration processes launched by the national States while confronting internal challenges.

The economic blocks resulting from such integration processes do not pursue purely commercial goals. In fact, their scope of influence reaches every aspect of local life (taxes, duties, public purchases, the labour market, etc.).

Over the past few decades regional integration efforts have increased dramatically. Outstanding examples are the European Union (EU), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the MERCOSUR (Common Market of the South), the Andean Community of Nations (ACN), the U.S. - Central America Free Trade Agreement and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (ALCA) initiatives, in addition to an increasing number of bilateral agreements.[9]

These supranational integration processes have influenced local life, prompting sub-national governments to act on wider decision-making platforms. The administrative boundaries of local bodies are no longer clearly defined, and public policies normally go beyond their territorial borders.

The above circumstances have led local governments to participate more actively in such inclusion-oriented schemes, not only to defend their views before the State, but also to develop their own new modes of direct cooperation.

Thus, at sub-national level innovative methods are being created for integrating neighbouring or adjoining towns in a more horizontal or "region-to-region" manner.

In Europe, for instance, this mode of collaboration is channelled through the so-called "cross-border cooperation", a political and even programmatic framework supported by the EU. At the same time, in Latin America it is being increasingly adopted in the MERCOSUR area. One such example is the case of the Valparaiso Region (Chile) and the adjoining Province of Mendoza (Argentina), which share feelings of community and belonging, and joinly seek solutions to similar problems.

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9 Regarding this issue, you can refer to: JAKOBSEN, Kjeld. *From the integration we have to the integration we want: the role of local governments and decentralised cooperation*. Document prepared for the 1st Annual Conference of the EU - LA Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation. Montevideo, March 2006.

1.2. Local government in the world: from observer to leading actor

As discussed above, the local governments' internationalisation process is parallel to an increasingly globalised civil society, within the context of growing poverty urbanisation. This is but a natural reaction to the challenges faced by local governments as a result of decentralisation and regional integration policies.

Yet it is not just a matter of context; we are also witnessing the transformation of international cooperation paradigms, as well as the start of a radical change in the status and role of local governments around the globe.

New visions about development cooperation

Over the past few years it has been necessary to redefine development and international cooperation paradigms. The traditional cooperation pattern that prevailed during the second half of the 20th Century, characterised by a paternalistic approach to development and preconceived or "prefabricated" solutions to address the problems of the poorer nations, has been challenged.

As a development aid policy, it basically entails a "one-way" transfer of resources as non-reimbursable subsidies or donations with no reciprocity of any kind.

Because the traditional cooperation system is largely structured around the central States, civil society and the private sector play a marginal role, sometimes as beneficiaries and only occasionally as direct stakeholders. In this practice, the "donor" States sponsor development by placing the local projects and initiatives "under their flag".

Since the late 80s, however, the virtues of such model have started to be questioned. The latest trend is to place less emphasis on the transfer of funds and actually focus on such instruments as technical assistance, transfer of technology, exchange of experiences, training of human resources (both technical staff and elected political authorities) and institutional development in a broader sense.

The diagramme in table 3 illustrates how the nature of cooperation has evolved.

Table 3 / How the nature of cooperation has evolved?

Strategic cooperation

- Exchange of experiences
- Technical assistance &
  Technology transfer

- Development "aid"
- "North-South" assistencialism
- Rich-poor paternalism

TENDENCE

Stakeholders

Local Government
Private sector
Civil society

Central State
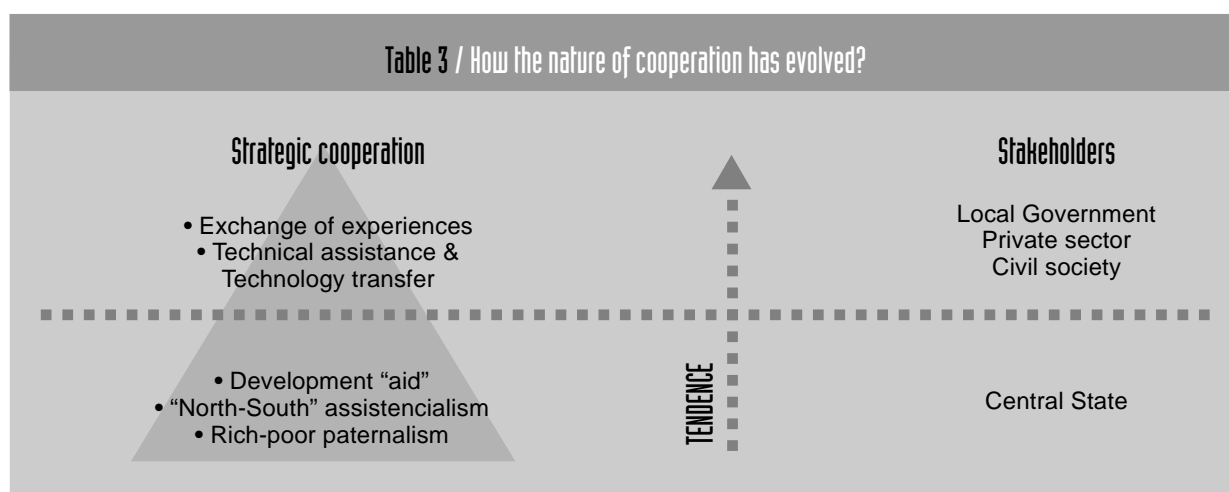
The distinctive feature of the new practices is multi-directionality and the direct involvement of the beneficiaries, who turn into partners and active agents instead of mere "gives" of the "donors' aid".

International municipalism

The States' new cooperation mechanisms have assigned a more important role to local governments, who in turn have worked hard themselves and made considerable collective efforts to earn their rightful place on the global stage. The reason for this is that, over the past decades, the scope of international level negotiations between States has widened so as to include sectors that were traditionally considered domestic policy affairs.

With the more comprehensive economic liberalisation policies, the international agenda now covers such areas as agriculture, education, health, power generation and supply policies, purchases by the public sector (including town councils and local governments), tax-related affairs and/or water supply.[10] As a result, many of the decisions relating to local government responsibilities are now being negotiated at international fora where they have only limited negotiating margin and hardly any influence at all.[11]

This has prompted local authorities, either individually or through networks or associations, to constantly pursue wider political negotiation platforms in multilateral instances. In their endeavour to have a say in those regulations and programmes that have an impact on their territory, cities link up with increasing effectiveness creating international networks. Thus, it is not surprising to learn that the there have been quite a few hitches in the long-standing relations between local governments and the United Nations (UN) system. In sub-section 2.2.1 below the scope of local authorities' participation within the UN system will be addressed in more detail.

One of the latest achievements is the recognition of the role of local governments in reaching the Millenium Development Goals (MDG) (see Table 4).[12]

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10 For example, the final declaration of the 4th World Water Forum (Mexico, F.D., March 2006) recognises the importance of local governments in the management of water resources. Moreover, in the *"Local Government Declaration on Waters"*, which was formally added to the final States' Declaration, the mayors acknowledge that access to water constitutes a fundamental human right. **Source:** <www.worldwaterforum4.org.mx>

11 Ms. Martha Suplicy, Mayor of Sao Paulo, Brazil illustrates this issue very well. In her speech during the IULA-WFUC Unity Congress (Rio de Janeiro, May 2001) she stated that *"it is increasingly necessary for local authorities to take active part in commercial and financial liberalisation debates, as well as in the organisation of regional blocks [...]. This is particularly true for the less developed nations, which have been most severely affected by the "evil" trends of the globalisation process whereby public resources become increasingly scarce while poverty spreads dramatically"*.

12 For information on how to "localise" the Millenium Development Goals, refer to the documents: *UNDP Capacity 2015. Toolkit for Localising The Millennium Development Goals,* 2006. *UK LOCAL GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. Showing Global Poverty the Red Card. How local authorities are scoring international development goals. United Kingdom,* 2006. *UN-HABITAT Best Practices Centre for City-to-City Cooperation. Identification and exchange of strategies for improving the effectiveness of city-to-city cooperation projects in support of the Millenium Development Goals. Report of the Spring Workshop.* Seville, Spain, March 2006.

Table 4 / Millenium Development Goals [MDG]

Goal 1: Erradicate extreme poverty and hunger
• Reduce by half, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day and who suffer from hunger.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
• Ensure that, by 2015, all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
• Eliminate gender disparity in basic education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
• Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate amongst children under 5 between 1990 and 2015.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health
• Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio, between 1990 and 2015.

Goal 6: Combat HIV-AIDS, malaria and other diseases
• Halt and begin to reverse HIV-AIDS, as well as the incidence of malaria and other major diseases, by 2015.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
• Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources.
• Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
• Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020.

Goal 8: Promote a global partnership for development
• Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory, includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction-nationally and internationally.
• Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction.
• Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States.
• Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term.
• In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth.
• In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.
• In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies- especially information and communications technologies.

In addition to, and, no doubt, as a result of, the advances in the political arena, over the past few years international bodies have been more willing to work directly with local governments rather than with the national governments alone.

This trend has increased since 2004, when the world organisation "United Cities and Local Governments" (UCLG) was founded. The UCLG brings together practically all the city council associations in the world and a significant number of cities and local governments in more than 100 nations (see box in section 6.4).

The main objectives of the UCLG include promoting decentralised cooperation, international cooperation, town-twinning and associations between local governments and their town councils' associations.

"In a continuously evolving world scenario, States and multilateral bodies no longer monopolise international relations. The exchange and cooperation between local governments has intensified to the point that, today, these represent the 'diplomacy of the cities".[13]

Foreign policy from the local government?

Foreign policy has traditionally been the exclusive remit of the State. However, as international municipalism develops and local governments play an increasingly important part in multilateral negotiations, a change in this respect could be on the cards.

Some people talk about "new international relations" as a result of the splitting of State foreign policy, which, in theory, was rather consistently centralised in the Foreign Affairs Ministries or Offices.

At present, with new actors stepping on stage, it seems the former unit splits while local governments, rather than forging circumstantial relationships abroad, tend to have their own foreign policy and further play a role in the national foreign policy.

One such example is the case of the local governments in Italy that cooperate with municipalities in the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, while the central Italian government refuses to officially recognise this republic, maintaining its traditional diplomatic relations with Morocco. This example clearly illustrates how foreign policy in local government can also help the State accommodate to politically complex or sensitive diplomatic situations.

There are quite a few examples of cities that have raised their voice on international issues against the official opinion of their national governments, daring to take foreign policy actions that go beyond strictly local interests, with obvious diplomatic consequences.

Table 5 shows some examples of local authorities who have taken a stance on the matter.

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13 Taken from the website of the City Council of Lyon (France): <http://www.lyon.fr>

Table 5 / Foreign policy in local governments: Some examples

• Since 2001 a total of 165 city councils in the US have adopted resolutions opposing the **war in Iraq**.[14]

• More than 180 local governments, including the New York City Council, have adopted resolutions opposing the application of the **"Patriot Act"**, a law whereby the federal executive is vested in exceptional powers to combat terrorism.

• The San Francisco and Los Angeles city councils adopted the United Nations *Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women*, which has not been approved by the National US Government.

• Salt Lake City and Seattle city councils adhered to the **Kyoto Protocol** on global warming, an initiative that has been strongly opposed by the US central government.

• The Catalan municipalities of Cambrils, Castelldefels, La Fatarella, Molins de Reig, Mollet del Vallès, Reus, Ripollet, Sant Bartomeu del Grau, Santo Boi de Llobregat, Santa Coloma de Gramenet and Sant Pere de Ribes brought forward, at different points in time, official proposals in support of the Sahraui populations affected by the conflict in **Western Sahara**.

• Other Catalan municipalities have taken an official stance for the **Palestinian** population, against the **blockade of Cuba**, in favour of peace in **Afghanistan** and for **Tibetan autonomy**.

Hence, more than ever before, the dividing line between the foreign affairs competence of the State and local governments is hard to define. Indeed, there are "grey areas" of internation law where practice comes from opportunity rather than from pre-existing rules and regulations or an *ad hoc* institutional framework.

The fact is that, all too often, this kind of international activism has been viewed with suspicion, if not outright disapproval, by central governments. To some, such "foreign policy atomisation" should even be banned, curbed or controlled.[15] This undoubtedly hawkish approach to international affairs has little to do with recent experience.

14 The full list can be found in <www.ips-dc.org/citiesforpeace/ >
15 For a skeptical view of local governments' international relations, refer to: BEAUREGARD, R.A., Pierre Jon. *Disputing the global: a sceptical view of locality-based international initiatives. Policy and Politics,* Volume 28, No. 4, pages 465-78. October 2000.

Yet the schemes of the past are currently undergoing a transformation, and some countries are beginning to implement formal mechanisms for empowering sub-national goverments within the framework of the schemes that were traditionally the State's remit.

The German government, for instance, has authorised regional governments "by delegation" to act on its behalf before the Council of the European Union, whenever an issue under consideration affects the Länder.

Likewise, the local governments in France have a permanent seat at the "High Council for International Cooperation". Moreover, since 1992 they have worked closely with the central government in the National Commission for Decentralised Cooperation, chaired by the Prime Minister.[16]

In Europe local governments are allowed to have increasing participation in the so-called "Joint Committees", in which the highest authorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of one country meet their peers abroad, in order to prepare a bilateral agenda and lay the foundations of future cooperation agreements.

Also in Brussels there are currently more than 200 "embassies" of regional governments from various countries in Europe, which have representation powers and exert pressure on the European Commission by forming networks.

This phenomenon is beginning to take place in Latin America where States are gradually opening international cooperation paths for local governments. In some countries such as Nicaragua, Bolivia or Peru, municipalilities have historically partnered with the State for foreign cooperation activities. In others, such as Mexico, the State is beginning to recognise the importance and potential of this kind of collaboration to the point that it is even fostering it through national programmes.

. . . .

16 <www.diplomatie.gouv.fr>

International activities of local authorities have their own specific nature as compared with the international relations of States. Both spheres complement, rather than oppose each other. Comparisons should therefore be avoided as they all too often prove misleading. The idea that local international affairs undermine the State's policies is erroneous.

Today it is evident that the State can no longer view local governments as enemies or competitors who are trying to deprive it of international protagonism. The coordination and synergy between the different internationally active stakeholders in a country may help generate various action fronts and provide national governments with a broader range of possible ways to react to international issues.

Table 6 / Simultaneous actions: The "Cities of the Millenuim" Campaign[17]

1. City Hall of **Bogotá**, Colombia
2. City Hall of **Roma**, Italia
3. **Castellar del Vallés**, España
4. **Buenos Aires**, Argentina

17 Photos kindly provided by UCLG.

2. How to devise an effective, long-term strategy?

a LOCAL government's actions beyond national borders should not be viewed as the result of a mere juxtaposition of its foreign relations. In order to achieve more consistent, effective, permanent globalisation, a local government must necessarily act within a strategic framework. In other words, reflection should preceed action.

One of the most generally accepted ways of establishing international relations is by working on a project for which financial and/or technical assistance is obtained in response to an international body's call or a donor's offer. In such cases, the project is prepared on the basis of the co-operating institution's expectations and specification rather than the local government's own priorities.

A large share of international cooperation projects fall within this category, where the initiative is actually determined by the cooperation and funding offer. Such is the case of international cooperation programmes with pre-established rules and regulations, where the beneficiary merely responds to public bids and calls.

That is also the case whenever local governments respond to invitations to take part in international events. They usually send delegates to seminars, conferences, workshops and other activities that are in no way connected with their local priorities. While such participation is enriching and therefore desirable, it is not always easy to carry on with isolated initiatives that add to the heavy burden of a town council's day-to-day work. Besides, only occasionally is it possible to know whether such erratic and isolated international bonds have any impact at all on the institution as a whole.

Practically every local government has a strategy, even if merely informal, for implementing its programme. However, only a few of them have devised strategic plans in the field of international affairs.

An old saying goes: "if you don't know where you are going, just about any road will lead you there". That is why it is so important to emphasise the need to clarify the institutions' international horizons by means of a strategic planning process. If a local government has only reactive, intermittent international relations, if it does not have a clear vision of what it aims to achieve in the future, its efforts will most certainly fail to yield the best results, resources will be wasted, opportunities will be missed and effectiveness, impact and credibility will be lost.

2 Every local government should plan its international strategy by means of a structured process. The aim is to determine its position in the world and subsequently design a clear vision of its goals and how to achieve them.

Therefore, even though it may often take more effort and time, the local government must first reflect, and only then devise a medium and long-term international strategy.

Local authorities are faced with the challenge to create and implement a globalisation strategy bearing in mind not only their own territory and population, but also the circumstances abroad. The idea is therefore to leave behind the "project culture" and the traditional "red-tape-type" approaches largely centred around individual projects and isolated actions, in pursuit of a more comprehensive approach that entails working on a long-term strategy.[18] Table 7 lists the general guidelines to be developed in this Manual to assist local authorities in this important task.

Table 7 / General guidelines for international strategic planning
A. To conceive an international strategy it is necessary to… **1.** Analyse the external context, **2.** Analyse the internal situation, **3**. Identify local priorities and **4.** Define the vision for the future;
B. To implement the international strategy it is necessary to… **5.** Adapt the institution and adjust its procedures, **6.** Monitor the legality of the procedures, **7.** Allocate resources;
C. To professionalise the strategy it is necessary to… **8.** Formalise it and ensure its continuity, **9.** Inform and raise awareness among the population, **10.** Evaluate and improve the strategy.

. . . .

18 This chapter has been largely inspired by SANZ CORELLA, Beatriz. *"De la idea a la acción: concepción, gestión y evaluación de iniciativas de cooperación descentralizada"* ("From idea to action: conception, management and evaluation of decentralised cooperation initiatives"), Module 4 of the on-line Training Course *"Specialist in Europe-Latin America Decentralised Cooperation"*, offered by the EU-LA Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation jointly with the Open University of Catalonia, 2006.

2.1. Drawing up the strategy

There are no agreed typologies for classifying the international relations of local governments; nor are there any set rules for initiating, or carrying through, the transnational strategies of cities. Far from that, these will vary according to the local context, motivations and specific goals of each government.

Practice has demonstrated that each local government has a broad margin of manoeuvre and creativity to innovate when it comes to forging international bonds. While we do not intend to give step-by-step directions, below are some general guidelines that may prove useful for planning an international strategy.

2.1.1.Assessing the external context

An internationalisation strategy cannot be based only on a local government's needs. The possibilites available must also be taken into consideration.

To find out its international potential, a local government must identify the threats, as well as the opportunities that are beyond its direct control. This assessment calls for a thorough analysis of the background and current situation of the city's international relations rather than just the government institutions.

The process entails identifying international links in every area of local life and drawing up an inventory of those key players with bonds beyond national borders (universities, companies, immigrants' communities, cultural, artistic and sports associations, chambers of commerce, etc.).

It is also important to consider other tiers, such as neighbouring city councils, provincial or regional governments and the central State, and to become familiar with foreign policy principles and priorities, as well as with the current status of diplomatic relations. To that end, information must be obtained on the existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes.

The analysis of the external context must further include an evaluation of the current political, economic and social situation in the country, the region and the global scene.

2.1.2.Analysing the internal situation

Once the external context has been analysed, it is essential to do some research into the internal situation of the local government and the territory, identifying their strengths and weaknesses.

In this case, it is convenient to ask oneself these questions: What motivates my government, as an institution, to establish international relations? What results does it expect to obtain? Is the institution prepared to take part in the international cooperation process? What are the resources available and what is the degree of involvement desired?

It is of the utmost importance to be familiar with the applicable legal framework and the margin of manoeuvre the city council is afforded in international affairs. It is also necessary to study the different government areas and departments, in order to find out which of these have established international links –either now or in the past–, and which have a greater potential and need for such links.

Administrative aspects and internal policy mechanisms are extremely important. It is necessary to be thoroughly familiar not only with the government's formal structure and procedures, but also with the actual day-to-day decision-making practices. The latter is particularly important since, in order to act efficiently, international strategy will call for executive support, which is not always channelled by means of formal administrative procedures.

Thus, the analysis of the internal situation should not be restricted to adhering to the rules and regulations, organigrammes and manuals of procedures. Far from that, it should give a broad and objective description of the actual decision-making process within the government, including an assessment of the actual technical qualifications of the staff, the fast, smooth-running or cumbersome administrative procedures, the work environment, etc.

Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of the territory will help set the scene for the local government's international integration. Its history, geographic location, production, social and cultural characteristics, natural features, etc. are all essential elements for determining international potential.

2.1.3. Identifying local priorities

As we all know, every local government should have a Local Development, or Strategic, Plan, in which the policies and priorities of the current administration are clearly defined. International relations should not be excluded from this approach. Indeed, careful attention should be placed on the activities related to this area, in accordance with the priorities established in the above Plan.

Hence, once both the internal and external contexts have been analysed, priorities should be identifies, so that the actions beyond national borders may help reach the goals set out in the government plan. Only this way, in the strategic agenda defined by the local authority do international relations drive change and leverage to the potential of the city in each sector.

Identifying priorities represents an extremely important step in every strategy, as it is the basis for setting the specific goals of the policy to be developed and subsequently planning appropriate activities. In the area of inter-national affairs it is essential to establish priorities. In fact, all too often local governments erratically devote to multiple initiatives, programmes, prospective partners and themes.

Carefully setting priorities will make it possible for the local government to advance steadily and consistently in the right direction instead of losing sight of its aims by randomly reacting to multiple isolated issues.

To identify priorities for transnational actions, a local authority may opt for innumerable possible criteria, such as thematic, historical, cultural, geographic, linguistic, etc.

At times, the international priority will be to cooperate with partners with whom similar characteristics are shared (port cities, metropolitan governments, farming territories, etc.) or otherwise with partners in those countries with which there are strong historical bonds (e.g. Portugal and Brazil, Italy and Argentina or Spain with Latin America).

The challenge is to set international priorities that are absolutely consistent with local priorities. That is why local governments often prefer to establish links with those partners with whom they share similar concerns.

The exchange of experiences is one of the main reasons for establishing cooperation links with similar partners in such areas as urban planning, public transport, environmental pollution, social policies, etc.

Table 8 displays the criteria used by the City Council of Milan, Italy to establish international priorities. These are divided into: thematic options, sister cities, geographic proximity, political options, presence of Italians abroad and immigrants' communities in Milan.

Milano | Comune di Milano | Relazioni Internazionali

Table 8 / An example of international priorities: Milan City Council (Italy)

Thematic priorities	Geographic priorities
Fight against poverty, particularly through projects in the following *themes and areas:* • Food safety • Health care assistance • Fight against HIV-AIDS • Economic development • SME support, • Eco-friendly production and trade • Occupational training and placement • Micro-loans • Social inclusion and promotion of vulnerable groups (minors, women, minoirities) • Urban recharacterisation	• *Town-Twinning and friendship agreements:* Sao Paulo (Brazil), Dakar (Senegal), Saint Petersburg (Russia), Guadalajara (Mexico) y Lima (Peru). • *European neighbourhood partners:* Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean region. • *Political options:* Sub-Saharan Africa, Palestine and the Middle East • *Presence of Italians abroad:* Brazil, Argentina, Eritrea • Communities of non-European and Eastern European immigrants in Milan (Senegalese, Argentine, Romanian, Albanian, Moroccan and Peruvian nationals).

For further information: <www.comune.milano.it/relazioninternazionali>

2.1.4. Defining a vision for the future

Once the external context and the internal situation have been analysed and local priorities have been defined, the government will be ready to determine a vision for the future - what it intends to achieve through its international strategy. Again, this vision should be based upon, and harmonise with, the local government's general mission and the Local Development Plan.

The objective is to define a vision on how the institution is envisaged on the international scene over the next five, ten or twenty years. Such desired future vision will act as a "beacon" for the local government's actions beyond national borders.

No restriction of any kind should be considered when determining the vision for the future. It is a forecasting exer-

Table 9 / An example of 2015 city vision:
Municipality of San Jose, Costa Rica

In the year 2015, for both its dwellers and visitors, the city:

• Will be admired for the quality of the services offered.

• Will have a healthy, pleasant atmosphere characterised by order and cleanliness, where commercial and industrial activities will develop in harmony with the environment, offering a range of recreational and cultural facilities.

• As the hub of economic, commercial and political activities in the country, it will boast transport and communication facilities and will offer educational and technological opportunities, so as to ensure sustained development.

• Turned into a modern metropolis, which will be capable of generating enough resources to ensure the well-being of the population, have achieved a high standard of economic competitiveness on the basis of its production facilities and the availability of cutting-edge services for businesses.

• Will display planned and controlled urban development, smooth-running traffic; it will be renewed and safe for its dwellers, as well as be socially and technologically balanced.

For further information: <www.msj.co.cr>

cise that calls for a remarkable share of creativity and imagination. Table 9 shows a good if general example of the vision of a city in 2015.

It is important to define a vision, so that the institution's efforts can be geared in the right direction, taking decisions, adopting policies, performing activities and obtaining resources to eventually achieve specific results. Local government's leadership is absolutely essential for bringing together local stakeholders and other national and foreign partners in pursuit of a common goal.

While making a point of setting feasible, realistic objectives, the local government may define a vision for the future where it is recognised as an autonomous player with international relations that contribute to its institutional projection, visibility and strength, and technical cooperation bonds that help it fulfill the expectations of its inhabitants.

Table 10 shows an example of a vision of the future –in the specific area of international affairs– on the part of a local government that views itself mainly as a beneficiary of cooperation.

Gobierno de Chiapas Uno con Todos

Table 10 / An example of international vision:
Government of the State of Chiapas [Mexico]

In the short term, promote closer relations with those key government and non-government entities in the world that have expressed their interest in cooperating in the implementation of development projects in the State.

In the medium term, position Chiapas on the international stage by taking part in programmes focused on the up-to-now neglected regions and attracting technical resources and development projects for the State.

For further information: <www.chiapas.gob.mx>

By contrast, table 11 displays the international vision of Canterburty City Council, United Kingdom. Canterbury's position as World Cultural Heritage and the site of the mo- ther church of the Anglican communion entails remark- able international visibility and, consequently, different ob- jectives.

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

Table 11 / An example of international policy vision:
Canterbury City Council [United Kingdom]

Specific objectives:

1. Identifying funding opportunities, specifically in the areas of regeneration, economic development, cultural provision and tourism;
2. Facilitating international relationships that help meet the Council's corporate strategic aims, in accordance with its Plan;
3. Promoting Canterbury on the international stage.

Aims:

1. To identify and secure international funding streams to support the city council's objectives;
2. To further knowledge and innovation-for-growth initiatives, make Canterbury a more attractive place to invest and work, and create more and better jobs;
3. To work towards the improvement of the cultural provision in the city;

▶

4. To support the development of a thriving tourism industry in order to increase the number of overseas staying visitors;

5. To take into account the impact of the global economy on commercial activities across the district, but particularly in the higher education sector;

6. To raise the international profile of the Canterbury district.

Requirements for establishing cooperation links:

1. Have access to international or European Commission funding programmes;

2. Meet the specific objectives of, or deliver direct benefit to, local enterprises, educational establishments and/or community groups;

3. Provide opportunities for learning and achieving people's potential through cultural activities;

4. Enhance the cultural or heritage assets of Canterbury;

5. Develop local tourism;

6. Enhance prestige, heighten international standing or boost public relations so as to strengthen the district's position;

7. Share best practices and promote capacity building.

For further information: <www.canterbury.gov.uk>

Needless to say, whatever the vision for the future, international policies must be drawn up in the light of the actual context and priorities of the local government. Table 12 anticipates some ideas that may prove useful when envisaging the global city of the future. Such ideas will be developed more specifically in the different sections of this Manual.

Table 12 / Tips for previewing the global city of the future

In the future the city:

• Will have global projection and visibility as though it were a prestigious city "brand",

• Will be identified by a specific feature, a public policy or an international event,

• Will be recognised by the national authorities and other local governments in the country as a player with bonds beyond national borders,

• Will take part in, or be a member of, the main national, regional and international municipalist fora and associations -whether of a general or thematic nature,

• Will be a global stakeholder with its own political and economic personality and identity,

• Will participate in international campaigns and efforts aimed at improving the living conditions of the needy and protecting the global environment,

• Will have partners beyond national borders for pursuing specific goals (town-twinning, friend cities, international bodies, foundations, international NGOs, etc.),

• Will play an active, enthusiastic role in decentralised cooperation through capacity building and direct local government experience sharing,

• Will receive and offer technical assistance in local agenda priority areas,

• Will attract international investments, tourism and trade with a view to developing the local economy, industry and services;

• Will participate in international bodies' programmes and projects aimed at improving the quality of life of the city-dwellers and the supply of basic public services,

• Will have an international solidarity policy in place and will help other city councils abroad in case of emergency and/or natural disasters,

• Will help boost both the local stakeholders' and the population's international relations by fostering civic education activities focused on the challenges faced by the world.

• Will adopt a foreign policy stance on international conflicts, particularly war, in favour of peace, tolerance and cooperation, and against discrimination of any kind.

2.2. Implementing the strategy

The international strategy implementation is the stage of the process where actions are defined and activities are developed. Once the international priorities of the local government have been identified, the next step is to establish the general and specific objectives. An objective is a goal; it is what has to be done in order to achieve the desired result through actions.

When an objective is defined within the framework of a strategic plan, it goes beyond a mere operation. While operational objectives are part of the day-to-day routines, strategic objectives focus on vital endeavours of the institution in the medium and long term.

Table 13 provides an example of a local government's decentralised cooperation objectives. It is interesting to note that this example refers to a local government –that of the Canary Islands, Spain– whose international policy is basically focused on fostering development through cooperation.

Gobierno de Canarias
una tierra única

Table 13 / An example of cooperation objectives:
Master Plan of the Canary Islands Government (Spain).[19]

General objective:

To promote sustainable human, social and economic development in order to erradicate poverty in the world.

Specific objectives

a) To foster the development of the more disadvantaged nations by providing them with economic and material resources, so as to help them achieve economic and social growth on a more equitable basis.

b) To favour such nations' self-sustained development based on the beneficiaries' own capacities, promoting a better standard of living for the population - particularly the poorest sectors - as well as due respect for fundamental human rights.

c) To work towards more balanced political, strategic, economic and commercial relations, thereby promoting a stable, safe scenario for international peace.

d) To prevent and assist in emergency situations by carrying out humanitarian aid actions.

e) To favour the organisation and consolidation of democratic systems of government, as well as respect for fundamental human rights.

f) To foster political, economic and cultural relations with developing nations in accordance with the principles and objectives of cooperation.

For further information: <www.gobcan.es>

19 GONZÁLEZ PÉREZ, Inmaculada and GARCÍA-TALAVERA TRUJILLO, Paula. *Manual para la cooperación internacional descentralizada desde Canarias* (Manual for Decentralised International Cooperation from the Canary Islands). Canarian Foundation for Social Development. 1st Edition, 2005.

Even if nowadays the most common impediments for the international action of local governments are of egal nature, in most countries this has not prevented the actual practice from evolving, often through gaps or grey areas in the regulations, and bringing about *sui generis* legal situations.

2.2.1 Verifying the legality of actions

Before implementing the strategy and carrying it through it is essential to check the legality of the actions. Verifying local government international action compliance with the rules and regulations in force is a requirement that must be seriously considered from the very start.

As we know local governments' international relations develop within the framework of the competences vested in them by the laws. The applicable legal frameworks in the different countries are extremely diverse and often involve different levels or tiers, such as international conventions and treaties, national laws, regional and municipal regulations, etc.

In addition to the many often overlapping legal frameworks, the scope of cities' transnational actions has also been subject to multiple, often obscure and contradictory legalistic interpretations.

Today only a few countries have actually updated their laws to render this phenomenon legally consistent and certain. However, everyone seems to agree that, strictly speaking, rather than a new competence or authority a local government's trasnational strategies are a new (international) work method for exercising pre-existing legal powers.

International legislation

Not much has been achieved in terms of rules and regulations at international level to recognise the new role played by local authorities. Regardless of the particular country or legislation, local governments have no legal status in formal international public Law.[20] No treaties, UN conventions or International Court of Justice decisions mention or acknowledge the existence of local governments as entities directly subject to international law. In fact, as far as their legal status is concerned, local governments are subordinated to, and represented by, States.[21]

Besides, only States can be UN members.[22] Since the mid-20th Century States have recongnised the capacity of local governments to town-twin, but that is all. Town-twinning has been approved as an exceptionally valuable mechanisms for forging closer relations amongst peoples under several UN decisions - mainly Economic and Social Council Resolutions 1028 (XXXVII) and 1217 (XLII) and the General Assembly's Resolutions 2058 (XX) and 2861 (XXVI) (see Table XX). Table 14 lists the milestones in UN - local governments relations.

20 Save exceptional cases where the UN has attempted to place some cities involved in serious conflicts under international jurisdiction (e.g. Tanger, Jerusalem, Krakow or Shang-hai).
21 Article 2 of the Vienna Convention on International Treaties (1969) only recognizes States.
22 BLANK, Yishai. *"The City and the World"*, Columbia Journal of Transnational Law, 44:875, New York, September, 2006 is an excellent source to be consulted for legal studies on local governents' fight for being heard in the International Law arena.

Table 14 / Local Governments and United Nations: Milestones

Year	Event	Advances
1964	ECOSOC Resolution 1028 (XXXVII)	Town-twinning is considered a means of international cooperation that should be fostered by the UN.
1965	General Assembly Resolution 2058 (XX)	UNESCO is encouraged to take steps to foster town twinning.
1966	The World Federation of Twinned Towns is recognised as an NGO.	The World Federation of Twinned Towns, which would later become the United Towns Organisation (UTO), is recognised by the UN as an A status entity (the highest category). However, it is considered a non-governmental organisation, even though it is an association of public authorities.
1971	General Assembly Resolution 2861 (XXVI)	For the first time "cooperation between local governments around the world is considered a natural complement of cooperation between States and inter-governmental organisations", and the Secretary General is invited to "analyse their relationship with the WFUC".
1992	"Earth Summit" 1st Environment and Development Conference Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	For the first time in history the local governments formally participate in a UN summit through the ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives). The role of local governments is expressly recognised in the Declaration of Presidents and Heads of State, as well as in Agenda 21 (the environmental action plan).
1996	Habitat II "City Summit": 2nd UN Conference on Human Settlements Istanbul, Turkey	Local authorities succeeded in participating in the deliberations, main committees and work groups of the Conference. In the Istanbul Declaration local authorities are referred to as "the closest and essential partners in the application of the Habitat Programme". Parallel to the States' Conference, the local governments held the First World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities (WACLA).
1997	Creation of WACLAC (the World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination)	With a view to coordinating local governments's participation in the UN, major international local government associations come together and unsuccessfully request a seat in the UN-Habitat Council.

Year	Event	Advances
1998	Project World Charter of Local Self-Government	UN-Habitat and WACLAC publish the rough draft of what was intended to be the most ambitious legal text for recognising the local government's autonomy and authority on the international stage. The World Charter of Local Self-Government was expected to become a UN Convention on the basis of three fundamental principles: subsidiarity, proximity and local autonomy. However, this Charter has not been ratified by the member States up to now (2006).
2000	Creation of the UNACLA (United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities)	First formal local authority consultation body related to the UN. It is composed of 20 members, 10 of whom are nominated by the World Association of Cities WACLA. This body is the natural interlocutor of the UN in local government issues and its existence represents a remarkable step forward.
2001	WFUC-IULA and second WACLAC conference Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	After years of negotiations the two main local government associations in the world - WFUC and IULA - decided to come together and disappear as individual entities, creating a single global organisation. During the Congress the 2nd World Assembly of Cities is held in the presence of the UN-Habitat Executive Staff.
2004	"United Cities and Local Governments" (UCLG) is born Paris, France	With the merge of WFUC and IULA, in the Conference in which the UCLG was created more than 3 thousand mayors and local government delegates from all over the world came together and demanded that their association be formally recognised by the UN.
2004	Report on United Nations-civil society relations issued by a panel of eminent persons (the Cardoso Report)	The panel appointed by the Secretary General of the UN and chaired by former President of Brazil Fernando Henrique Cardoso strongly advised the UN "to recognise United Cities and Local Governments as an advisory body on issues related to governability" and UN bodies to work closely with local governments." It further established that the General Assembly of the United Nations should discuss a resolution "reinforcing and abiding by local autonomy as a universal principle."[23]
2005	Millenium Summit +5 New York, USA	The Heads of State and Highest Government Authorities expressly reconginse the role of local governments in achieving the Millenium Developmen Goals (MDG). The final draft of the document opens new possibilities of direct dialogue between the UN General Assembly of the United Nations and the UCLG and places local governments as key partners of the UN for the purpose of reaching the MDG.

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23 *Proposal 18*, Chair of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations Transmittal letter dated 7 June 2004 from the Chair of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations addressed to the Secretary General, U.N. Doc. A/58/817, 20 (June 11, 2004).

While international Law had virtually remained "frozen" for more than half a century on this issue, over the past decades the situation has evolved, bringing about a number of significant, probably irreversible changes. Consequently, in order to understand the scope and legal limitations of a city's international strategy, let us briefly go over what has happened over the past years.

The first significant step was taken during the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements –generally known as **Habitat II**– held in Istambul in 1996. The mentality with regard to the role of cities in the global agenda begins to change when the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) becomes a platform for advancing in the municipalist agenda.

Apart from recognising the role of cities in economic and social development (poverty reduction, housing and environmental protection promotion, etc.) Habitat II introduces innovating concepts of a more political nature, such as decentralisation, local democracy, citizens' involvement in decision-making and the possibility to establish decentralised cooperation relations at local government level.[24]

The mandate of Habitat II brought about the creation of the **World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination** (WACLAC) in 1998.[25] Since its foundation, WACLAC has undertaken to prepare the draft of the **"World Charter of Local Self-Government"**, which should eventually become a formal United Nations convention.

The Charter draft was aimed at making decentralisation a priority issue in the global agenda. Based on the principles of subsidiarity, proximity and autonomy, decisions were to be taken at the level closest to the citizens (municipality or town) and only those tasks which the local level could not effectively carry out alone were to be referred to higher levels of authority.

The World Charter was inspired by the **European Charter of Local Self-Government** - adopted by the Council of Europe in 1985 - which established the political, administrative and financial independence of sub-national governments and their authority to perform decentralised cooperation activities.

While the World Charter of Local Self-Government draft has been the subject of long debate amongst local authorities around the world through their associations, with the support of UN-Habitat, it has not been as successful as its European counterpart. In fact, it has not been adopted to date.

In the absence of the Charter, the General Assembly of the United Nations settled for ratifying the Istambul Declaration and the Habitat 1996 Agenda as the main UN texts that would regulate the relations with local governments.

The **Advisory Committee of Local Authorities** (UNACLA), established in 2000, is the first local authority advisory body attached to the United Nations. Consisting of twenty members, ten of whom are nominated by the United Towns Organisation, UNACLA is the UN's formal interlocutor in local government - related issues and its existence represents a major step forward.

The process comes to an end in early 2002, when the General Assembly adopts a resolution aimed at reinforcing the role of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, whereby UNCHS becomes UN-Habitat, a General Assembly subsidiary body under the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which coordinates the tasks carried out by the fourteen specialised agencies of the United Nations.

While it is still not clear whether the World Charter for Self-Government will ever be adopted by the UN, local

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24 UNITED NATIONS. *Conference on Human Settlements* (Habitat II, June 3-14, 1996, Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.165/14 (Aug. 7, 1996).
25 The founding associations of the WACLAC in 1998 were: the United Towns Organisation (UTO), the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), Metropolis (Large Cities Network), the United African Towns (UAT), the Arab Towns Organisation (ATO), Citynet (Asia - Pacific), Summit (Asia - Pacific), Eurocities (Europe) and the Latin American Federation of Cities, Town Councils and Associations (IULA - Latin America).

governments' international relations are increasingly recognised and legally accepted.

This far more promising scenario has been brought about not only by a change in the pattern of relationships between towns, States and international bodies, but also by the external policy work carried out by local governments themselves, as well as by the associations of local authorities.

In view of the above, in order to verify the legality of its actions beyond national borders, a town council must be familiar with the contents of the aforementioned Istambul Declaration, Habitat Agenda, ECOSOC and General Assembly resolutions. It is also essential for the Town Council to know whether the National Government has signed the Istambul Declaration and what stand it has taken on the World Charter of Local Self-Government.

While national laws stll have to be adapted to allow for, and foster, transnational actions on the part of town councils, any local government can defend its interest in establishing international relations on the basis of the abovementioned documents.

National legislation

In each country foreign relations are regulated by the Constitution or otherwise by national laws establishing the central role of the State in foreign policy and international relations. We all know that foreign policy has traditionally fallen within the remit of the State, together with other sensitive areas such as currency issue and defence.

This Manual is not intended to go into the legal provisions regulating the transnational actions of the local governments in the different countries in Europe and Latin America, as it would take a whole book to analyse such a wide range of rules and regulation.[26] Besides, because this phenomenon is evolving rapidly, many States are review-

ing their relevant legal frameworks. In some countries in the European Union, such as Spain, France and Italy, legislation has been updated in order to render local governments' transnational actions more consistent and certain. In other EU countries, on the other hand, either laws have been outrun by actual practice or there is a legal vacuum on the matter.

In conclusion, local authorities must be thoroughly familiar with the national legal framework within which they will develop their international strategy so as to verify the legality of their actions and be aware of their scope and limits.[27] Tables 15 and 16 address just a few typical cases intended to familiarise the reader with the different legal scenarios and help them gain insight into their own legal situation in the light of other examples.

Local regulatory frameworks

Cooperation-related actions should be carefully scrutinised and monitored to check compliance with the law. For example, before deciding on the the best funding option for a project it is necessary to know exactly what the financial resources will be spent on and how they will be applied. In fact, almost every financing body has preestablished rules on the matter.

For example, according to international pracice no taxes apply to donations for development projects. However, this is not the case under every national or municipal legislation. This is important as some bodies, such as the European Commission, require that local taxes on goods and services hired with their resources be paid by the beneficiary on an additional basis. Therefore, before establishing a budget it is convenient to clarify the local fiscal regulations that apply to such resources.

The legal nature of international actions needs to be controlled even if this entails complex, often cumbersome bureaucratic procedures. That is why, ideally, a local

Table 15 / National legal framework for local government's foreign actions: some examples in Europe	
Country	**Legal framework and State control**
Germany	Under art. 32.1 of the **Basic Law**, local governments are allowed to carry out transnational actions while abiding by federal laws. Art. 32.3 refers to the regional governments or Länder and art. 28.2 to the town councils. The *Länder* are authorised to enter into agreements with regions or States beyond national borders, but only within their legislative competence and with the Federal Government's consent. City councils and districts have "the right to resolve, taking full responsibility, any local community issues, in accordance with the law and within their competence". The Ministry of Foreign Affairs **International Treaties Bureau** is responsible for verifying that the agreements signed are in compliance with the Basic Law. Both the Federal Government and the *Länder* participate in a **Cooperation Policy Coordination Committee**.
Belgium	Competence in the area of international affairs is shared by the federal State, the regions and the town and city councils. **No order of importance exists between the different regulations**, nor do the federal State or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) perform any control activities, provided that the local governments act within the framework of their legal competence. Information is not centralised and the MAE is only occasionally aware of previously signed agreements.
Spain	Under **International Cooperation for Development Law No. 23/1998, Section 2, art. 20: 1)** The cooperation for development undertaken by the Autonomous Communities and local Entities as an expression of their respective communities' solidarity is inspired by the principles, goals and priorities set out in Section 2, Chapter I of this Law. **2)** Such entities' development cooperation actions are developed and executed on the basis of the principles of budgetary autonomy and self-responsibility, in accordance with the basic general guidelines established by the Lower Chamber of Parliament, referred to in art 15.1 herein, and with the principle of collaboration amongst public Administrations regarding access to, and sharing of, information, and best use of public resources. Under Royal Decree No. 22/2000 as amended by Royal Decree No. 2124/2004 the **Inter-Territorial Commission for Development** is established. Nineteen representatives of the Autonomous Communities and nineteen delegates of the Local Entities (appointed by the Spanish Federation of Town Councils and Provinces and the Municipal Cooperation and Solidarity Funds) take part in this commission.
France	Under the **General Guidelines Law of 6 February 1992** (Articles L1115-1 to L1115-7 of the General Code of Local Governments and their amalgamations), "local governments and the amalgamations there of may undertake decentralised cooperation actions in areas within their remit and in accordance with France's international commitments". The interpretations of this Law have been specified in **Official Communications 20/04/01** and **13/07/04** on local government action in support of emergency relief. The legality of the agreements signed by the local governments is subject to a posteriori State control. Within the framework of the **National Decentralised Cooperation Commission** (CNCD) the State and local authorities discuss and reach agreements on issues of common concern. The CNCD Secreatry is the **Local Government Transnational Action Delegate** at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Italy	Under **Article 117** of the **Constitution**, while foreign policy falls within the exclusive remit of the State, the regions have concurrent authority in international affairs and within the European Union. The procedures for exercising such authority and entering into agreements with autonomous regions and provinces, as well as with foreign States or territorial entities –within their specific competence– are set out in the Loggia Law of 5 June 2003. Under Act 49/87 of 1987 municipalities, provinces and regions are authorised to establish decentralised cooperation relations. To sign an international cooperation agreement a region must obtain the consent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) and the Department of Regional Affairs, which reports to the Prime Minister.

Table 16 / National legal framework for local government's foreign actions: some examples in Latin America	
Country	**Legal framework and State control**
Argentina	Argentine local governments have developed multiple international activities which they claim to be legitimate on the grounds that they are within their competence and/or concurrent with the Federal Governments' strategies. Under article 124, included as a result of the **Constitutional reform of 1994**, "Provinces may enter into international agreements, provided that such agreements are not incompatible with the Nation's foreign policy and that they affect neither the authority vested in the Federal Government nor public confidence in the Nation."
Chile	The Regional Governments' only competence in international affairs is set out in the Constitutional **Organic Law on Regional Government and Administration** (No. 19175, Art. 16, item g), whereby "it shall be the Regional Governments' role to participate in international cooperation actions in the region, within the framework of the relevant treaties and conventions signed by the Chilean Government, and in accordance with the appropriate procedural rules and regulations." In 2000 the Regional Coordination Bureau is created within the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE), and in 2002 the Presidential Advisory Committee for Cooperation with the Regions. Besides, a Regional International Affairs Unit is established in each region. While this unit repors to the respective Regional Government, it works in coordination with the MRE and the Presidential Advisory Committee referred to above.
Mexico	Under section 28, sub-section 1 of the Organic Law on Federal Public Administration the Office of Foreign Relations (SRE) must participate in every kind of treaties. Furthermore, under **article 6 of the 1992 Act on the Signing of Treaties** "notwithstanding the authority exercised by the departments and entities of the Federal Public Administration, the Office of Foreign Relations shall coordinate the actions required in order to sign any treaty and shall give an opinion as to the legitimacy of signing such treaty, and, once it has been formalised, it shall enter it in the appropriate register." Under article 7 of this act, whenever an interinstitutional agreement is sought (as would be the case with town-twinning), the Office of Foreign Affairs shall be notified; it shall subsequently issue the corresponding decision as to the legitimacy of such agreement sought and shall enter it in the respective register as appropriate. The Foreign Relations Office's Political Relations Bureau is in charge of fostering and supervising the actions beyond national borders carried out by the states and town councils in Mexico.
Peru	Under the **International Cooperation Act and the regulations** there of, the regional and local governments are granted autonomy to negotiate and channel international cooperation. According to this Act the Council of Regional Presidents shall be responsible for defining the regions' international cooperation policy. Such autonomy in the management of international cooperation is reinforced by **article 5 of the Foundation Act of the Peruvian International Cooperation Agency** (APCI) whereby "the regional and municipal governments submit their applications directly, notifying APCI for the purpose of the Annual International Cooperation Programme record". According to article 4 paragraph b of this Act APCI shall channel the requests for cooperation, and shall further "provide support in the preparation and execution of international cooperation plans, programmes and projects at the request of the regional and local governments and other autonomous entities". Under this act each regional and local government is authorised to participate through one representative in the Agency's Directing Board, as well as in the Multisector Coordination Committee.

government should ensure an adequate legal framework for its international actions - in line with its national rules and regulations.

Up to now only occasionally have local governments adopted a general legal framework for international affairs, but in such cases, they have done so strictly adhering to the authority and competence of their respective national governments.

For example, in 1998 the City Council of Amsterdam in the Netherlands adopted the "Criteria Applicable to International Development Cooperation Programmes" whereby "a cooperation programme may not contravene the Government policy of the Netherlands" (article VII).[28] Likewise, under article 2.2 of the Development Cooperation Act of the Community of Madrid (Act 13/1999), its development policy is in line with the foreign policy criteria of the Spanish State".[29] Table 17 lists some examples of such regulatory frameworks.

Table 17 / International relations. Examples of local governments regulation		
Local government	**Local regulations**	**Contents**
Milan City Council (Italy)	Municipal Statute, article 3.4	The city council "shall foster European and international cooperation, as well as relations with local institutions in other countries, through joint initiatives of mutual interest".
Sao Paulo City Council (Brazil)	Act No. 13.165 of 5 July 2001 (Executive Bill # 283/01).	Creation of the City Council's Office of International Relations, and issue of regulatons on issues relating to this area.
Autonomous Community of **Madrid** (Spain)	Development Cooperation Act of the Community of Madrid (Act # 13/1999)	General procedural framework for international affairs and funding of cooperation projects.
Autonomous Province of **Trento** (Italy)	Province Development Aid Support Law (Law # 10), 17 March 1988	Province law providing a legal framework for technical assistance, volunteer work, education for development and budget preparation.
Amsterdam City Council (Netherlands)	Criteria Applicable to the International Development Cooperation Programmes (April 1988)	Considerations for establishing and terminating international cooperation relations.
Canterbury City Council (United Kingdom)	Canterbury City Council. International Policy. September 2006.	Strategy document setting out the objectives and priorities of the city council's international policy.
Government of the Province of **Tierra del Fuego** (Argentina)	Constitution of the Province, article 5, p. 5.	It states that "notwithstanding the Federal Government's authority the Tierra del Fuego Government takes actions and signs agreements at international level for the purpose of satisfying the interests of the Province."

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28 *Criteria applicable to International Development Cooperation Programmes. The City of Amsterdam and its development cooperation policy. An overview of experiences since 1983 by the Committee for Development Cooperation Amsterdam.* The Netherlands, March 1997.
29 *Development Cooperation Act of the Community of Madrid.* Act 13/1999 of 29 April. Community of Madrid. Development Cooperation Report issued by the Public Administrations of Madrid, 1999.

2.2.2 Adapting the institution and its procedures

Even with a vision for the future, clearly defined priorities and objectives and due compliance with the law, a good international strategy will not come about if the local administration does not have the appropriate structure and procedures in place to guarantee smooth-running processes.

This means assigning duties and tasks, and conferring decision-making authority. The aspects to be considered include how to best organise the local government's structure, how to distribute authority amongst the different hierarchical levels, and how to integrate the various areas involved in the international relations processes.

A large number of structural and organisational options are available for managing transnational actions. For the institution to properly suit international relations needs it is necessary to determine whether to opt for a vertical or a horizontal kind of hierarchy

What is the most adequate degree of centralisation/decentralisation for decision- making? Is it desirable to split the organisation into relatively autonomous sub-units, i.e. divisions or deparments? What mechanisms should be used for integrating the tasks in the different areas and adjusting processes in order to make them more efficient? How can local authorities ensure that international relations reach across all the areas and departments? Is it convenient to create a position or a bureau, or should international affairs remain as a direct advisory entity attached to the mayor's executive council?

Whatever formula is considered more suitable for a specific city, it is of the utmost importance to include international affairs in the local government's organisational structure. Just as any other government programme, the international area should be in the hands of a clearly identified officer responsible for supervising and managing the administrative aspects of international affairs and, most importantly, coordinating actions with other key government areas. Foreign partners should rely on such officer as a valid interlocutor who is always available and ready to help.

However, rather than adding to the complexity of the municipal organigram or centralising all international relations in a single area, the idea is to have a visible unit within the local government that can carry through the international strategy and ensure the consistency of international actions involving other divisions.

To that end, in many cases specific executive offices have been created, or otherwise basic structures reporting directly to the mayor (with a secretary, project managers, an accountant, etc. In actual practice, the international relations offices in the cities can range from small, one-person division to full departments with dozens of employees.

It should be born in mind that the local government's actions beyond national borders is not the sole competence of an international relations office. Whatever the internal organisational structure, transnational actions will eventually be in the hands of the key local policy areas of the government.

Thus, international actions should reach across the different services and departments as evidenced by both the organigram and the prodedures. This will prevent overloading or monopoly of foreign affairs by a single office. Thus, each area will benefit by actively participating in the projects.

The second volume of this Manual will address more thoroughly the different organisation and procedural options for managing international relations within local governments. Meanwhile, and by way of example, table 18 presents the case of the Province of Buenos Aires and the efficient mechanism in place for managing international affairs.

Gobierno de la
Provincia
de Buenos Aires

Table 18 / An example of roles in a foreign affairs office

Cooperation and International Relations Agency

1. Work towards the **integration** of the Province into the world.

2. Act on **behalf** of the Province before the National Government and public and/or private international bodies in international relations and development cooperation issues.

3. Help **coordinate** the actions carried out by the competent technical bodies in the Government of the Province in the area of international relations and development cooperation.

4. Help coordinate the actions carried out by the competent technical bodies in the Government of the Province regarding bilateral, regional or multilateral **international agreements**.

5. Negotiate, enter into, amend or in any other way participate in acts relating to conventions or other international-law instruments.

6. Coordinate **technical cooperation** and development assistance forums.

7. Coordinate and **assess** international cooperation actions.

8. Act as international affairs **adviser** to academic, R&D, and private institutions, as well as NGOs.

9. Offer horizontal cooperation in **coordination** with the competent bodies and local authorities, with a view to consolidating the Province's presence on the **international stage**.

10. In **coordination** with other competent technical bodies in the Government of the Province, take part in **international events** of interest.

11. Coordinate the design, management and evaluation of development programmes while facilitating access to **international cooperation sources**.

12. Take part in the signing of **bilateral agreements** with Foreign States relating to the Agency's competence, record those agreements currently in force and work in the programmes derived from such agreements.

13. Participate in the **MERCOSUR** integration process in those issues within its remit.

14. Foster and actively work towards cultural integration amongst MERCOSUR countries through transfer and exchange programmes.

15. Reinforce the cultural, social, economic, productive and scientific **identity** of the Province of Buenos Aires on the international stage through **exchange** and coordination with other states and regions beyond national borders.

16. Foster educational and further-**training** opportunities for Buenos Aires university graduates at renowned academic centres abroad.

Buenos Aires Province Development Cooperation Office:

1. Analyse and assess international cooperation resources to help integrate the Province into the world in the area of economic, productive, environmental and technological development.

2. Draw up joint actions and strategies with the public and/or private sector to make the best use of cooperation resources.

3. Help decentralise international cooperation resources for the benefit of public and/or private institutions through specific advice and funding.

4. Help negotiate, draw up, follow up and monitor international cooperation proposals, particularly in such areas as productive structure transformation, SME performance support, IT and communications, preservation of the environment and natural resources, emergency and disaster relief, State efficiency and public management enhancement.

5. Manage the overall operation of joint commissions for bilateral agreements in those areas within the competence of this Office.

6. Help forge closer bonds between Buenos Aires Province experts, researchers and authorities and the international community, so as to draw up progrmmes to promote human resources training and development, information sharing and joint R&D projects.

7. Establish links and pursue Cooperation Agreements in the areas of economy & production and science & technology, particulary between the countries in the MERCOSUR area, so as to foster cutting edge technology transfer.

8. Collaborate in cooperation proposals in such areas as technology, know-how and goods & services, for the purpose of helping other nations, regions and/or provinces in need of development support.

9. Act as adviser to the various bodies in the province in the preparation of cooperation Agreements, programmes and projects.

For further information: <www.gba.gov.ar>

2.2.3 Allocating resources

Whenever a local government establishes international relations, it has to assign a certain part, however small, of its own resources. We should bear in mind that the local government's budget largely comes from tax revenues and that, for this reason, citizens might well ask themselves why their money is being spent on "foreign" affairs.

Therefore, politicians must be extremely careful to ensure international actions are not viewed as sheer squandering of resources. Hence the importance of strictly adhering to the Strategic Plan rather than to the current authority's circumstantial priorities.

In European countries where cooperation plays an important role in cities' international relations, the assigned budgets can be very significant as the population urges their government to do something to alleviate poverty in the least favoured nations. Table 19 shows the example of the "Pointseven Campaign", which represents a citizen vindication in favor of this cause.

0,7%sí

Table 19 / The "0,7 %" campaign

- Back in the 1970s the UN proposal that the "developed" nations devoted 1% of their GDP to helping the "developing" countries gave rise to a movement that came to be known as the "Pointseven Campaign". This number comes from the 0.7 per cent that was to be contributed by the governments, while the remaining 0.3 per cent was to be provided by the civil society. The emblematic if controversial 0.7% was wielded by organised civil society movements claiming that the rich countries undertook to support war-on-want strategies by contributing resources to their poorer counterparts.

- The "pointseven-or-more campaigns" were in the spotlight in several European countries. While not much was achieved as far as central government contributions were concerned, such movements promoted a higher degree of commitment on the part of local governments, some of which contributed more than 0.7%.

- In Spain, in particular, the local governments unilaterally undertook to perform the duties the State had failed to fulfill. At present, "0.7%" remains as a symbol rather than the actual share to be contributed by governments or other institutions.

For further information: <www.congde.org>

The fact is, the international relations budget can by no means be subject to the availability of residual funds or resources assigned for other items.

Having a specific budget line makes it possible to formalise the international policy and tailor it to the progress of the programmes underway. Assigning resources ultimately legitimizes transnational actions as part of a local government's policy by providing the necessary financial framework.

Table 20 displays the case of the Autonomous Community of Madrid (Spain), which devotes significant resources to assisting developing nations.

Comunidad de Madrid

Table 20 / An example of an international cooperation budget
Autonomous Community of Madrid (Spain)

Million euros
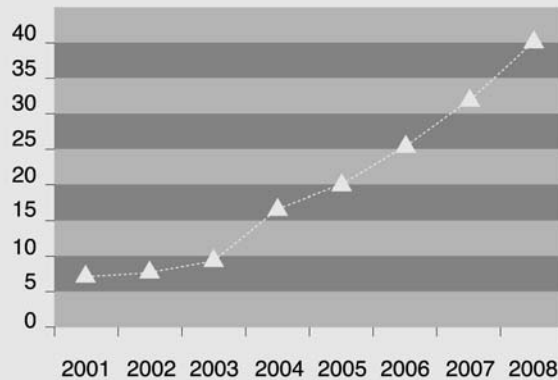
For further information: <www.madrid.org>

It is advisable to distinguish the different activities or categories within the budget so as to clearly define the purpose of each amount and ensure continuity.

The budget breakdown can be based on the following items:

- Day-to-day operation
- Subventions for cooperation projects
- Participation in networks and events
- Instruments for enhancing the international role and visibility of the city
- Humanitarian and relief aid
- Citizen awareness campaigns
- Diagnostic surveys and evaluationss, etc.

Some local governments choose to split their budgets establishing limit-amounts for each activity and setting multi-year horizons. This strategy proves remarkably useful for leveraging their planning capacity and ensuring the stability and predictability of their resources. Normally, global undertakings can be subject to minor variations according to the relevant deliberative bodies' decisions.

Table 21 shows an example of how the Barcelona City Council has split its international cooperation resources in accordance with its International Cooperation and Solidarity Master Plan 2006-2008.[30]

30 Barcelona City Council. International Cooperation and Solidarity Master Plan 2006-2008. *"Barcelona, a supportive city: un compromiso con el mundo"*, 2005

Ajuntament ⊕ de Barcelona

Table 21 / An example of a budget breakdown:
Barcelona City Council (Spain)

	€ 2006	%	€ 2007	%	€ 2008	%
Total budget	6.000.000	100,00	7.000.000	100,00	8.000.000	100,00
Direct city council cooperation	1.500.000	25,00	1.750.000	25,00	2.000.000	25,00
Jointly agreed city council cooperation	570.000	9,5	700.000	10,00	800.000	10,00
Non-profit private entity cooperation	3.600.000	60,00	4.200.000	60,00	4.820.000	50,25
Multi-annual	1.800.000	50,00	2.450.000	58,33	3.000.000	52,24
Annual	1.050.000	2,50	160.000	2,29	180.000	2,25
Awareness and education activities	750.000	20,83	850.000	20,24	970.000	20,12
Emergencies and humanitarian aid	150.000	2,5	160.000	2,29	180.000	2,25
Management and evaluation of the programme	180.000	3,00	190.000	2,71	200.000	2,25

For further information: <www.bcn.es>

Finally, table 22 presents some very general guidelines on how a local government can make efficient use of its budget resources for cooperation and international relations as and when it may deem fit.

Table 22 / Tips on how to manage a budget for international relations and cooperation	
Annual funds	**Possibilities**
Less than 20,000 Euros	• Allocate resources to one single action. • Engage in joint activities with other entities (coordinating institutions, networks). • Co-finance a project with an NGO or another local actor. • Attend an important international event.
20,000 to 50,000 Euros	• Formally join international bodies of local governments and participate in major thematic meetings. • Undertake more than one project while avoiding dissipation of resources. • Allocate all the resources to a single yet potentially continuous strategic project. • Organise a prospective work tour. • Organise an international workshop with foreign experts in the city. • Invite potential partners, paying for any expenses incurred.
50,000 to 100,000 Euros	• Finance development cooperation projects. • Co-finance international technical assistance. • Take part in experience-sharing forums. • Conduct a citizen awareness campaign. • Plan promotional international tours with other local stakeholders. • Occupy political positions in world organisations of cities.
More than 100,000 Euros	• Engage in several international projects. • Become politically involved in international associations. • Plan emergency relief aid in case of disasters. • Call for project subventions • Draw up visibility and international projection tools. • Organise an important international event or seminar.

2

2.3. Professionalising the strategy

An international strategy is neither long-lasting nor credible unless it is professional and entails a formal, multifold commitment on the part ot the government. Indeed, in addition to political determination, such commitment calls for institutional support, legality, resources and professionalism.

Obviously, just willing to integrate the local government into the world and establishing intermittent international relations are not enough. For actions to be more continuous and sound, an international strategy ought to be formally validated.

The idea is to leave behind the old bureaucratic, residual and circumstantial approach, opting for a more comprehensive and strategic vision where international relations actually turn into articulated local policies. Regardless of the fact that the mechanism will be tailored to each government's specific context, procedures and needs, below are some recommendations that may prove useful in practice.

2.3.1. Formalising and ensuring continuity

Formalising international relations as a stable local government policy by no means entails viewing them as something static. In fact, just as any other local policy, transnational actions evolve in time as actors get to know one another and generate mutual confidence. International relations are forged step by step. They do not yield instant results.

Hence, they should be conceived as a continuous process. The kick-off is usually an "anecdotic" circumstantial action or undertaking by the actors. The grand finale, on the other hand, is a "comprehensive" strategy characterised by the consistency of international policies, the continuity of political relations and the high degree of commitment involved. While continuity is a key element in cooperation, relations do not necessarily have to last forever. Table 23 illustrates such sustainability level. Again, the general guidelines below are only meant to facilitate practice.

We should not be afraid of acknowledging a cooperation relationship that does not work, fails to yield the expected results or no longer fulfils the government's interests. In such cases it is better to say "no" and terminate the rela-

Table 23 / Local Government's International Relations: Sustainability Levels				
	"Anecdotic" actions	Projects	Programmes	Overall strategy
Connection with the Local Development Plan ▶	Practically no connection at all ▶			Very close
Local government's institutional commitment ▶	Very low ▶			Very high
Technical and financial resources allocated ▶	A small amount ▶			A large amount
Relations stability and continuity ▶	No stability or continuity at all ▶			High
Participation of other local stakeholders ▶	Circumstantial ▶			Long-term
Replication potential for actual results ▶	Minimum ▶			Very high

tionship, gearing time and efforts towards different, more productive relations.

Only a handful of local governments in Latin America have developed the statistic assessment and planning required to formally adopting a public policy in the area of international affairs. A notable example is the Government of the Valparaíso Region in Chile, which has undertaken this challenge in the document "Toward a regional policy for integrating the Valparaíso Region into the world". This paper explains the regional context and the reasons for its long-term international policy aimed at making Valparaíso the "bridge between South America and Asia-Pacific".[31]

In the formalisation of an international strategy, a local government can display varying degrees of institutional commitment. Table 24 below shows some general guidelines that may prove useful for assessing the level of formalisation and commitment.

Table 24 / Local Government's International Relations: Formalisation Levels					
Situation	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Different government areas deal with circumstantial international affairs as they arise.	■				
International affairs form part of the duties of a local government officer.	■				
The local authority has formally delegated international relations management to an external body.		■			
The local government has a full-time international relations officer.		■			
The local government's structure includes an international affairs department.			■		
An international relations work programme is in place -with its specific budget.			■		
The local government has adopted a political declaration, charter or manifesto as a regulatory framework for international relations.				■	
The local government has a multi-annual Strategic Plan in the area of international affairs.				■	
The local government has an international affairs committee or equivalent advisory body.					□
The local government has enacted a law or regulation on international relations.					□
The local government has established representative offices abroad.					□

31 Valparaíso Region Government. *"Toward a regional policy for integrating the Valparaíso Region into the world"* TICHAUER M., Ricardo. (Editor) *The international integration of regions and town council districts. Articles on decentralised cooperation.* International Relations Institute. University of Viña del Mar, Chile, 2005.

Likewise, adopting a legal framework helps prevent hitches due to lack of coordination between the different departments.

Formalisation renders IR management more reliable and predictable. This is particularly important in some nations in Latin America where government periods are brief, decision-making is in the hands of non-career officers or mayors may not be re-elected, as is the case in Mexico.

Whenever no formal regulations guarantee the permanence of officers and policies, the long-term sustainability of international projects is at stake.

By contrast, if an international strategy does not face risk of this kind, actions beyond national borders will be consistent and autonomous enough to withstand circumstantial political whims.

A city's international relations should be formally acknowledged as a policy that cannot be arbitrarily challenged. Only then will the local authority play a sustainable political role on the international stage.

The campagne *"Ma commune n'est pas le but du monde!"* (My town council is not the end of the world!), launched by Belgium's National Development Cooperation Centre (CNCD-Belgique), gives a both innovative and interesting example of local governments' formal commitment to international cooperation.

The purpose of this campaign is to prompt town councils to adopt an international cooperation policy -with its own budget and international security advisory board- so as to evolve from town-twinning to decentralised cooperation and become global development agents.

Table 25 shows a Charter signed by those town councils adhering to the campaign.

However, such guidelines need not be followed strictly or even gradually. They are mere examples to be used for making comparative analyses or suggesting specific lines of action.

As evidenced in the table above the highest level of international strategy formalisation is associated with an advisory committee on international affairs, cooperation-related laws or regulations or offices/officers abroad. [32]

These are useful instruments for consolidating international relations and actions beyond local government authorities' spur-of-the-moment whims or special circumstances.

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32 The terms "Embassy" or "Consulate" of a city has been coined to describe the office representing a local government abroad. Though such terms are not legally valid –they are not endorsed by any international Diplomatic & Consular Law treaties– they do reflect the rapid evolution of international municipalism vis-à-vis State Law.

Table 25 / An example of international commitment: The Belgian campaign "My city council is not the end of the world!"

Charter

My city council is not the end of the world!

Our city council is in a privileged position to understand the problems in the world.

The problems we face day by day, such as the degradation of the environment, the changes in the employment pattern, drugs and racism, affect our own community and reflect uneven development.

As a local democracy, community and political institution our city council has the power to make a fairer world:

• If it promotes citizens' economic and social rights –particularly the right to have a useful, rewarding job– as a way to achieve balanced development both in our own community and in the developing nations;

• If it promotes the happy, sound coexistence of the various cultural communities living in the town council district, and combats any arbitrary or violent act against any person, regardless of their nationality, race, religion or philosophical belief;

• If it rejects any form of discrimination in the application of refugee-related laws, rules and regulations;

• If it fosters activities aimed at preventing drug addiction, so as to combat its devastating effects and reduce the pressure of demand on the economies of the developing countries;

• If it promotes the production and use of quality food products both here and in the developing countries, and helps ensure adherence to food safety and fair trade rules in the exchange with developing nations;

• If it works towards reducing power consumption, natural resources waste and waste production, so as to contribute to the sustainable development of the whole planet;

• If it facilitates the activities of associations -particularly those that support developing nations and advocate the principles set out herein.

The .... city council adheres to the principles in this Charter.

For further information: <www.cncd.be>

2.3.2. Communicating and raising awareness

A local government's international integration and cooperation strategy is bound to fail without the approval and support of the population involved. To obtain this support, it is not enough to conduct surveys or invite local stakeholders to help draw up the international strategy.

In other words, rather than just prompting the local population and actors to join in the strategy planning process, it is essential to keep them informed and ensure their enthusiastic involvement in international affairs.

To that end, an international strategy must include communication and awareness activities. Communication entails transparency. It further entails informing local stakeholders and foreign partners about the actions planned.

Local government traditional channels of communication include:
- the press (newspapers and magazines)
- radio
- television
- e-news bulletins
- websites
- local government's "open door" sessions
- public speeches
- publication of brochures
- signs, notice boards, etc.

The local government's communication policy should also apply to international actions. This is particularly important as international affairs all too often face critical press reviews or outright accusations when they involve foreign travel.

In a remarkable communication effort some cities have even launched a specific website for their international affairs. Such is the case of the "Agora" system developed by the Piemonte Region in Italy, which brings together all the cooperation actors in the region and includes a large number of sources, links and useful resources (see table 26).

Table 26 / An example of website on decentralised cooperation: the AGORA system of the Piemonte Region [Italy]

The website **"AGORA: International Peace, Cooperation and Solidarity"** was established by the International Affairs Department of the Piemonte Region, which reports directly to the Office of the Regional Council's President.

AGORA is a useful communication and enquiry tool as it provides thorough information about the Region's international policy, international cooperation actors, agenda of events, news, references, projects, countries and applicable regulations.

For further information: <agora.regione.piemonte.it>

Likewise, table 27 illustrates the example of the Rosario City Council in Argentina, which has a very comprehensive website on international affairs that can be the source of inspiration for other cities wishing to create their own.

In addition to communicating, it is necessary to raise and maintain citizen awareness of the local government's international actions, as well as of the global problems that affect the local population.

Raising local partners' awareness has become increasingly important over the past few years. The idea is to kindle interest in world problems whilst promoting adherence to certain universal values - respect for human rights, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, relief aid in case of natural disasters, a "culture of peace" and education in pursuit of a fairer, more inclusive economy.

The aim is to provide an insight into the structural causes of world inequalities, thereby eliciting personal involvement and commitment to the transformation of inadequate development models. It is a process that entails adopting new values, attitudes and habits. An "international culture" that is deeply rooted in the population and actors within a town council district will naturally inspire acceptance of the local government's involvement in activities beyond national borders.

MR
MUNICIPALIDAD DE ROSARIO

Table 27 / An example a website on international relations: Rosario City Council (Argentina)

The City Council of Rosario in Argentina, widely known for its international dynamism, has a special international affairs section on its Internet portal whose contents include the following:

1. Introduction

General information on the city's location on the world map and introduction to its international strategy and website contents.

2. City-to-City Programme

The city council's decentralised cooperation strategy, including a sub-section on town-twinning agreements detailing the specific areas of cooperation, and a further sub-section on joint bilateral cooperation projects with other local governments. Both include links to the Internet portals of the relevant partner-cities.

3. Networks of Cities

The city-council's networking policy, including a list of the networks Rosario is active in, with links to the relevant web pages.

4. International Cooperation

The city council's non-decentralised international cooperation activities, i.e. bilateral cooperation (with the central governments of other countries) and multilateral cooperation (with UN bodies), including a full list of projects sorted by themes and partners.

5. Contribution to international economic promotion

Information about the Thematic Unit on Local Economic Development; two specific sub-sections on Rosario's business-institutional missions abroad, the PRO-Rosario Programme for the international projection of the city and its businesses, and the Rosario International Food Fair; and further sub-sections on the "positioning of the city and the region" and "decentralised cooperation" for economy and trade.

6. Relations with Embassies and Consulates

A list of the consular authorities in Rosario (with contact data), information about the Embassies of other countries in Argentina and a list of personalities (Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ambassadors, etc.) who have visited the city.

7. Rosario citizens on the net

Links to civil society associations in Rosario, as well as to Rosario citizens living abroad.

8. International Awards

List of international awards won by the city, including a brief description and a link to the relevant documents.

9. Visit Rosario

A photo gallery, a link to the Rosario Tourist Office and a further section, "Rosario in figures", detailing the city's key indicators, important dates, demographic, architectural, economic, social and industrial data.

10. Recommended links

A list of institutions and research teams in Rosario working in the field of international relations, and a list of links to the websites of international bodies and other institutions.

For further information: <http://www.rosario.gov.ar>

The Autonomous Community of the Murcia Region in Spain, for instance, has since 2003 organised the Symposium on Development Cooperation in the Region aimed at raising Murcia society's awareness of the importance of these activities. At regional level, this symposium provides a permanent debate, analysis and proposal platform for local government staff members, civil society representatives and other stakeholders.[33]

Another outstanding example is that of the Barcelona City Council, which has a catalogue of citizen awareness ac-

tions in the area of development cooperation. The catalogue includes a wide range of actions planned by NGOs and local institutions, which are available to the Catalan town councils. Because part of such awareness actions are subsidised by the Barcelona City Council, the town councils wishing to make use of them are only required to pay a reduced fee.[34] Table 28 presents a list of possible themes and a list of possible actions aimed at raising citizens' awareness about such themes.

33 <www.carm.es>
34 BARCELONA CITY COUNCIL. International Relations Bureau. *Raising awareness about solidarity and development cooperation. Catalogue of awareness-raising actions for town councils.* 2006.

Table 28 / Tips for raising citizen awareness on international affairs	
Possible themes	**Possible actions**
• Human Rights • Education for Development • Cultural, ethnic and religious diversity • Approach (Africa, Europe... by region) • Culture for peace and disarmament • Prevention of conflicts • International solidarity • Cooperation and volunteer work • Migration • Project cycle • Languages • Water and desertification • Sustainable solidarity tourism • Globalisation • Foreign debt • Education on the environment • Emergency relief aid • Poverty and inequality • Women and minorities • Racism, xenophobe, discrimination • Foreign trade • International business • Fair trade • Consumer responsibility	• Press releases • Training and courses • Classroom sessions • Virtual schools • Mass media campaigns • Radio and TV content review • Enquiry forums • Awareness-raising conferences • Events, festivals • Plays • Public readings • Contests, raffles • Organisation of international days • Exhibitions • Lectures • Teleconferences • Publications (CDs, books, brochures, magazines, manuals, guides, handbooks, etc.) • Videos, documentaries, DVDs • Seminars, debates • Workshops • Public enquiry service hotline • Information and advice services

As evidenced in the above table, imagination is the limit when it comes to planning actions and listing citizen awareness themes.

Table 29 displays another example. In this particular case it refers t the joint actions deployed by several French town councils with a view to informing the local population and drumming up support for international relations.

Plaine Comm∩ne

Table 29 / An example of inter-municipal actions for raising international awareness
Plaine Commune Solidaire! (France)

The *Plaine Commune* town council community is a French inter-municipal institution bringing together eight town councils: Aubervilliers, Epinay-sur-Seine, L'Ile Saint-Denis, La Courneuve, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, Saint-Denis, Stains and Villetaneuse.

As an inter-municipal body, *Plaine Commune* has drawn up a common international strategy in addition to the international relations already established by each member.

Within the framework of its joint pursuit *Plaine Commune* celebrates the *International Solidarity Week*, during which it organises **debates and concerts, features films, plays, photo and other exhibitions, and holds meetings and conferences on inter-municpal territory international affairs**. Participants include **associations, NGOs, elected local authorities, community groups, artists, itinerant guests**, etc. from these eight French town council districts, as well as from their respective partner municipalities abroad.

"The eight cities in the Plaine Commune are involved in a large number of international cooperation projects, making our territory a land of solidarity. On occasion of the International Solidarity Week 2006, we would like to inform on our cities' initiatives and pay homage to those who play an active role in our international solidarity awareness actions: elected authorities, citizens, associations, artists..."

Patrick BRAOUEZEC, *Plaine Commune President*

For further information: <www.plainecommune.fr>

Finally, we would like to highlight the example of the Municipality of La-Roche-sur-Yon in France. Its "Home of the World and the Citizens" (*Maison du Monde et des Citoyens*), an educational centre open to everyone in the city, offers information about the town council's international activities.

The resounding success of this initiative has inspired other nearby municipalities to create their own Maisons (see table 30). Their activities can be used as examples by those town councils wishing to develop a participatory and inclusive local international strategy.

Table 30 / "The Home of the World and the Citizens"
La-Roche-sur-Yon (France)

L'esprit pionnier **LA ROCHE SUR YON**

Created by the town council in 2000, the *Home of the World and the Citizens* is an international affairs centre in La-Roche-sur-Yon aimed at supporting both individual and collective initiatives brought forward by citizens, associations, educational institutions and any other kind of entities interested and willing to participate in the international affairs of the city.

The Home of the World offers:

• A centre providing resources and information about international affairs, twin- and partner-towns, the European Union, international solidarity and globalisation;

• Support and advice for individual and/or collective international projects;

• Organisation of events and conferences on European and international themes;

• A place open to everyone for Internet enquiries and direct links to twin-towns;

• The possibility to borrow documents, magazines, international newspaper and CDs.

• Support to young people seeking international experiences -information about scholarships, assistantships, travel, volunteer work, jobs, lodging and transport abroad.

Contact: *Maison du Monde et du Citoyen* Château du Plessis, 172 rue Salengro, 85000 La-Roche-sur-Yon, France, Tel: (33-2) 51 47 50 00, <www.ville-larochesuryon.fr>, <ri@ville-larochesuryon.fr>

2.3.3. Evaluating and perfecting the strategy

Only through continuous evaluation, monitoring and perfecting can an international strategy prove efficient and long-lasting. Evaluation makes it possible to adjust the process in a timely manner, so as to cope with unexpected events, learn from good moves and errors, and deal with changing circumstances.

Practice shows that evaluation is all too often neglected. At best it is focused on accounting and financial aspects rather than on identifying the advances and setbacks of cooperation. As a result, it is not possible to actually learn from hitches and mistakes.

To evaluate it is important to have the necessary tools to gauge forward and backward steps, preferably by means of indicators contrasting the past with the present. This Manual is not intended to present a methodology for evaluating international strategy as this will be addressed in volume 2. However, it is convenient, early on, to draw decision-makers' attention to the following questions:

Has international cooperation helped improve the work methodology in the different areas of the local government? Has the local authority integrated international insight and experience to solve local problems? Has the international projection of the city brought about more trade, investments, tourism? Has the local government diversified the cultural activities available to make them more internationally appealing and varied? Have the local actors and citizens benefited directly from international bonds? And if so, how has this come about?

To answer the above questions it is important to monitor progress and detect early enough any deviation or threat that may hinder the strategy execution.

Such monitoring and assessment should comprise not only the local government's internal procedures (office organisation, decision-making process, etc.), but also external aspects, such as the nature of the international relations established and the partners abroad. The idea is to learn from experience and capitalise results.

In the light of the results obtained and the lessons learned through practice the local authority will have to take corrective measures to overcome weaknesses and consolidate strengths. Consequently, it will have to review priorities, objectives and activities on a regular basis. The strategy should therefore be flexible enough to correct the compass course along the way whilst adhering to the political guidelines in the long-term vision.

To perfect the strategy a local government should be aware of its own weaknesses so as to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the world. Besides, it should be capable of minimising the impact of external threats by working on its own weaknesses and advancing steadily and consistently towards its institutional goals. The SWOT matrix can prove useful for this purpose:[35]

Table 31 / SWOT Matrix		
	Strengths Positive internal features	**Weaknesses** Weak internal features
Opportunities Favourable external conditions	How to use local government's strengths to neutralise international threats? **Orientation strategies**	How to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the world to overcome local government weaknesses? **Reactive strategies**
Threats Risky external conditions	How to use local government's strengths to make the most of the opportunities available in the world? **Active strategies**	How to overcome local government's weaknesses while protecting oneself from external threats? **Defence strategies**

35 SWOT: acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Finally, and with a view to informing interested stakeholders about the evaluation results, we suggest issuing a Yearbook on all the international actions undertaken by objectives, detailing each activity carried out, the outcome, the resources, the allocation of resources, the partners in the different parts of the world, the conclusions, the lessons learnt and the outlook for the future.

In summary, regardless of the methodology a local government may opt for to formalise and carry through actions beyond national borders, table 32 lists the ten essential characteristics of a good international strategy.

Table 32 / Ten essential characteristics of a good international strategy

When formalising an international strategy, you are encouraged to verify it is:

1. **Consistent:** according to the objectives and priorities of the Local Development Plan;
2. **Legitimate:** drawn up in collaboration with the population and other local stakeholders;
3. **Solemn:** formalised as an institutional commitment on the part of the local government;
4. **Legal:** binding for having been adopted by the deliberative political body in accordance with the law;
5. **Viable:** neither too demanding nor too ambitious as regards its targets and goals;
6. **Credible:** supported by political determination and resources - not just funding;
7. **Professional:** run within an institutional framework, with adequate technical qualifications and skills;
8. **Effective:** including specific activities with tangible results and impact;
9. **Sustainable:** continuing beyond a government period, multi-annual in nature, in line with long-term vision;
10. **Flexible:** capable of adapting to the transformations and needs of the changing environment.

3. Who are involved in a local government's internationalisation process?

t HE TERM "city" should not be construed as just the local government. It embraces every aspect of the civil society-citizens, businesses, associations and other entities that play a relevant role in the life of the city. An international project will be neither sustainable nor effective in the long run unless it goes beyond the town hall doors and reaches out to the local population and other stakeholders.

Examples of potential partners include NGOs, universities, schools, syndicates, chambers of commerce and industry, associations, medical centres,[36] cooperatives, trade unions, institutes, natural parks, sport clubs, cultural groups, professional associations, churches, citizens' groups, etc.

In fact, the early town-twinning that pioneered today's decentralised cooperation was basically aimed at fostering the direct exchange between such institutions.

Hence, from the outset it is essential to establish international goals in consultation with the above entities as they are bound to be beneficiaries and active partners in the pro-

jects undertaken. An international strategy will be sustainable to the extent it is accepted by city-dwellers and supported by local stakeholders.

Local authorities are encouraged to seek collaboration and feedback from all prospective partners from the outset and throughout the strategy design and implementation, in an effort to harmonise and integrate the various perspectives and interests into a common vision.

How to go about it though? While there is no doubt that citizen involvement should be a priority in any local policy, it does not always work this way. At times due to lack of political determination; other times, due to weaknesses in the social fabric; yet in most cases, simply because the authorities do not have a clear idea of how to go about it.

Does citizen involvement mean working in consultation with NGOs? Does it mean inviting city-dwellers to exhibitions, forums and lectures? Does it mean prompting people to participate in projects? Does it mean pursuing private economic contributions for projects?

· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
36 In the case of France, for instance, given the importance of medical centres in decentralised cooperation, the **"Decentralised cooperation and international hospital cooperation"** work group published in 2003 *"Cooperation guidelines for local governments and hospitals"*.

3.1. Mechanisms for participation and concertation

Strictly speaking, involvement should be construed as insight, collaboration and feedback about the government's international affairs policy on the part of the local population and key stakeholders.

Involvement rests on two pillars: city-dwellers' motivation and availability of information. Even though it is possible to kindle citizens' interest and involvement, the effects of such actions seldom last long.

While a local government's international strategy obviously calls for citizens' support, participation mechanisms should be more far-reaching.

It is often argued that citizens have already vested powers in the local authorities by casting their vote. However, such generic powers do not give them leeway to undertake any action in the international stage.

Are citizens aware of how much their local government spends on foreign affairs? How can they voice their views - whether they think it is too much or too little, sound or unsound? Do they agree to its devoting the town council's time, effort and scarce resources to "international tours"? Do citizens understand the reasons for, and possible benefits of, cooperating with other countries? Do they agree to foreign experts' involvement in the design of local policies? Do they feel truly identified with other communities abroad with similar problems and challenges?

Table 33 illustrates the different levels of involvement local actors may attain in the local government's international strategy. Again, these are neither gradual steps nor pre-established stages. They are just different levels observed in practice in some cities in Latin America and Europe.

You can see that, while involvement can be very limited when the local government's policy merely aims at informing city-dwellers, it can grow as the town council gradually undertakes to collaborate with other stakeholders in specific projects or channel international resources for the benefit of local entities.

Involvement consolidates when a local government goes beyond a "one-way" logic and opens up so as to listen to what the different actors have to say.

Such mutually enriching dialogue can take the form of regular meetings with key bodies or public forums.

Situation	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Table 33 / Level of local actors' involvement in the international strategy					
The local government only sporadically informs about its actions in the field of international affairs (press, Internet, etc.)	■				
The government occasionally defines, coordinates and collaborates with local actors in inter-national actions within its remit.	■				
The government seeks local actors' opinions on specific international actions that may affect them.		■			
The government regularly holds a formal dialogue with local actors (through forums, meetings, etc.)			■		
The local government's international strategy is drawn up by means of an open, participatory process.				■	
A formally appointed advisory board, committee, assembly or equivalent body is responsible for following up international affairs.					□
Citizens' participation in international affairs is enshrined in a law, rule or regulation.					□

A local government that draws up its international strategy through consensus from the very outset boosts citizen involvement.

The General Development Cooperation Plan of the Autonomous Community of Madrid is a good example of how to build an international strategy in a participatory manner. Table 34 describes the various stages of the process and the result obtained.

Table 34 / An example of a participative international strategy:
The Autonomous Community of Madrid

To draw up the **General Plan for Development Cooperation of the Autonomous Community of Madrid 2005-2008** in a participative manner the autonomous government called upon all possible stakeholders (NGOs, public administrations, social entities, city and town council districts, political parties, etc., including partners from Africa and Latin America). The process was organised through eight thematic committees, namely Direct Cooperation, Co-funding with NGOs, Education for Development, Agreements, Joint Development, Women, Emergency Relief, Planning and Management.

The plan consisted of nine stages:

1. Organisation of the technical team,
2. Introduction to the public,
3. Evaluation of the previous programme (2001-2004),
4. Preparation of a preliminary draft of the 2005-2008 Plan,
5. Participation and contributions through the Internet,
6. Organisation of the First Participation Conference,
7. Preparation of the second draft of the Plan,
8. Second Participation Conference,
9. Final draft.

Effects of participative planning on the GPDC:

1. Introduction (foreword, local and international context).
2. Basic principles (initiatives brought forward by the South, association, joint responsibility and participative development, focus on development processes, search for impact, mutual transparency).
3. Themes of common concern (gender, institutional strengthening and the environment).
4. General objective: fight against poverty.
5. Specific objectives:
    a. Development in the Southern countries:
        i. Specific sectors' priorities: education, health, water, sanitation, civil society, reinforcement of decentralised administration, economic improvement, rural development, migrations and development.
        ii. Geographic priorities: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Morocco, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Dominican Republic and Senegal.
    b. Education for development (gender, human rights, migration, cross-cultural issues, fair trade and responsible consumer behaviour).
    c. Humanitarian action (emergencies and disasters).
6. Management (methods and instruments, planning, management by objectives, mechanisms of consultation ad coordination).
7. Relations with partners (within Spain, abroad, with international bodies).

For further information: <www.madrid.org>

To implement the consensus and participation process, local authorities can make evaluation questionnaires, organise interviews with key actors, consultation forums, virtual forums on the Internet, participation conferences, debates, meetings, opinion polls and/or any other events they may deem appropriate, provided they are open and inclusive.

The establishment of an advisory council as a means of formalising a consensus amongst the local government, the citizens and other actors represents a further step forward. In Spain, for instance, most of the local authorities allocating more than 100 thousand euros to international cooperation have one.

Though obviously not essential, it is indeed desirable to have an advisory council which, rather than replace the local government's competence and powers in the area of international affairs, is aware of the actions undertaken, gives opinions, puts forward initiatives and/or provides support in specific activities and projects. In addition, the advisory council acts as a bridge to facilitate social communication with the population as a whole.

Some municipalities –and even the NGOs themselves– tend to view the advisory council's work as a futile attempt to sort out technical-administrative matters related to project selection. Worse still, the advisory council is not always free to decide which projects to finance as its scope of action is often limited by an NGO's bias for, or outright involvement in, certain projects. While it is true that such critical views are occasionally grounded, we should not underestimate the advisory council's significant contribution to citizen participation, management transparency and international cooperation enhancement.[37] Table 35 illustrates the example of the Bilbao Municipal Cooperation Council (Spain).

Bilbao

Table 35 / An example of an advisory body:
The Bilbao Municipal Cooperation Council (Spain)

The Bilbao Municipal Cooperation Council is an advisory whose duties include information and institutional, social, political and citizen participation. It is responsible for defining and following up Bilbao Government's international strategy. The Council works in four areas:

I. Municipal cooperation strategies:

1) Provide advice to the city council;
2) Suggest solidarity and cooperation priorities and criteria;
3) Participate in the drafting of municipal bills and ordinances;
4) Pronounce decisions on related questions raised by the local government;
5) Put forward proposals on matters within its remit;
6) Evaluate the town council's actions and issue an annual report;
7) Promote a strategic cooperation plan on a four-yearly basis;
8) Foster consistency with other town council policies;
9) Issue a report prior to proposing municipal cooperation fund allocation, except in case of emergency relief aid.

. . . .
37 Extremadura Local Development Cooperation Fund. *Development Cooperation Manual for Local Entities*, Spain, 2003.

The legal framework, structure, goals and duties of the international affairs advisory councils or similar entities will be addressed in more detail in volume 2 of this Manual.

3.2 Citizen and community groups

Citizen and community groups have historically played a major role in the cities' international strategy. In fact, as mentioned above, city-dwellers' involvement at the beginning, as well as during the implementation and subsequent evaluation stages, is absolutely essential for the success of the strategy. Needless to say, if international relations are focused on issues that affect the population's day-to-day life, their impact will be stronger.

International cooperation is more likely to last if projects are carried out in collaboration with specific civil society groups or associations - youth, women, native people, labour-trade unions, etc.

Special attention should be placed on young people as they usually find it easier to speak or learn foreign languages and are keen to study or work abroad.

Multi-cultural cities with strong immigrant presence have extremely dynamic international relations, particularly if they have forged bonds with counterparts in the countries of origin or the immigrant communities. In the case of some Mexican municipalities, for instance, many people have emigrated and settled in certain cities in the United States as illegal residents. Some cities in Europe, on the other hand, are home to large numbers of Asian and African immigrants.

In addition to immigrants, local citizen' associations have played an active role in cooperation activities by promoting "neighbourhood-to-neighbourhood" relations between cities within the national territory.

Table 36 illustrates an example of how a local government in South America has integrated immigrant communities into international activities within the framework of its social inclusion policy.

PREFEITURA DA CIDADE DE
SÃO PAULO

Table 36 / Integrating immigrant communities into international cooperation

Sao Paulo's website *"Mil povos"* [A thousand people]

In 2002, on occasion of the 448th anniversary of the foundation of Sao Paulo, the City Council decided to create the Internet portal *"Mil povos"* (A thousand people) with a view to enhancing the integration of the foreign immigrant communities into the city. The portal is a platform for sharing information on the history, activities and cultures of these peoples. It includes information about more than thirty community groups, addresses of typical food restaurants, architectural landmarks, interviews, a photo gallery and a map showing where each community lives. The portal has given immigrants a feeling of belonging. As a result, they have joined in international and decentralised cooperation actions and projects with their regions and countries of origin. These groups include:

African-Brazilians, Angolans, Arabs, Argentineans, Armenians, Austrians, Belgians, Cape Verdeans, Canadians, Chileans, Chinese, Colombians, Ecuadorians, Finns, French, Germans, Greeks, Hungarians, Indians, Irish, Italians, Japanese, Jews, Koreans, Lithuanians, Mozambiqueans, Nigerians, Palestinians, Peruvians, Portuguese, Russians, Slovaks, Spaniards, Swiss, South Africans, Uruguayans and Venezuelans.

For further information: <www.milpovos.prefeitura.sp.gov.br>

3.3 Universities

Universities represent a privileged platform for international cooperation, not only because they have qualified human resources, but also because they are ideal scenarios for raising awareness and educating for development.[38]

Over the past years universities have widened their scope of action by joining a broad range of international networks. Many universities have even established foundations, cooperation departments, institutes, etc. for the purpose of fostering international cooperation.

The University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, for instance, has created the University Centre for International Cooperation, and the Institute of High Latin American Studies of the University of Paris III (Sorbonne Nouvelle) has a specific association for cooperation.

This is also the case in some universities in South America, such as Universidad Del Rosario in Colombia and Universidad de la República in Uruguay.

Along this line, a number of technological and research institutes have gradually joined in by making significant technical cooperation contributions to local government initiatives.

We should not underestimate the importance of universities and higher education institutions in the implementa-

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38 For further information on this subject refer to: AGUIRRE, Félix. *"La cooperación internacional descentralizada desde la perspectiva universitaria"* in TICHAUER M., Ricardo. (Editor) *La inserción internacional de las regiones y los municipios. Lecturas sobre gestión de cooperación descentralizada.* International Relations Institute, University of Viña del Mar, Chile, 2005.

tion of a city's international strategy. Indeed, they play a major role in the local government's actions beyond national borders by welcoming foreign students, participating in teachers and linguistic exchange activities, providing technical assistance, etc.

Table 37 shows the example of a network of universities and local governments in Latin America working jointly on international cooperation and institutional strengthening activities.

Table 37 / The Andean Community network of universities and local governments

In July 2004 **universities and local governments** from the Andean region met in Caracas. The purpose of this conference was to strengthen bonds and structure educational programmes to help improve **town and city management performance**.

The Andean countries sought to channel **decentralised cooperation** through the direct links established between their town councils and universities. The founding members include:

1) Bolivia: Cochabamba City Council and San Simón State University
2) Colombia: Gigante (Huila) Town Council and Del Rosario University
3) Ecuador: Loja Town Council and Private Technical University
4) Peru: San Miguel Town Council (Lima) and the Catholic University of Peru
5) Venezuela: Naguanagua Town Council and Simón Bolivar University

They are working towards:

   • Identifying the demand for municipal public servant training and designing new university course opportunities to meet this demand;
   • Structuring projects and accessing international cooperation sources;
   • Establishing competence and efficiency benchmarks;
   • Designing competence-based training programmes for local employees
   • Assessing municipal powers.

The network has forged bonds with the Observatory on Changes in Latin America (LOCAL) of the **University of Paris 3**, and has been invited to participate in the **Ile-de-France Region's** decentralised cooperation programme for the professionalisation of town management in Latin America (through De Rosario University, Colombia and the Catholic University of Peru)

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3.4 The business sector

The private sector and businesses are key partners of the city's international strategy. In fact, the so-called "public-private" cooperation has become a priority for the implementation of the development policies of many local governments, and it is encouraged by international bodies.[39]

Traditionally companies only had a duty to for their shareholders. Over the past years, however, this has gradually changed. Indeed, because their decisions have an increasing impact on the day-to-day lives of millions of people, social endorsement is becoming a must.

This explains the Corporate Social Responsibility movement spreading throughout the world. The idea is to raise awareness among businesspeople, so that they do not limit their strategies to boosting profits.

Some companies have engaged in such endeavours as environmental protection, quality-of-life improvement, poverty reduction, education, sport and culture. This new approach favours a gradual change in their public image and the public sector's role in the construction of a certain kind of social order.

With these goals in mind business organisations have created networks and devised joint cooperation strategies while maintaining alliances with local governments. Some large corporations have even established development aid policies in the form of donations or sponsoring of city council projects.[40]

Nevertheless, we should not forget that the ultimate goal of any business is to maximise profits. It is even argued that this trend toward greater social responsibility is yet another sales, marketing and promotional strategy for enhancing the companies' public image.

What's more it is argued that corporate interest in a local government's international policy merely aims at gaining a competitive edge in public sector contracts and tenders or at securing participation in advisory and technical assistance projects financed through international cooperation. This is particularly true with urban sector companies providing services or supplying infrastructure.

Because an international cooperation project is unlikely to attract companies for the "sheer joy of giving", local governments should carefully assess the nature and scope of collaboration with potential private partners.

In fact, it is not uncommon for local authorities to be offered financing, "free" technical assistance, support for feasibility studies or invitations to travel abroad. Through such offers, private corporations may be just paving the way to future negotiations for providing public services, signing sales contracts or obtaining special licenses and permits.

However, not always does the lure of potential business contracts arouse the private sector's interest in a local government's international affairs. Whatever the motivation, the fact remains that the corporate sector is becoming a key partner for city councils in this area.

Different forms of public-private cooperation, such as patronage or sponsoring of international events and projects bear witness to the above. Some municipal networks and bodies actually promote this kind of cooperation.

The Ibero-American Municipal Union, for instance, has established a network of companies engaged in local development cooperation (EMCODEL),[41] and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has published the Tools for pro-poor municipal public private partnerships (PPP).[42]

39 For further information on this subject: TICHAUER, M. Ricardo. *"Cooperación internacional: el papel de la empresa privada"*, in TICHAUER M., Ricardo. (Editor) *La inserción internacional de las regiones y los municipios. Lecturas sobre gestión de cooperación descentralizada.* International Relations Institute. University of Viña del Mar, Chile, 2005

40 The Solidarity and Sustainable Development Fund for Access to Water, which was created in 2003 by water supply giant Veolia Environnement and the City Council of Lyon (France) is a good example of public-private collaboration for financing access to drinking water in towns with no water works. This fund has supported municipal projects in Morocco, Madagascar, Burkina Faso and Moldavia. **For further information:** <www.veoliaenvironnement.com>

Similarly, the programme Cities Alliance (see sub-section 6.2 below) organised a work group specialised in the collaboration with companies. The Municipal Finance Task Force (MFTF) seeks to increase the flow of domestic long term private capital in support of slum upgrading and sustainable urban development strategies. MFTF serves as a forum for collecting the experience and views of international experts on municipal finance and private capital mobilization.[43]

3.5 Non-governmental organisations

There is no doubt that the non-government sector is a key partner in local government international strategies. Thousands of NGOs, CSOs (civil society organisations) and CBOs (community-based organisations) around the world are working on cooperation projects.

NGOs can range from small groups of people to huge corporations with annual budgets worth billions of dollars, offices throughout the globe and thousands of employees worldwide.

Hence, the potential of associating an NGO with local government international strategies should not be underestimated. NGO coordination policies or platforms have varying degrees of organisation in practically every country.

Because such entities usually work with thematic groups or in specific geographic areas, it may be very useful to keep a record of those foreign non-governmental organisations financing projects or working on certain themes in a given country.

Examples include the NGO Coordination for Development in Spain,[44] the National NGO Coordination for International Solidarity (Coordination Sud)[45] in France or the Brazilian NGO Association (ABONG)[46].

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41 <www.uimunicipalistas.org>
42 <http://pppue.undp.org/toolkit/index.html>
43 <http://www.mftf.org>
44 <www.congde.org>
45 <www.coordinationsud.org>
46 <www.abong.org.br>

In order to collaborate with NGOs you must first get to know them. Are there any active NGOs in the city? What countries do they co-operate with? What themes do they deal with? It is essential to work with organisations that are deeply rooted in their own area and, at the same time, are well aware of the local problems in the country they wish to forge bonds with.

NGOs can provide local governments with experience and know-how in international affairs. They act as bridges between local governments and the community in countries in need of cooperation. They have information and knowledge about those countries, and can operate as technical centres for project implementation and follow-up.

Nevertheless, NGO - local government relations are not necessarily a bed of roses. In fact, the stereotyped distribution of the tasks each of them is expected to perform often leads to clashes.

Sometimes the NGOs are regarded as too dependent on local government grants, and are accused of lacking institutional legitimacy. On the other hand, NGOs may view local governments as competitors in their search for resources for international cooperation, an area where some NGOs claim sole competence.

Most NGOs expect to be treated as "representatives" of the civil society rather than enterprises that are subcontracted to carry out projects.

While a local government may have wide experience in certain fields, such as institutional strengthening and the provision of public services, it has a lot to learn from NGOs when it comes to humanitarian relief aid or community projects. In the latter cases, neglecting NGOs assistance would entail higher costs and less impact.

Collaboration between local governments and NGOs should be based on two basic principles: maintain auto-

Local governments should not "sell international cooperation to the highest bidder", nor should they just donate funds with no follow up or control. On the other hand, they should neither ignore NGOs' vast experience in international relations. The challenge consists in striking the right balance, thus collaborating in a constructive manner.

tive cooperation policies. At present nine funds make up a Confederation. (See section 6.5)

This model has been remarkably successful as it has favoured mutual learning and enabled local governments to channel cooperation more efficiently.

Municipal associations further help devise solutions for common problems. Although these plans have been basically developed for the provision of public services (garbage collection, road work administration, water works, transport, etc), there is no reason why they should not apply to international affairs.[47]

The old saying "united we stand" applies not only to this, but to other areas as well. Association galvanise municipalities into more powerful, effective action.

Collaboration can be implemented horizontally, that is, between local authorities at the same level (several town councils) or vertically, i.e. between different government levels (region, county, district). Sharing material, HR and administrative costs helps consolidate long-lasting international relations.

nomy and specificity so as not to confuse roles or blur visibility; ensure that the local government will take the final decision as to the goals, methods and long-term objectives of its international strategy.

3.6 Other local governments

In addition to the remarkable work done by municipal associations, new inter-municipal collaboration mechanisms are available for working with other countries. It is becoming increasingly common to see two or three town councils in the same region join forces and resources in order to develop a joint international relations strategy.

Spain provides a good example of this type of local associations for international cooperation. The Spanish Cooperation and Solidarity Funds amalgamating different municipalities bring together technical and economic resources to carry out stronger, more consistent and effec-

There are several examples of successful collaboration between different local government tiers, such as the experience of the State of Jalisco in Mexico, where the Government has launched a programme to support the town councils in the state. (See table 38).

Another example worth mentioning is the *Xarxa Barcelona Municipis Solidaris*,[48] promoted by the Barcelona Provincial Council through its Development Cooperation Division. By implementing this mechanism, the local government helps Catalan town councils work together in the area of solidarity and international cooperation.

The Xarxa (Network) is based on the concept that cooperation must be included in every city council's public po-

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47 For futher information on this subject refer to: Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. Commission Nationale de la Coopération Décentralisée. *Vade-mecum coopération décentralisée et intercommunalités*. France, 2004

**Table 38 / Joining efforts: Regional government + municipalities
The example of the State of Jalisco [Mexico]**

Since 2005 the State of Jalisco has developed a **Twin Town Pilot Programme** through the National Municipal Development Bureau, the administrative area coordinating regional government-town council relations.

The aim was to encourage local town councils to formalise town-twinning relations with their counterparts abroad. To that end, Jalisco organised a **Town-Twinning Agreement Training Workshop** for some ten local town councils. Within the framework of this workshop, fraternal relations forged by some of them were formalised as per the guidelines set out in the Treaty Formalisation Law.

Jalisco seeks to stamp out the belief that town-twinning is a mere mechanism for fostering friendly relations, and actually set the agreements in operation. The government is working on the formalisation of nearly **50 town-twinning agreements** in around **20 municipalities**, including densely populated Guadalajara, Tlaquepaque and Zapopan. These outreach and support activities are intended to accompany town-twinning processes, help establish international bonds and foster decentralised cooperation at the local level.

For further information: <www.sre.gob.mx>, <www.jalisco.gob.mx>

licy as a platform for experience-sharing, networking, information, training and debate, as well as a useful mechanism for providing technical and economic support to town councils in their international strategies.

Through the Xarxa the Barcelona Provincial Council specifically offers its town councils:

- Assistance for general international strategy planning
- Assistance for raising citizen awareness of international affairs

- Technical support for cooperation projects abroad
- Economic support for specific project co-funding
- Economic support for circumstantial action funding
- Organisation of events and seminars.

Table 39 illustrates a success story in Latin America: the Consortium for the Development of the Northeast of the Province of Buenos Aires (CODENOBA) in Argentina, which has been declared by UNESCO an example to be followed.

48 <www.diba.es>

Table 39 / Inter-municipalism and international relations:
The example of CODENOBA (Argentina)

The Consorcio para el Desarrollo del Noroeste de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (CODENOBA) is an association made up of **nine town council districts** (Alberti, Bragado, Carlos Casares, General Viamonte, Hipólito Yrigoyen, Nueve de Julio, Pehuajó, Rivadavia and Trenque Lauquen) with nearly **250 thousand inhabitants**. Created in 1994 with a view to promoting productive development throughout the region, its activities involve agribusiness, small undertakings, handicrafts and local cultures. At the beginning CODENOBA had neither the necessary administrative and technical capacity, nor the legal or financial instruments to fulfil its objectives.

In 2002 the mayors of the nine town council districts requested the support of UNESCO'S programme MOST,[49] in order to transform the administrative culture and develop a common work method that went beyond the specific interests of each town council district. This entailed mastering the project culture and applying a new work methodology to suit the regional development projects.

CODENOBA members jointly managed to obtain **international cooperation** from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France and UNESCO in the form of technical assistance missions.

Hence, multilateral international cooperation projects were carried out in order to reform the inter-municipal structure's internal communication system, help develop communication tools, such as the web page, make an inventory of actors and organise seminars on good practices to facilitate experience-sharing and improve regional administration methods.

CODENOBA established a common international relations area, thereby positioning the region abroad and participating in cooperation and technical assistance networks.

Contact: Carina Miguel, Secretary. CODENOBA <subcom@yrigoyen.mun.gba.gov.ar>

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49 The programme MOST operating within UNESCO's Social and Human Science (SHS) area seeks to link and harmonise social science research with its application to public policies. <www.unesco.org/shs>

4. How to provide the city with visibility and international projection?

a T PRESENT international projection represents an innovative tool for the local management of cities which aim to turn into development and innovation beacons, by becoming increasingly competitive worldwide.

Such identity can be achieved through a local policy or by making good use of a natural or physical asset. "Territorial uniqueness" seeks to build or consolidate citizens' identification with their city, its organisations, its products and services, while creating a city "hallmark" that can be recognised by others.

Table 40 illustrates some examples of cities that have adopted a well-defined identity in order to stand out at the international level.

Table 40 / Seeking identity for a city: Latin American examples	
Porto Alegre, Brazil	The cradle of the World Social Forum, Porto Alegre is known as a meeting place for social movements, and considered a model of direct democracy for its "Partici-pative Budget" municipal policies".
Curitiba, Brazil	The "Quality-of-Life Capital", Curitiba is a global paradigm of environmentally friendly urban development.
Rosario, Argentina	The "Port and Gateway to MERCOSUR", Rosario stands out for the inclusive governability policies and transparent city management enshrined in its Strategic Plan.[50]

But what are the foundations of a "city project"? What criteria should prevail to give it a global appeal?

To gain a position on the national, regional and global stage local governments have devised a broad range of strategies sometimes referred to as "City Marketing", by analogy with the strategies used by the private sector to position products on the market. Urban marketing is a strategy for developing the city that aims to:

1. Promote its characteristic features and services amongst residents, visitors and investors;

2. Articulate incentives with a view to enhancing its appeal for current, as well as future users;

3. Ensure fast, efficient access to international markets;

4. Make the public aware of its image and comparative advantages.

Table 41 illustrates the example of the Cordoba City Council in Argentina, which applied this methodology to mark its presence worldwide.

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50 For more information, refer to *"Marca de ciudad. Posicionamiento, competitividad e imagen de Rosario"*. Cuadernos del Plan Estratégico (A city's hallmark. Positioning, competitiveness and image of Rosario. Strategic Plan Writings), Rosario City Council,1998.

Table 41 / An example of international city marketing:
Cordoba City Council (Argentina)

MUNICIPALIDAD
DE CÓRDOBA

Córdobaciudad

Cordoba's City Marketing Plan represents a pioneering experience in Latin America as it applies a management tool usually associated with private companies. The Plan was prepared with the support of the Project *Proyecto de Gestión Urbana en Ciudades Intermedias seleccionadas de América Latina y el Caribe* (Urban Management of Medium-Sized Selected Cities of Latin America and the Caribbean) (ITA/92/S71), which was financed by ECLAC and the Italian government.

The Plan began by carrying out a diagnostic survey about Cordoba's four key marketing features: image, infrastructure, attractions and people. The findings of this survey revealed that Cordoba is basically viewed as an academic and industrial area with quality technological and educational infrastructure, cultural heritage tourist attractions, a prestigious university and capable, enthusiastic people.

The Plan's priorities include strengthening Cordoba's image as the **city-of-knowledge within the MERCOSUR** Region and an attractive place to establish high-tech enterprises, especially in five strategic areas: new materials, robotics and automation, IT and telecommunications, environmental technologies and regional integration economy. In line with the principles defined in the Plan, Cordoba sets out to attract investors from MERCOSUR and other key regions by designing a functional marketing strategy and a battery of actions for boosting its international projection.

Improve service quality

• High performance research groups
• Internationalisation of universities
• International academic events
• International scientific publications
• Total Quality Management
• Technological Centre Network
• Science & Technology Plan
• Technopark

Spread image worldwide

• Launch an international city-of-knowledge network
• Install direct aerial connections with advanced metropolis
• Create a Teleport
• Free Net services
• International experts' network
• International itinerant exhibition

Communicate

• Set up a show room
• Conferences on Knowledge societies
• Corporate delegation visit programme
• Ads in high-tech magazines
• Brochure, CD-ROM and website
• Newsletter
• Merchandising products
• Thematic park "City of Knowledge"

For further information: <http://www.bm30.es/intranet/inter/cordoba.html>

4

While it is true that cities compete on the global market, we should not forget that the political agenda of local governments includes far more potential for cooperation and sharing than for competition.

International promotion tools normally have a two-fold purpose: on the one hand, attracting investments, funding for public works, events, corporate and institutional headquarters, fairs, conventions, conferences, exhibitions and tourism; on the other hand, promoting local strategic sectors and exports abroad.

To assess the degree of local government openness to the world, some people even use "internationalisation" indicators, such as the so-called GEII (Global Economic Internationalisation Index) made up of the following coefficients:[51]

1. Willingness to establish international commercial bonds
2. Attraction of foreign investment
3. Inflow of foreign tourists
4. Foreign population (immigrant communities)
5. International workers
6. Foreign students and international educational opportunities

While enhancing local identity does facilitate international projection, this type of urban marketing appears to privilege competition between local governments because it is based on commercial criteria.

4.1. Economic promotion: investments, foreign trade and tourism

To many local governments international relations represent a major tool for generating wealth and jobs. As we all know, this is achieved by promoting exports, attracting foreign investment and establishing businesses abroad.

More often than not, formalising official relations between local governments naturally leads to agreements involving the purchase and sale of goods and/or services, investments and exchange of technologies.

That is why the people or divisions in charge of international affairs usually report to the government's economic development officers. Likewise, international tours are often intended to promote trade and attract foreign investment.

Trade is often fostered through programmes or actions aimed at supporting local exports, particularly those involving SMEs.

Hence, local governments should develop comprehensive commercial promotion plans with clear objectives and targets. This can be done by assessing the supply of local products for export and their promotion abroad, through institutional and communication media, as well as by establishing smooth-running communication channels with businesspeople, importers, exporters and chambers of commerce.

To successfully implement this strategy, local governments should work jointly with those national authorities responsible for promoting foreign trade, commercial representation offices abroad and chambers of commerce and industry, both nationally and abroad.

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51 Global Economic Internationalisation Index (GEII). *Report on the internationalisation of Piemonte*. Union of the Chambers of Commerce of Piemonte. IRES Piemonte, ITP Investimenti Torino e Piemonte and the Foreign Trade Office of the Piemonte. Chamber of Commerce, 2004.

It is also important to conduct economic promotion tours, support commercial missions involving local business people, participate in international fairs and have the necessary infrastructure and capacity to welcome commercial delegations from abroad.

Furthermore, for the sake of visibility and international projection it is essential to establish communication channels in several languages. Many local governments are launching specific websites in the languages of their major potential business partners. Printing attractive brochu-res with photos and useful data about the city is also a common practice these days.

These communication instruments should describe all the characteristics of the city and the territory, stressing the comparative advantages and attractions for foreign stake-holders in the public and private sectors, and, of course, for young people and families.

Table 42 illustrates the example of the city of London, which boasts one of the most ambitious international business promotion strategies.

Table 42 / An example of international economic promotion:
London (United Kingdom)

The government of the City of London:

1. Promotes business and London-based businesses through international tours conducted by the Mayor, covering 20 countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and North America (not more than 80 days per year), including business people's delegations.

2. Welcomes **official guests** from abroad and entertains Heads of State and high officials strictly adhering to the relevant protocol standards. Organises an annual banquet for the diplomatic corps.

3. Maintains a **City Marketing Suite** available free of charge to display the characteristics of the City, its services, products, entertainment and advantages. In 2005 fifteen thousand users from 60 countries visited this Suite.

4. Maintains an **advisory service** for those who wish to invest in the City, also aimed at identifying potential investors.

5. Organises up to nine courses on **"Familiarisation with the City"** for UK Foreign Affairs Ministry officers and commercial promotion and investment staff abroad. Offers **high-level courses** for Ambassadors. Regularly **sends the publication** *City News London* so as to keep former attendees up-to-date.

6. Publishes the *Global Powerhouse* **magazine**, the main tool for promoting the city and its services, in English, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese. This publication is distributed through the City's representation offices abroad, and its academic and business institutions.

7. Maintains a **London Office** in the city of **Brussels** to collect intelligence information and carry out deliberation and lobby activities before the EU authorities.

8. Annually organises the **City of London Programme**, a training programme for companies and university graduates from the new EU member-states.

9. Maintains a **Representation Office** in **Beijing** and another one in **Shanghai** (China) to defend and promote the city's economic, commercial and business interests.

For further information: <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/business_city/lordmayor/international.htm>

Below is a list of possible areas to be addressed in a London international promotion brochure, book or video, preferably in several languages.

a. Territory (geographic characteristics, climate, temperature, etc.)

b. Demography (population by gender and age groups)

c. Employment (economically active population figures by sector)

d. Business (information about companies and businesses by sector, including banks)

e. Economy (information about major economic and industrial activities)

f. Logistics (information about road links, external transport media, such as buses, trains, airports, river and sea ports, markets)

g. Local transport (information about city buses, tram cars, taxis, underground, etc.)

h. Real Estate Market (office and home options, average lease and sale prices)

i. Hospitality infrastructure (number of hotels, categories, room capacity)

j. Tourist attractions (nature, history, gastronomy, monuments)

k. Cultural options (museums, festivals, cinemas, libraries, concerts, etc.)

l. Infrastructure for events (auditoriums, amphitheatres, meeting rooms, conference halls, areas for fairs and exhibitions)

m. International relations (town-twinning, bonds with other countries, Embassies, consulates, foreign nations' chambers of commerce and industry)

n. Educational options (information about primary, secondary and higher education)

o. Health (hospitals, clinics, health-care centres, chemists')

p. Key dates (holidays and major national events)

q. Standard of living (green areas, sport infrastructure, near-by promenades)

r. Government and city council services (authority, powers, main services: water, garbage collection, roads, parking, cemeteries, etc.)

Just as promoting trade and attracting investors represents a remarkably useful means for boosting tourism, so does the local government's international strategy. Considering its own competitive advantages, authorities should therefore carry out actions to increase the number of visitors from abroad.

By implementing a programme to attract tourists, you can either create or enhance the image of a city, helping boost tourist inflow, spending on local services and hospitality industry-related investments.

It is important to define the tourist profile sought through the infrastructure, hotels, cultural and recreation events offered. The local government should analyse potential markets and plan specific tourist promotions on and off season.

Over the past few years local governments have developed specialised tourist activities to concentrate on specific target visitors. Thus, they have drawn up strategies to attract luxury, high-net-worth tourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, social tourism, etc.

The **International Forum on Fair Tourism and Fair Trade (FITS)** is an important alternative tourism platform where local governments in Europe and Latin America share their experiences (see table 43).

FITS 2006

Table 43 / Cooperation between local governments for an alternative tourism:
International Forum on Fair Tourism and Fair Trade

The main purpose of FITS is to help strengthen an **international movement** in favour of a different kind of tourism -environmentally friendly, respectful of local cultures and, above all, focused on fostering the **economic development of local populations**, rather than just intermediaries, large tourist operators, travel agencies and transnational hotel chains.

The first FITS took place in Marseille in 2003, and the second in Chiapas in 2006, seeking to:

• Strengthen national, regional and international social tourism networks through experience sharing and direct contact between participants, especially base- organisations and local governments

• Devise joint actions at international level through the "International Action Plan 2006-2010.

The Action Plan 2006-2010 clearly establishes joint work with local governments and promotion of **decentralised cooperation** actions to help town councils develop social tourism projects for the benefit of local communities.

For further information: <www.tourisme-solidaire.org>

4.2. Culture, the arts, sports and recreation

Art, culture, sports and recreation have always represented key channels and should therefore be included in every local government's international strategy. All of them have a huge potential as they help forge long-lasting bonds with other countries, promote the host city and generate both revenues and jobs.

Cities and town councils engage more and more in international projects related to those fields. There are countless possibilities ranging from the organisation of mega-events of global impact, such as the World Fair, the Olympic Games, the World Football Championship or the Universal Forum on Cultures, to small undertakings such as staging exhibitions, shows or festivals.

Table 44 illustrates the international contest "World Book Capital City". Every year UNESCO grants this award to one city. This is an example of an event that can boost the visibility of a city and position it on the world map.

Table 44 / International cultural visibility:"World Book Capital City"

Encouraged by the experience of the World Book Day and Copyright Day, created in 1996, UNESCO established in 2001 the annual award **World Book Capital City**. The International Press Association (IPA), the International Federation of Librarians' Associations (IFLA) and the International Book-Sellers Federation have joined in this initiative, assisting UNESCO as members of the selection Committee.

The World Book Capital City undertakes to actively **promote books and reading** for one year. The selection criteria include national and international commitment to the city council, involvement in the "book chain" and cooperation with national and international professional organisations representing authors, editors, book-sellers and librarians.

The award-winning city undertakes to abide by the principles of **freedom of expression**, freedom to publish and spread information, UNESCO Charter statements and other relevant documents.

While nomination entails no direct economic benefit, it represents a recognition of great symbolic significance for the visibility and projection of the award-winning city. The World Book Capital Cities for the 2001-2008 period are listed below:

2001:	Madrid (Spain)
2002:	Alexandria (Egypt)
2003:	New Delhi (India)
2004:	Amberes (Belgium)
2005:	Montreal (Canada)
2006:	Torino (Italy)
2007:	Bogota (Colombia)
2008:	Amsterdam (Holland)

For further information: <http://portal.unesco.org/culture>

Organising international events with specialised media coverage is a very efficient way to give visibility to a city. Many cities have gained international recognition for cultural or artistic reasons.

Examples include Cannes (France) or Cartagena (Colombia) for their international film festivals or Guanajuato (Mexico) for the International Cervantino Festival (see table 45). Organising important concerts or music festivals can also contribute to a city's projection beyond national borders.

Table 45 / Guanajuato (Mexico) and the International Cervantino Festival

Launched in 1972, the **International Cervantino Festival** (FIC) is the main cultural and artistic festival in Mexico, and one of the most important in Latin America and the world.

It was inspired by an initiative of the Government of the **State of Guanajuato** and the **Guanajuato City Council** with the support of the **Mexican Federal Government** and the **University of Guanajuato**. From the outset, the Festival has had strong international presence in the form of **"friendly countries"** and **"guest countries"**.

As a major cultural event, the Festival has generated tradition, identity and deep roots in the city, and has further generated important bonds and recognition abroad. At present, FIC is a significant cultural heritage not only of Guanajuato, but also of all of Mexico and Latin America.

Over the past years FIC has been organised with the support of a **Guest of Honor** country. This gives the audience the chance to get to know the current cultural options and complexity in a given nation.

For the artistic and cultural development of Guanajuato and Mexico, the Festival has meant an invaluable opportunity to **open up to the world and gain international visibility**. The benefits of the past 34 FIC festivals cannot only be measured in terms of money, jobs, cultural and artistic infrastructure, tourism, etc, but also through the various **long-lasting cooperation bonds** established.

For further information: <www.festivalcervantino.gob.mx>

In addition to organising events of huge international projection, local governments have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to innovate, wielding art and culture as instruments for long-term development. Bilbao (Spain) is a wonderful example; it came into the global spotlight by opening a museum (see table 46).

Guggenheim BILBAO

Table 46 / The art of going global: A museum places Bilbao on the world map

The project of establishing Bilbao as the European site of New York's **Guggenheim Modern and Contemporary Art Museum** was one of the activities developed by the Basque local governments (**Basque Country Government, Biskaia Region and Bilbao City Council**) to contribute to the recovery of the Basque Country's economic structure and increase the chances of turn the Bilbao metropolitan area into a **reference hub in the regions by the Atlantic**.

The museum is a major element in the **city's reurbanisation plan**, along with other great projects conceived by some of the most renowned architects in the world.

It came about as a result of the collaboration between the Basque local authorities and the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation**, based on complementary contributions. While the Basque government contributes political and cultural authority, as well as financing for the construction and operation of the museum, the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation** brings in art collections, special exhibition programmes and international experience in the field of museum administration and management. The Museum operates in close collaboration with, and with the support of, an important group of **Spanish and foreign companies**.

Inaugurated in 1997, by the time it turned one year old more than **1.5 million people** from all over the world had visited the museum, placing Bilbao and the Basque country on the world map and bringing about an unprecedented **inflow of money**.

For further information: <www.euskadi.net>, <www.guggenheim-bilbao.es>

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Not only culture and the arts represent efficient channels for local government's internationalisation. Let us consider how the organisation of sports events or celebrations, such as the Great Formula 1 Prize in Montecarlo, the World Tennis Championship in Wimbledon or Carnival in Rio de Janeiro helps boost the city's development and international visibility. Table 47 illustrates some of the measurable benefits obtained by the city of Torino, Italy, after hosting the Winter Olympic Games in 2006.

Table 47 / Sport as international catalyser:
Turin and the Winter Olympic Games 2006

The organisation of the XX Winter Olympic Games in the city of Torino, Italy was an excellent opportunity to boost international relations between municipal, provincial and regional governments. Apart from the inflow of money generated by some one million attendees and the infrastructure built, the city and its inhabitants gained unprecedented benefits and international projections.

Among the many initiatives brought forward, there stands out the agreement reached with the **United Nations Programme for the Environment** (UNPE) to ensure that the Games would not have a negative ecological impact - fumes, garbage, water preservation, mountainous ecosystems and ecological certification of the buildings constructed and the hotels hired.

Another significant international initiative involved the promotion of the **"Olympic Truce"**. Born in Ancient Greece back in the 11th Century B.C., the Olympic Truce aims to safeguard the athletes from every country by allowing them to compete regardless of the political situation in their country. Thus, sport contributes to the

peaceful resolution of conflicts. To that end, the local governments of the **Piemonte Region**, the **Province of Torino** and the **Torino City Council** took the necessary steps before the **United Nations General Assembly** to have a resolution adopted on the matter.

In addition, to promote this initiative, the local authorities decided to organise, at the same time, **One World International Cooperation Cities**, an event for analysing peace, cooperation and justice issues during the months prior to the Olympic Games. During this event the local governments signed a statement in favour of the Olympic Truce in the presence of the mayors of **Gaza** (Palestine), **Sarajevo** (Bosnia) and **Hiroshima** (Japan).

For further information: <www.torino2006.org>,< www.comune.torino.it>

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4.3. Awards and international recognition

A local government can achieve remarkable visibility and projection by obtaining an international award or recognition. There are many kinds of contests and awards for recognising the work of local governments in countless areas.

While in many cases such prices are granted only on one or two occasions, the most prestigious ones are awarded periodically. Apart from the recognition and visibility they bring about, they often entail a financial reward.

Beyond any doubt, the most renowned international award granted to local governments is the Dubai International Award for Best Practices to improve the living environment. In collaboration with UN-Habitat, the United Arab Emirates have granted this award on a biannual basis since

1995. The Dubai International Award is associated with the **UN-Habitat Programme** for Best Practices and Local Leadership.[52]

This programme is part of a worldwide network of state bodies, local governments, town council associations, academic institutions and base organisations cooperating in solution-sharing for sustainable development in issues relating to housing, the urban environment, environmental planning, architecture and urban design, economic development, social inclusion, crime prevention, poverty reduction, women, young people, town council finances, infrastructure and social services.

Table 48 includes basic information on the Dubai International Award.

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52 <www.unhabitat.org/programmes/bestpractices>

Table 48 / Visibility and international recognition: The Dubai International Award

Every two years, up to two initiatives obtain the **Dubai International Award for Best Practices** to improve the living environment. Established in 1995 by the City Council of Dubai, capital of the United Arab Emirates, the award analyses and assesses environmental projects in local governments around the world through a technical committee and an independent panel. The projects may be submitted by the local government or other actors.

1. Objective: To recognise and provide visibility to successful practices to improve the living conditions in the city, according to the guidelines in the 2nd Habitat Conference (Istanbul 1996) and the Statement of Dubai.

2. Award: The award totals US$ 480,000. Part of this amount is shared by the award-winning experiences, and the rest is used for covering the travelling, accommodation and food expenses of a delegation of up to two people for each winning case attending the ceremony in Dubai. Each winning experience is further granted a trophy and a certificate.

For further information: <www.dubai-award.dm.gov.ae>

The World Water Council and the Government of Morocco offer the World Water Award King Hassan II to successful initiatives in the management of water.[53] The US$100,000 award was created in 2001. It is granted every three years. Other recognitions include the Ibero-American Digital Cities Award[54] for specific results obtained by local governments in the area of new technologies, or the International Downtown Association Award[55] recognising the best practices for revamping and rehabilitating the centre of towns.

We would like to mention that a large number of awards and recognitions do not apply solely to local governments, though they can apply.

Among these awards, UN agencies grant recognitions in the areas within their remit, and so do private foundations, companies, universities and a broad range of institutions.

For example, the **United Nations Public Services Award** recognises the quality and professionalism in the management and supply of public services. To local governments this award helps demonstrate on the international stage innovation capacity in three categories: **a)** transparency, responsibility and reactivation of public service according to the city-dwellers' needs; **b)** improvement in the service supply methods; and **c)** more active citizen involvement in decision-making.[56]

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53 <www.worldwatercouncil.org>
54 <www.iberomunicipios.org>
55 <www.ida-downtown.org>
56 <www.unpan.org>

5. How to forge decentralised cooperation relations?

*W*HEN establishing relations abroad, local governments recognise that many of the problems they faces at home are similar to those encountered by local authorities in other parts of the world. Shared concerns inspire mutual support and solidarity in various areas. In this scenario it is not surprising to see that direct cooperation between local governments in Europe and Latin America is expanding rapidly. The official opinions stated by Eurocities and Mercocities bear witness to the above (see tables 49 and 50).

Table 49 / Cities Open to the World

In its 2005 General Assembly, within the framework of the theme "Cities open to the World", the members of *Eurocities*, the network of the main European cities, unanimously adopted the **"Statement of Lyon"**. Highlighting the key role played by local governments as partners in international cooperation. *Eurocities* calls upon States to:

• Recognise decentralised cooperation as an integral part of the EU´s foreign policy
• Include the strengthening of subnational governments institutions and local democracy as one of the EU international cooperation goals
• Ensure that the different financial instruments and programmes are used for boosting local and regional participation and direct city-to-city cooperation.

For further information: <www.eurocities.org>

Table 50 / Statement on decentralised cooperation with the European Union [57]

Ten years after the European Union and Latin America undertook pioneering decentralised cooperation actions, the Council of MERCOCITIES considers the cooperation programmes applied in the region by the European Commission and states:

• It is convinced that cooperation between cities represents a major contribution to solidarity between our peoples, and that there have been multiple examples of solidarity between Latin America and Europe.
• Considering the pressing need to address the problems derived from poverty, inequality and social exclusion that affect great sectors of the Latin American population, it is important to work toward the strengthening and deepening of the relations between the local governments on both continents.
• It is aware that local governments are closest to the community and their problems, and that they are capable of creating public policies for them.
• It considers that decentralised cooperation between Latin America and Europe is a strong instrument to cooperate with these policies in order to solve such problems.

For further information: <www.mercociudades.org>

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57 MERCOCIUDADES/BOARD/MINUTES Nº 01/05 XXIII. ANNEX XII. Board Meeting, Buenos Aires, 16 May 2005.

5.1 What do we understand by "decentralised cooperation?"

Before anything else, it is important to explain what we understand by "decentralised cooperation." The term "cooperation" is often understood in a strict sense as "aid for development", particularly within the rich-poor relations framework. It is important to clarify this concept as it does not reflect reality. Development cooperation is one, rather than the only way to cooperate, and it does not comprise the full range of international relations forged by local actors.

Nowadays we can say that the meaning of the term "decentralised cooperation" is vague and that its interpretation is subject to various interpretations.

For example, some international institutions –and particularly the European Union– believe that decentralised cooperation comprises the cooperation provided not only but local governments, but also NGOs and other actors in civil society.

In contrast, in some countries such as France, Spain and Italy, decentralised cooperation is limited to local governments, that is to say, regions, provinces, departments, autonomous communities, regional authorities, town councils and their associations.

The truth is that this conceptual definition is reflected in the great diversity of the existing methods of cooperation. The different actors have considered a range of practices and actions, such as the classical town twinning of two cities and their participation in very important international programmes with complex institutional articulations, as decentralised cooperation. In fact, the use of this concept has often been determined by the practice of a country or of a specific region - or, more precisely, by a given legal framework.

Furthermore, in recent years, and due to the publication of a document by UN-Habitat, the use of the term "city-to-city cooperation" has become widespread, often abbreviated as C2C.[58]

Needless to say, within the context of this Manual, the term decentralised cooperation refers to the relations of direct collaboration between two or more local governments, which is an important part but not all the international action of these governments. As discussed earlier, foreign action entails promotion of initiatives, attraction of investments in tourism and commerce, adoption of foreign policy positions, deliberation, lobbies, etc. that not necessarily imply collaboration with other local governments.

Thus, considering the aims of this Manual and on the basis of the experience of the actors of Euro-Latin American decentralised cooperation, the following definition is suggested:

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58 UNCHS, WACLAC. *City to City Co-operation: Issues arising from experience*. Nairobi, Kenya, 2001.

observatorio
| Cooperación Descentralizada | Unión Europea | América Latina |

Table 51 / Decentralised cooperation definition [59]

Local decentralised cooperation is the set of official cooperation initiatives for development which, under the leadership of local authorities, aim to stimulate the capacities of territory- based actors and foster a more participatory development.

Without denying the existence of practices which imply "aid", local decentralised cooperation is fundamentally based on the principles of multilateralism, mutual interest and partnership. It tends more and more towards initiatives which incorporate added value to the activities based on the specificity of local governments' competence areas and experience.

In addition to the attempts to define decentralised cooperation, there have also been a great deal of analytic efforts to conceptualise the different modalities it represents.[60]

Some specialists have even tried to classify it. Though these typologies are useful to tackle the phenomenon from an analytical point of view, they are often limited and schematic compared with the richness and diversity of practice[61], because the international relations of the local governments are in full progress and innovative ways to work and new schemes arise every day.

Without analysing in detail these typologies, table 52 shows us some of the elements that are often taken into account when it comes to classifying decentralised cooperation.

59 ROMERO, María del Huerto *Introducción a la cooperación descentralizada*. Ibid.

60 The CITTA group works on an interesting continuous research project–*Cities as International and Transnational Actors*–. With the support of Sapienza University in Rome, the group includes research workers, professors and graduate students from different universities studying local government internationalisation. For further information: <www.diesonline.it./citta.esf>

61 Refer to: ROMERO, María del Huerto. *"La cooperación descentralizada local. Aportes para la construcción de un marco de referencia conceptual en el espacio de las relaciones Unión Europea-América Latina"* in *Annual Report on Decentralised Cooperation 2005*. A useful, if complex, analytical framework can be found in: UN-HABITAT, WACLAC. *Partnership for Local Capacity Development. Building on the Experiences of City-to-City Co-operation*. Nairobi, May 2003.

Table 52 / Usual criteria for classifying decentralised cooperation	
Criteria	Considerations
Considering the kind of actions	Depending on the scope of the actions carried out it is possible to talk about concrete actions, projects or programmes. They can also be classified into formal and informal (depending on whether there are contractual relations or not).
Considering issues	Depending on the sectorial work environment.
Considering the kind of actors	Depending on the nature of the institutions (local governments, associations, States, NGO, central governments, international organisms, etc.)
Considering the number of actors	Bilateral (two actors, example: town-twinning) or multilateral (in nets, forums, coalitions).
Considering the aims	Depending on the kind of work it intends (dialogue, collective visibility, deliberation, political pressure, technical exchange, coordination)
Considering its geographic scope	Local, territorial, beyond frontiers, binational, regional, continental, global, etc.
Considering the way of management	Direct (carried out by the local government) or indirect (through NGO subsidies or subsidies to other external organisms).

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To fulfil the aims of this Manual and to ease the approximation of the phenomenon for those who put it into practice, the proposal of the OCD is adopted to characterise decentralised cooperation according to two great groups of relations: those institutionalised and those informal. Institutionalised relations may be bilateral (between two local governments) or multi-institutional. Also within groups it is possible to identify many kinds of relations: among the bilateral relations we find town-twinning, projects between two local governments and relations between associations of municipalities, and within the multi-insti-

tutional relations the nets and the projects with more than two institutions involved are to be highlighted.

It is to be mentioned that, furthermore than institutionalised relations, the role of informal relations must be appreciated, although they can hardly be quantified, they are very important.[62]

When considering the different ways of management, the kinds of initiatives, the instruments and the working environments, it is clear that there is no unique model of local decentralised cooperation.

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62 GUTIERREZ CAMPS, Arnau. "*Una aproximación a las relaciones de cooperación descentralizada entre la UE y América Latina*" en *Anuario de la Cooperación Descentralizada 2005* "An approach to decentralised co-operation between the EU and Latin America" Annual Report by the 2005 Decentralised Co-Operation, Published by the EU-LA Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation.

Decentralised cooperation management methods

Concerning the way to manage decentralised cooperation in a general way, it is possible to identify two great trends that may even be practised simultaneously by the same local government.

1. Direct decentralised cooperation: the local government is directly responsible for the conception and planning of actions, and it may manage its execution directly or entrust the administration of the projects to a third party.

2. Indirect decentralised cooperation: the local government is not directly responsible nor it participates in the conception of the cooperation actions; it is limited to the financing, often through open calls for subsidies to other actors (NGO, base organisms, universities, etc.) who at the same time are responsible for the cooperation projects.

Although both kinds of cooperation are in force, it is evident that direct cooperation demands much more involvement and responsibility on the part of the local government than the indirect modality, which is carried out through the financing of third parties.

Some assistants have even disqualified indirect cooperation as a "false" kind of decentralised cooperation because the identification of actions, the presentation of the projects and their execution are in general entrusted to solidarity groups and local NGO, and the local government only acts as a money window.

This modality is very common in Europe, particularly in Spain, where the NGO are often "in the hunt" of municipal subsidies. Besides causing a dispersion of the actions and little control by the local authority, it has been claimed that with this scheme the growth of the NGO has more potential than the institutional strengthening of the local governments in the developing countries.

Although it is true that this kind of mechanism has given rise to great involvement of civil associations in both continents and to the elaboration of interesting projects, the problem is that not always the actions are articulated with the local authorities and the appointed representatives.

Because of what was said before it is advisable that, without abandoning the scheme of subsidy to the NGO for their actions of international solidarity, the local government grants priority to the direct management of some of its projects, most of all when the partner is another local government. This will position the exchange of experiences in the right place and will open decentralised cooperation into all its institutional development potential.

5.2 Which are its specificity and its added value?

In order to understand the importance of decentralised cooperation it is necessary to situate it clearly, within the frame of the decentralisation processes of central power and as an expression of local autonomy. States, during most of the 20th Century, were reluctant to hand over international spheres, which they considered their sole competence, while local governments and cities strove to forge international and cooperation relations bearing their hallmark.

Indeed, we can clearly tell State from local government decentralised cooperation by at least two distinctive features that characterise the latter: **1)** actors have deep roots in, and strong bonds with, the local community and territory, **2)** the nature of cooperation is more horizontal, thus favouring experience sharing and **3)** cooperation is based on reciprocity - a, mutual interest and benefit. [63]

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[63] A good part of this section has been inspired by: MALÉ, Jean-Pierre. *Public Decentralised Cooperation Specific Features: Actors, Contents and Models.* Document prepared for the First Annual Conference of the EU-LA Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation. Montevideo, March 2006.

5.2.1 Grass roots stakeholders

The main specificity of decentralised cooperation lies in the personality of its actors, the local governments, which are the population's closest level of public administration, and therefore are most sensitive to the needs of local development. As we saw in section 3 of this Manual, decentralised cooperation generally involves other local actors such as citizen groups, NGO, universities, enterprises, etc.

This local root of actions, sustained in a limited territorial dimension, is undoubtedly the most valuable component of decentralised cooperation, because it not only guarantees a local appropriation and a greater sustainability to actions, but it also provides them with a more democratic base as well.

When the civil society, the private sector and the local governments are no longer passive observers and become co-protagonists of cooperation actions, the results are necessarily more adequate and long lasting.

As main actors of decentralised cooperation, local governments are not assimilated to the NGO, because they are public institutions invested with a political mandate derived from the citizen´s vote. The originality of this kind of cooperation is that it gives way to an irreplaceable opportunity: the exchange of experiences in the technical and organisation areas and the establishment of institutional relations and political alliances.

Due to the local nature of the actors, the content of cooperation is also localised and gives priority to territorial problems such as providing basic services (water, light, public transport, drains, etc.)

These issues are often quite comparable between countries, even among local governments with different wealth levels. Although there are important differences in the way these problems are faced, the options to fulfil the demands of the citizenship are often very similar and constitute a solid base for horizontal cooperation and for the exchange of experiences.

5.2.2 Horizontal cooperation and experience sharing

Although decentralised cooperation often implies the transference of resources, it must be taken into account that it is not limited to that. Without discarding the money flows under certain conditions, its nature is more strategic, that is to say, cooperation becomes a more durable horizontal association and not just a concrete gesture of aid.

It is a relation which favours more dialogue and collaboration rather than substitution, subordination or competence between two or more local governments. Its advantage is that it mobilises and transforms the government much more deeply than simple financial transferences.

For that reason, one of the main riches of decentralised cooperation is that it is an incomparable environment to foster technical exchange. Exchange is often in the frame of a wider institutional agreement of cooperation, which involves local teams and professionals who work in coordinated actions. With the exchange of experiences the transference of knowledge, information and management techniques are made easier.

In this way, technical exchange is the practical application of a desire for cooperation based on reciprocity and work among equals. Even though the starting point is usually an unequal situation, in decentralised cooperation a hierarchical relation is not established. This is the difference between exchange and technical assistance, because the latter has a more unilateral characteristic and repeats the donor-receptor model. Some call it partnership, as explained in table 53 below.

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Table 53 / What is a partnership?
The notion of "partnership" is characterised by:
1. Being an **equitable relation** between two or more actors
2. The aims and ways of cooperation result from a **negotiation**
3. The relation is based on **respect**, mutual compromise and **trust**
4. There exists a minimum level of partners´ **autonomy**
5. A clear **distribution** of roles and responsibilities is established
6. There exists reciprocal **complementarities** and **exchange** among the actors.
7. Relations are built **progressively**
8. In spite of their specificity, a **common vision** of the project is shared
9. The relation is **transparent** and accounting explanations are given openly
10. Communication is fluid and constant, and it uses a common language

Finally, it is to be mentioned that to assure that the exchange of experiences is truly profitable, it must be supported by mechanisms to transfer knowledge and by appropriate meeting environments to lead the counterpart closer to reality. Only in this way will there be reciprocal understanding and it will be possible to go beyond the transference or pure imitation to obtain appropriation and adaptation of solutions. [64]

It is intended in this way to make the most of this know-how and to share it so that it may be applied to other zones or circumstances. An interesting example is the "Aula Sao Paulo", a project developed by the City Council of Sao Paulo in Brazil to facilitate good practices sharing (see table 54).

64 BATISTA, Sinoel. *Cooperation between European and Latin American authorities*, Module 3 of the on-line Training Course by the EU-LA Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation, in collaboration with the Open University of Catalonia, 2006.

AULA SÃO PAULO

Table 54 / The portal of good ideas:
Exchange of experiences in urban development

Aula Sao Paulo is an innovating Project for the **exchange of experiences** about urban development between cities all over the world. It is inspired in the pioneer initiative called "Aula Barcelona" which during the 80s contributed with the urbanisation of the city through communication campaigns and collaboration agreements with the private sector.

The aim of *Aula Sao Paulo* is to discuss the present and the future of the city, to learn how other metropolises of the world are responding to common problems. The Municipal Secretariat of International Relations of the city of Sao Paulo periodically organises **seminars of good ideas**, where professionals of different countries visit the city to share their good practices in the urban area. Besides the **open conferences to the public** which take place in the University of Sao Paulo, international experts also participate in restricted workshops addressed to officers and technicians of the municipality. The Aula is available in **Internet** (conferences, photographs, videos, links) and has successful experiences in the following issues:

- Revitalisation of historic centres
- Urban landscaping
- Cultural policies
- Popular Housing
- Sustainable transportation
- Green and Environment
- Security

Some examples of successful experiences shared in Aula are: Revitalisation of the historic centre of the City of **Mexico**, bicycle roads and citizen responsibility in **Bogota**, Architectural and economic transformation in **Barcelona**, Recovery of socialist habitation groups in **Berlin**, etc. *Aula Sao Paulo* is supported by the *Aula Barcelona Project*, of the Spanish telecommunications firm *Telefónica*, and by the Maria Antonia Centre of the University of Sao Paulo.

For further information: <www.aulasp.prefeitura.sp.gov.br >

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In order to guarantee horizontality, this Manual recommends that in order to establish a relation of decentralised cooperation, partners work all together from the beginning, to develop the diagnosis, as well as the aims and the modalities of joint actions. The problem is that it takes time, which is not always available for local authorities, who are used to working under urgency.

Decentralised cooperation is not only a source of money. Its added value lies in its potential to make the most of the specificity of its actors, local governments, and their experience and knowledge to face their inherent responsibilities. Their direct and active participation acquires much more importance than their financial contributions.

This preliminary work to identify points in common, the synergies and the joint vision of the future is undoubtedly one of the most important contributions of decentralised cooperation. When sharing common problems, even though from different realities, a real alliance is created and it is proved that in spite of the differences –which are sometimes enormous– between their respective territories and problems, local governments share similar aims and concerns and therefore may work jointly to solve them.

5.2.3 Reciprocity: mutual interests and benefits

Upon establishing a relation of decentralised cooperation, we must start from the reciprocity principle. This does not necessarily mean that the exchanges of resources or of technical assistance must be identical or that a local counterpart is always demanded in exchange for the cooperation received. Reciprocity lies in the mutual interest to cooperate and in the possibility of obtaining benefits from cooperation on both sides.

Although the expansion of decentralised cooperation has given rise to expectations among the local governments of developing countries, the latter do not always coincide with the reality of the suggested proposals and the available resources. Nevertheless, as it was seen, the added value of decentralised cooperation must not be measured in terms of money.

Practice has proven that in the majority of the cases the quantitative impact of decentralised cooperation is modest and it is not realistic to expect that important amounts of money are to be canalised in this kind of relation.

Because local governments even in the richest countries have budget limitations, it is not to be expected for cooperation to respond to all needs. On the other hand, it would not be realistic to think that cooperation is always and necessarily an aid instrument in a single sense. [65]

The European local governments which destine resources to cooperation have quickly identified the benefits they receive when cooperating with their homologues abroad. UN-Habitat has denominated the benefits of cooperation as a new "cooperative governability" through the work in nets, and the fact that this is an efficient way to internationalise cities brings benefits far beyond specific projects.

In this sense the work done by the International Office of Local Governments of the United Kingdom is also highlighted, which work has identified a number of benefits for local governments that cooperate abroad. Table 55 was adapted to the conclusions of this analysis.

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65 For a critical vision which ensures that there are always particular interests behind decentralised co-operation, the case studies of Rome and Madrid, carried out by IOCCO, María Eugenia, may be consulted. *The international role of cities: Decentralized co-operation between domestic concerns and symbolic politics. Programme on Comparative and European Politics*, Centre for the Study of Political Change (Circap), Faculty of Political Science University of Siena. Italy, 2005.

Table 55[66] /"Win-win" approach. Mutual Benefits of decentralised cooperation	
1. Improving public service by means of exchanging experiences and providing access to better techniques developed in other countries	One of the main benefits of cooperating with similar entities is exchanging ideas, policies and strategies about the problems faced and the possible solutions. The unlimited exchange of experiences is reflected on specific projects for enlarging the local government's capacity to perform its responsibilities.
2. Training administrative staff and elected officers	When facing similar problems within different contexts, the officers elected can benefit from innovative "field" training, suitable to take distance from their local reality and see it from a different perspective.
3. Finding other financial and technical cooperation sources	International cooperation projects have access to alternative specific financial sources, for the exchange of experiences.
4. Promoting the establishment of new institutional links	The cooperation among local governments of different countries is usually accompanied by the establishment of direct collaboration links among other kinds of institutions, such as schools, institutes, universities, hospitals, citizen groups, artistic and cultural organisations, etc.
5. Promoting intercultural tolerance and understanding	The collaboration among local governments coming from different cultural contexts is a relevant way to open the cultural horizon of the population into other ways of living and thinking. This is an efficient means for raising awareness about the need to respect others and for fighting both racism and xenophobia.
6. Strengthening social cohesion at a local level.	Decentralised cooperation is an efficient means for strengthening bonds in local communities. International action may attract minority groups, such as youngsters, disabled individuals, etc., to collaborate with the government. Wherever there are significant immigrant communities, external action is an efficient means to integrate them by means of solidarity projects solidarity with their native countries.
7. Promoting economic development, investment, trade and tourism.	Decentralised cooperation is usually a trigger for economic development and a fertile soil for the collaboration with the private sector by means of the establishment of businesses, foreign trade and investment attraction. Cooperation also promotes tourist exchange.
8. Endowing the local government with international visibility and strengthening its negotiating capacity.	Decentralised cooperation is very useful to endow the local government with international status and visibility beyond its territory, often by strengthening its negotiating stand before the central government.

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5.3 What kind of decentralised cooperation do we seek?

Decentralised cooperation has been the object of deep transformations during the last decades, in regard to management methods, themes, and even to the underlying philosophy that makes it one of the goals pursued by local governments. As we have seen, it is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon related both to the field of international relations and of cooperation for development.

The following section displays the different forms this cooperation assumes. The purpose is to familiarise the reader with a wide range of possibilities, help him/her to define his/her international actions, and make choices within the framework of a more strategic vision.

Table 56 / Evolution of decentralised cooperation: progress and new horizons
First half of the 20th century
• School and cultural exchanges, language teaching
Trans-border collaboration between neighbouring town councils
• East-West reconciliation town-twinning after World War II
North-South twinnings for development assistance following Africa's decolonisation process
• Town-twinnings for cooperation and technical assistance projects
Strengthening international municipal associations
• Triangular town-twinning (two towns supporting a third one)
International thematic networks (sectoral horizontal work)
• Links with bilateral cooperation programmes (States)
Links with international agencies' programmes (UN)
• Concerted lobbying actions to exert influence over political programmes
Coordinated activism in foreign policy and emergency aid
• Multilevel lobbying to influence the international agenda on decentralisation and local self government
Beginning of the 21st Century

5.3.1 Town-twinning and bilateral projects

Town-twinning is the oldest and best-known way of decentralised cooperation. Historically, town-twinning originated as a way of promoting international rapprochement between peoples. Through them friendly relationships have been established between two towns or regions, and institutional bonds have been created between governments, thus promoting rapprochement between the corresponding communities, cultural exchanges and support to development projects.

However, the town-twinning approach has evolved and adapted itself over time. At the beginning, town-twinning

consolidated in Europe by the end of World War II, as a channel for reconciliation between neighbouring town councils in France and Germany.

During the 60s, and within the context of Africa's decolonisation process, town-twinning acquired a development assistance profile. By then it was a way for "rich" European town councils to help "poor" African ones, generally by forwarding donations and materials (e.g. old fire fighting trucks, buses, food, medical supplies, etc).

During the 70s, and within the Cold War context, town-twinning was a significant communication and collaboration bridge between East and West Europe. But since the end of the 80's, with the arrival of new, more ambitious and innovative collaboration formulas, town-twinning no longer was the only way of decentralised cooperation.

At present there are still thousands of town-twinning examples in the world; some cities have dozens of them.[67]

As a collaboration formula with a perennial vocation, town-twinning has not been exempt of problems. The solemn act

in which two town councils reciprocally declare "eternal love", sharply contrasts with the fact that most town-twinnings suffer from inactivity, and as time goes by, the continuous changes in governments and the absence of specific results ultimately deprive the relationship of practical contents.

Therefore, without having disappeared, town-twinning has acquired more dynamic and ambitious work methods. Rather than being grounded on a perpetual alliance, cooperation is now focused on the performance of specific actions and projects. In some countries this new method has been called "town-twinning cooperation", in order to differentiate it from plain town-twinning based on aspects mainly related to culture and friendship among peoples.

It is important to highlight that, despite their capacity to adapt to, town- twinning has lost prestige in some spheres, and it is even considered to be an "obsolete", "anachronic" or "inefficient" way of decentralised cooperation. Here we must point out that not all town- twinnings are antiquated or unproductive. There are numerous town-twinning examples that have lasted for ten, twenty and even fifty years, and which are still successful in terms of cooperation.[68]

Table 57 / Twins for more thant twenty years
Leon (Nicaragua) and Salzburg (Austria)

Nicaragua's town councils have been particularly active in regard to town-twinning relationships with their European peers. Most town-twinnings originated in the 80's as a result of the solidarity movement following the beginning of Sandino's revolution.

An example of the relationships established between both countries is the town-twinning between Salzburg, Austria, and León, Nicaragua, which has existed since 1984. This initiative began by groups of people of both cities, and ended up as an agreement between both local governments.

67 An interesting case occurs in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where there have been 41 town-twinning examples.
68 A source of information in Europe is the **Institute for European Partnerships and International Cooperation** (IPZ) <www.ipz-bonn.de> (web page only in German).

The town twinning began as an association of base groups that made decisions on new projects and put both institutions in contact. The relation between public administrations was established by means of the direct participation of both majors, as well as of town council representatives in said association. Salzburg's town council financed the initiatives that were put into practice.

This town-twinning has established contacts within different institutional environments and the civil society. For example, relationships have been created between associations of neighbours, groups of youngsters, kindergartens, day care centres for young children and universities.

During this 22-year-old town twinning, a total of 17 initiatives have been implemented. One of them included an intervention in the sewerage system aimed at improving Leon's sanitary condition.

Further information: <http://www.ibw.com.ni/~chica/espanol/paginas/Untitled-2.htm>

Furthermore, town-twinning has played a significant role in Europe's integration. This is still relevant today, as proved by the fact that the European Commission has been financing town-twinning initiatives since 1989, in order to promote the emergence of an active, participative European citizenship. For instance, for the period 2007-2013, the program "Citizens for Europe" will finance town-twinnings between the local governments of member states and between two countries that have applied for EU membership (Bulgaria and Romania), by means of aids of up to 20,000 euros.[69]

Moreover, the EU maintains the "Golden Stars of Town-twinning" program for town-twinning remarkable projects, which rewards those projects helping citizens to contribute, at a local level, to a greater integration of Europe.

It is true that, even when town twinning is a good will act in city-to-city cooperation, and may entail good results as a cooperation formula, when limited to two players its contribution is clearly insufficient to exploit all the potentialities of horizontal cooperation.

In recent years, a new town-twinning modality has appeared. It is the so called "trilateral twinning" (or "trinning"). This occurs when two twinned cities which have been working together for some time and which have obtained significant results in certain areas, decide to invite a third town to benefit from their experience, and thus widen the exchange.

This modality has been very successful in some Dutch cities with town councils in East Europe, and it is a clear precursor of network activities.[70] At present, the expression "decentralised cooperation" is also used to refer to pairs of town councils in different countries.[71]

How to find a twin town council?

It is important to point out that currently not many European town councils seek town-twinning with Latin American peers. This is due to the fact that most of them have already implemented town-twinnings, that few of them (with the notable exception of Spain) consider Latin America as a priority region and that the formula of town-twinning as a permanent alliance has fallen into disuse.

69 The Community Action Program for the promotion of an active European Citizenship has a guide: *User's Guide 2006 Town-Twinning: "Encounter of Citizens".* Available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/towntwinning>
70 PGV. *Town Twinnings in the New Europe.* English Summary. PGV Publication Series, Number 9. *Network Municipal Peace Policy in the Netherlands. The Network of Netherlands town-twinnings with Central and Eastern Europe.* December, 2003.
71 This term was coined in order to give a name to the three-part co-operation between the Pays de la Loire Region in France and its partners in Niger and Guinea.

Even so, it is still possible to find a local government willing to do town twinning. To this end, you may appeal to the associations of local governments or search information and contacts through the different sources referred to in subparagraph 6 below.

Furthermore, the "Twinning Market" is a useful Internet tool that contains a list of local governments looking for town-twinnings, mainly in Europe, but also in other parts of the world.[72] Table 58 summarises the reasons for town twinning, according to the experience of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions.

Table 58 / The ABCs...of Town-Twinning [73]
What for?
Town-twinning for exchanging; exchanging for learning; learning for understanding; understanding for coexisting.
With whom?
In order to select a twin town the following elements must be taken into account: size, geographical situation, main economic activity, cultural and sports activities, local associations. Twin towns should get nearer to each other on the basis of their similarities, but also of their differences and complementarities. Town-twinning is based on a double commitment: on the one hand, that of the town council authorities, and on the other one, that of population. All population levels must take part in the town-twinning. A local body should be created to make a follow-up of town-twinning. In the so called "Town-Twinning Committee" both the authorities and civil representatives must participate. Its functions are: guaranteeing the participation of society, coordinating activities, representing the city and giving continuity to activities despite political changes.
How?
For finding a potential partner, the support of foreign associations of town councils may be requested. In Europe, the CMRE may be contacted for this purpose. Town-twinning is a commitment between two partners which agree on the contents of their joint work. Town twinning requires a decision by the political authorities and the population's commitment. For town-twinning to reach the whole population, the exchanges must involve the largest possible amount of inhabitants. It is relevant to hold an official town-twinning ceremony in order to record the history of the relation between both town councils. This will gradually become stronger by means of joint actions and activities.
Why?
Town-twinning contributes to raising international awareness within population and entails specific cooperation actions. Town-twinning enables the city and its associations and citizens, to exchange experiences to deal with problems and help each other in the search of solutions. Some common topics are transport, the environment, health, protection of historical heritage, fighting racism and xenophobia, equality of opportunities, initiatives for employment, etc. Town-twinning is a way of learning and constructing knowledge. By means of meetings of youngsters, elderly people, professionals, etc, town-twinning helps everybody open our minds to different cultures.

72 <http://www.twinnings.org>
73 *Twinning. A Europe of Citizens, Tomorrow's Europe*. CCRE-CEMR. Undated.

The nature of networks is extremely varied and it depends on many factors. As a form of decentralised cooperation, they have also been classified according to specific criteria such as their geographic scope, thematic vocation, etc.[74] There are networks with mainly political aims that restrict themselves to taking a position towards the issues that affect them. Others promote a direct exchange of experiences among their members but do not undertake common activities as a group. Still others are created ad hoc to carry out a common programme of activities and/or to manage resources for specific projects.

5.3.2   Local government networks: innovative cooperation

Networking is the form of direct decentralised cooperation that has grown the most in importance in the last few years. Networks are horizontal relationships between similar institutions that have no hierarchy and share a common objective. Their benefits are: consolidating areas of agreement to create economies of scale and generate common added value; obtaining greater lobbying and negotiation power; exchanging experiences and information; connecting isolated players with different action spaces and fostering cooperation with other institutions.

Local governments have gradually made inroads into networking, empowering and multiplying the work that used to be limited to bilateral projects or twinnings. Unlike these, networks are characterised by a greater margin of flexibility and dynamism as well as a capacity for adaptation and greater impact.

There is currently an increasing number of local governments networks that seek to work together in order to make their actions more coherent and effective. It is no longer a matter of isolated actions but broader collaborations with an enormous potential for triggering multiplying effects.

How to participate in networks?

It is not difficult for a local government to participate in networks. As a general rule, almost all the networks are open to new participants as long as they are willing to share the group's objectives and to participate actively.

It is common for membership in a network to be granted in response to a simple written application by the mayor or local government official or, in some cases, with the payment of an annual membership fee which is usually inexpensive. Membership implies acceptance of the network's principles and participation in the actions and possible projects.

It is safe to say that there are international networks in practically every local government work area. New networks seem to arise every day, even repeating and crisscrossing their various action frameworks and subjects. More than representing disorganisation or chaos, the multiplicity of the networks represents the wealth and real potential of this type of work.

Table 59 shows an example of an international network of local governments that work in the promotion of culture.

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74 One attempt to classification is the one made by KEINER, Marco and Arley Kim *"Transnational city networks for sustainability"* in *European Planning Studies*, Institute for Spatial and Landscape Planning. ETH Zurich, Switzerland (planned for the end of 2007).

Table 59 / INTERLOCAL Ibero American Network of Cities for Culture

INTERLOCAL is a network of Ibero American cities that exchange experiences and **territorial cultural management** practices. It is a new space for cooperation (observatory and laboratory) focused on the analysis and implementation of broad based cultural policies and the facilitation of projects between cities.

INTERLOCAL encompasses two basic instances: A biennial **Forum of local authorities** and a system of **information exchange and circulation**, a priority premise for regional cooperation. Through Internet, cooperation is enabled between the cultural area heads of the Ibero American cities, using a **local-local cooperation** logic.

Objectives:

• Achieve positions of greater relevance for local cultural policies in the next few years, viewed as an indispensable condition for the sustainable development of Ibero American cities.

• Advance toward more solid and participative local powers as an indispensable condition for governability and the consolidation of democratic systems in Ibero American countries.

• Promote possible forms of cooperation, complementary to existing ones, based upon multilateralism, Interlocal dialogue and an approach to culture in the context of development policies.

• Extend their reach to the remaining agents and operators, who from the private sectors make it possible for culture to be a determining phenomenon.

For further information: <www.diba.es/interlocal>

Networks are indispensable as meeting points and platforms for the launch of lasting cooperation relationships and the implementation of specific actions.

The local government should make an in-depth analysis of the possible networks before joining any of them, since at times, with the appearance of new networks; there is a drive to obtain fee-paying members. This will not be a surprise for mayors, who are usually invited to adhere to all kinds of initiatives.

Table 60 includes a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) which we hope will help local governments to analyse the convenience of participating in networks.

Table 60 / How to Assess the Convenience of Participating in City Networks?[75]

Strengths

• It leverages the city's profile of identity and international visibility
• It is a suitable framework to enhance decentralised cooperation and to make new contacts
• A fruitful space to exchange experiences in various topics
• More equitable and horizontal cooperation
• Flexible framework for objective definition
• Hierarchy-free structure, greater freedom of action
• It allows cities with limited resources to access international relations
• It contributes to supranational integration processes
• Great global or macro-regional geographic reach
• Agility and speed in the exchange of information

Weaknesses

• The members do not always have the same strategies and objectives concerning the network
• It's not easy to harmonise visions and actions between heterogeneous players
• Government and staff changes go against the continuity of the actions and commitments
• When there is a dependency from funding by players outside the network (States, international organisations), the freedom to establish priorities is reduced.
• When a network is created with circumstantial objectives, it has a short life span
• The cost of gathering the members of an international organisation is very high
• Working by Internet in virtual networks will never be a substitute for personal meetings

Opportunities

• Connect collectively with other players (States, UN, NGOs) from a stronger position
• Strengthen the local government in matters related to its own development
• The network can be consolidated permanently if it offers tangible results to its members
• A possibility to be recognised as a valid counterpart by other players
• Greater capacity for negotiating cooperation resources

Threats

• Horizontality may enable network control by the most powerful members (in resources, experience or political weight)
• Flexibility, lack of structure and authority in the network may weaken its credibility and legitimacy before external players
• When there is a mistaken perception of the network's objectives, there is disappointment about the results achieved
• Some networks exist only to make intermittent meetings and statements of intention
• When there is no real work or concrete results, the network will inevitably wear out
• If there are no clear working rules or flexibility to adapt and amend those rules, member cohesion grows weaker

It is convenient to avoid getting lost in the myriad of networks and focus on those that specialise in the priority issues for the local government. In addition to the examples included throughout the Manual, table 61 presents some networks in order to give the reader an idea of the multiplicity of subjects.

Because the number of local government networks runs in the hundreds and they often have a short life span and sporadic activities, it would not be useful to make a comprehensive list in this Manual.

75 Table adapted from: MINA, María Sol. *The city from object to subject in the international scenario. Thesis for the degree of Master in Social and Political Latin American Studies*, Department of Social Sciences, University Alberto Hurtado, Chile, 2004.

Table 61 / Some Examples of Local Government Networks		
Name	**Activity**	**Web site**
International Association of Educating Cities	Network of cities that cooperate in educational policies	http://w10.bcn.es/APPS/ eduportal/pubPortadaAc.do
International Association of Port Cities	It gathers the main ports in the world and facilitates the exchange of experiences	www.aivp.org
International Association of Public Transport	A forum for exchanging experiences in urban public transport	www.uitp.com
Local Authorities confronting Disasters and Emergencies	International association of local governments that work in humanitarian emergency situations and disasters	www.ulai.org.il/lacde.htm
Child Friendly Cities	Worldwide network of cities that defend children's rights	www.childfriendlycities.org
CODATU	Cooperation about urban transport and mobility in the developing world.	www.codatu.org
European Edge Cities Network	Network of local governments located in the suburbs at the edge of European capitals	www.edgecities.com
European Solar Cities Initiative	Network of European cities that work on solar and sustainable energy	www.eu-solarcities.org
Global Cities Dialogue	Worldwide network of cities that work on new information and communication technologies	www.globalcitiesdialogue.org
Global City Forum	International forum for decision makers of urban development policies	www.globalcityforum.com
Global Forum	Worldwide network of cities that promote decentralised cooperation	www.glocalforum.org
International City-County Management Association	Network of professionals, technicians and municipal staff devoted to public administration training	www.icma.org
International Downtown Association	Worldwide network of cities that cooperate for the revitalisation of historic centres.	www.ida-downtown.org
Historic City League	Worldwide network of historic cities	www.city.kyoto.jp/somu/ kokusai/lhcs/eng/index.htm
Organisation of World Heritage Cities	Worldwide network of cities that have been declared heritage of humanity by UNESCO	www.ovpm.org
Sister Cities International	Organisation that promotes twinning and cooperation of the city councils of USA with the world.	www.sister-cities.org
SMART Cities	Network of European and Asian cities that cooperate in urban policies for sustainable development	www.smart-cities.net
Union of Ibero American Capital Cities	It gathers the capitals of all the countries of Latin America plus Madrid.	www.munimadrid.es/ucci

5

5.3.3 The new frontier: multi-level cooperation, lobbying and advocacy

The increasing awareness of the specificity and added value of decentralised cooperation as well as the diversity and flexibility of its forms of action has opened new frontiers in recent years for the international action of local governments.

The political and practical potential of mobilising local actors, both public and private, in different countries around common objectives, has not gone unnoticed and is giving rise to new ways of working.

After decades when cooperation was focused on development assistance projects, the emphasis is now being made increasingly on the improvement of local issue manage-

ment and therefore on the institutional strengthening of the government. It is now clear that we cannot aim to have a sustainable effect on the living conditions of the population without increasing the capacities of the local authorities who are responsible for public policies.

It is no longer a matter of solving structural deficiencies and the basic needs of the vulnerable groups of the cities directly, but of helping local governments to acquire the capacity of confronting those deficiencies with their own resources and techniques. In short, the objective is to have an effect on the improvement of the performance of local public administration's basic functions.

Table 62 / Together to influence the highest levels

From left to right: Bertrand Delanöe, Mayor of Paris, **Jose Serra**, Mayor of Sao Paulo, **Paul Wolfowitz**, President of the World Bank and **Paco Moncayo**, Mayor of Quito during the meeting of the Executive Bureau of UCLG in Washington, D.C. in 2006. [76]

76 Photo courtesy of UCLG

Thus, beyond the individual strengthening of local governments, decentralised cooperation affects necessarily other processes and agendas that had previously been managed at the State, regional integration agreements or international organisations level. This is clearly shown by the processes of State decentralisation and transborder cooperation for regional development.

Decentralisation thus becomes a sort of "universal flag" for cooperation between cities as it becomes evident that, regardless of the country in question, cities confront similar responsibilities and their management capacity is determined by the legal framework of their functions and their financial capacity.

In this sense, decentralised cooperation is becoming an efficient tool for mutual "empowerment" and the strengthening of local authorities, beyond the advantages or benefits that each city council or city may reap individually. This new role is making local governments and their agendas have a greater weight before the States as well as generating a transformation in development policies, which used to be centred around and implemented by central governments.

If we go beyond national borders, decentralised cooperation acquires a significant dimension, because it enables local governments to liaise with important players they would not have had the possibility to interact with otherwise. These new multi-level relationships are opening new horizons in decentralised cooperation, whose potential has yet to be explored.

Thus, we see today the mayors of medium-sized city councils meeting high dignitaries, including Heads of State or Government or ministers of foreign countries. Through international involvement and lobbying actions, local authorities have practically "skipped" national governments to sit at the table of political dialogue with high ranking officials such as the President of the World Bank or the Secretary General of the United Nations.

The new decentralised cooperation is no longer limited to city-twinnings. Its scope goes beyond local issues and becomes global, thus strengthening the joint capacity of sub-national governments (wherever they may be) to negotiate and lobby before other players and to affect public policies and international development agendas.

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This new multi-level decentralised cooperation has also given rise to the design of new international initiatives where organisations of the civil society, universities, local governments, ministries of State and international agencies converge. This is the case of the ART programme of the UNDP, for example (see item 6.3).

To start or establish decentralised cooperation relations, the local government should not limit itself to wanting to solve the local problems in its territory. Their scope for action transcends the local area and it can have global repercussions that benefit local governments in other locations.

the capacities of the members may not match and expectations about the cooperation methodologies may diverge.

This mismatch between somebody's expectations and somebody else's response capacity varies greatly depending on the countries and local governments, and although it is not a general rule, it can become an obstacle for the deployment of the cooperation.

In the less developed countries, where the lack of financial and material resources is important, the interest in cooperation is expressed at times under the guise of a "project portfolio". In it, the initiatives defined in the Local Development Plan are listed to identify the ones that may find support from international cooperation.

When this is the case, instead of approaching the relation out of mutual interest, the cooperating local authority becomes a sort of financial window rather than a partner in its counterpart's local development. In these cases, the local incumbents and city council officials requesting the assistance should raise their awareness so as to "assume responsibility for their demands" and make them more feasible and realistic.

Throughout this Manual there have been guidelines on how to build a coherent long term strategy for international relations of the local governments. We know there are no predetermined paths or universal recipes to establishing international links and decentralised cooperation relations.

However, practice indicates there are some important points to be considered when entering the international arena, as well as some red lights to be avoided in order to save time and scarce resources.

Table 63 shows some of the most common hindrances facing decentralised cooperation and table 64 offers useful advice at the time of starting it.

5.4 Some tips for starting decentralised cooperation relations

Although decentralised cooperation gives priority to collaboration between institutional equals, in practice it is not always easy to find a similar equivalent abroad in terms of administrative, geographic or demographic levels.

However, as we have seen, experience shows that players with a certain degree of heterogeneity can collaborate constructively and successfully. That is the case of some French or Italian regions that cooperate directly with Latin American councils.

But in addition to the differences in the nature of the partners, decentralised cooperation can face another type of obstacles. For example, the duration of the mandates or

Table 63 / Possible obstacles to Decentralised Cooperation

- Differences in the **capacities and fields of responsibility** of each local government
- Differences in the **expectations**, objectives and real impact of the cooperation actions
- Mismatched duration of the **political mandate** terms
- Lack of administrative **continuity** due to staff turnover
- Intermittent or erratic **political will**
- Inability to take advantage of the **"culture shock"** (differences in idiosyncrasy)
- Different **work scheduling** (holiday months, seasons and national holidays)
- **Language** communication problems
- Distance and differences in working hours
- Unequal **technical capacity** for the follow-up of the relation or lack of resources
- **Political-ideological** differences

Table 64 / Some tips for Establishing Decentralised Cooperation Relations

- **Take the initiative**, do not rely on luck to define your possibilities of finding a partner

- Contact the **national association of city councils** to get to know what countries they have relations with

- Contact **other local governments** in your country that already have international experience

- Become a member of the **networks** you consider a priority and participate in others even if you are not a member

- Ask the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** about the bilateral cooperation programmes that can work as a bridge to connect you with locales partners in other countries

- **Write formal letters** of presentation to potential partners, be it local or national governments or international organisations

- Promote **direct meetings** with potential partners, by inviting them to your city, organising identification missions abroad or attending international events

- Prioritise long term **strategic relations** and do not just concentrate on obtaining / receiving donations of resources or support for specific projects or actions

- Make a clear selection of your **priority partners** and of the most important topics so you avoid getting lost in a multiplicity of disperse actions

- Do not allow time to weaken your cooperation or for it to fall into oblivion when there are no activities. **Permanent communication** is indispensable.

6. Where to find support, information and contacts?

i F WE HAD TO DEFINE one key element to facilitate the international insertion of a local government, it will surely be the access to information and contacts.[77]

We present below an overview of the institutions that may provide information on international relations and cooperation with local governments, in particular in Europe and Latin America. The institutions mentioned are not necessarily sources of financing for projects, but rather information windows and useful means for establishing contacts.[78]

In order to facilitate the comprehension of this section, information sources have been classified in six groups: internal institutions of the central governments, support programmes, inter-governmental organisations, international and world local government associations and networks, and finally, other sources of information and contacts.

6.1. Central governments

In order to obtain information on the current situation of the international relations of local governments in a given country and learn about possible sources of financing,

technical assistance and partners, it is possible to begin by contacting the national governmental institutions.

Foreign affairs ministries or offices are a major source of valuable information. In some cases, specific service offices have been created to support local governments in their international projects.

For example, the Foreign Affairs Office of Mexico has recently created a sub-office to link with state and municipal governments to work on what they call "federative diplomacy". In Chile, there is a Board for Regional Coordination within the Foreign Affairs Ministry, in France the Delegate to Local Governments Foreign Activities, and in Italy the Office of Coordination of Decentralised Cooperation, both within the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

In the same way, national embassies may provide access to obtain data and contacts on possible partners in other countries. Most of the embassies have officers that are responsible for cooperation and in some cases with specific offices or documentation offices for these issues.

Table 65 shows a recent example of the way in which two central governments of Europe and Latin America collaborate with local authorities to promote decentralised cooperation.

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[77] For a thorough approach to information sources please see: SARRAUTE, Santiago. *"Hacia un mapa de la información existente sobre cooperación descentralizada pública entre Europa y América Latina"* ("Towards a map of the existing information on decentralised public cooperation between Europe and Latin America") in *Anuario de la Cooperación Descentralizada 2005*, published by the EU-LA Observtory on Decentralised Co-operation.
[78] Information based on ZAPATA-GARESCHE, Eugene. *"Financiación"* ("Financing"), Contents of Module 5 of the on-line Training Course *"Especialista en Cooperación Descentralizada Europa-América Latina"*. ("Specialist in Decentralised Cooperation Europe-Latin America"), delivered by the EU-LA Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation in collaboration with the Open University of Catalonia, 2006.

Table 65 / France and Brazil. Collaboration between central and local governments to promote decentralised cooperation
With the sponsorship of the Presidency of the Republic of Brazil, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region and United Cities of France, the **First Meeting for International Decentralised and Federative Cooperation of France and Brazil** was held in May 2006.
The objective of the Meeting was to learn about the status of cooperation between local governments of both countries, to encourage the strengthening of existing relations and the creation of new cooperation bonds. The aim was to articulate initiatives to promote their complementary features and to strengthen the work on binational networks. In view of the success of the event, representatives from both central governments along with local authorities adopted the **Declaration of Marseille** in which the following was decided:
• To create a Binational Committee for the International and Federative Decentralised Cooperation of France and Brazil composed of the representatives from the different governmental organisations involved in the process
• To create a **Fund for the Decentralised and Federative Cooperation** of France and Brazil, managed by the local and regional governments of both countries,
• To adopt a **Common Strategic Agenda** for Decentralised and Federative French-Brazilian Cooperation defining priorities for a concrete Action Plan.
More information: <www.regionpaca.fr>

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In addition to foreign affairs ministries and embassies, in most of the States there are national bodies responsible for decentralisation and for working with local governments, which are usually within the Ministries of the Interior or State Offices. These may be ministry boards or decentralised bodies of the central public administration with a certain degree of autonomy (institutes, centres). For example, the Nicaraguan Institute of Municipal Promotion (in Spanish, INIFOM) or the Federal Institute of Municipal Affairs (IFAM) of Argentina.

Because it is part of their mandate, it is often these offices that follow up on international technical coopera-

tion programmes with local governments. In the same way, it is advisable to consult the national authorities in charge of urban development.

In addition to bodies depending from the executive power, legislative power commissions (assemblies, parliaments, deputies or senators chambers) entrusted with foreign affairs, municipal or local government affairs are a good source of information. Members of the legislative power usually maintain exchanges and communication with their peers in other countries, which makes them a valuable source of information and contacts.

6.2. Accompanying Programmes

The boom of decentralised cooperation in recent years has caused an increase in the interest of national governments, international organisations, and other actors.

As a form of accompanying the international work done directly by local governments, bilateral and multilateral programmes for the promotion of decentralised cooperation have been created. Support has been of very different types and reflects a wide heterogeneity of purposes, depending on the institutions and their priorities.

Although it is argued that the objective of these programmes is to lend higher promotion, coherence and institutional stability to the phenomenon of decentralised cooperation, some local governments have frowned upon the sudden interest shown by certain States who "accompany" their international relations, even when these programmes involve additional financial resources.

The truth is that the multiplicity of initiatives and programmes has generally been channelled as an offer of technical assistance and resources. For this reason, it is not unusual to see a duplication of efforts in some topics or geographical areas, while others remain completely ignored.

Due to the limited amount of information sources and data on individual initiatives or on decentralised cooperation networks, it is often these support programmes that catch most of the attention or are considered of a higher strategic impact, even if this is not necessarily the case.

Bilateral programmes

Some European governments, such as France, Spain, Germany and Italy have mechanisms to accompany and co-finance local governments in their decentralised cooperation projects. Tables 66 and 67 provide examples of bilateral cooperation programmes for the strengthening of local governments in Latin America.

Table 66 / Germany – Peru Bilateral cooperation programmes for municipal strengthening [79]			
Program, organisation	Amount	Topics and sectors	Partners y beneficiaries
Project of support to decentralisation GTZ (Technical Cooperation Agency)	4 million euros	Training of the regional and local governments in financial management and rendering of accounts	Northern area regional and local governments, National Council of Decentralisation and General Control of the Republic
German Bank of Reconstruction (KFW)	14 million euros (2003-2007)	Drinking water and sewage, agricultural infrastructure, support to the elaboration of agreed development plans and pre-investment studies	Municipalities (in alliance with NGO) of Piura, Lambayeque, Cajamarca, La Libertad, Huancavelica and Ayacucho
Germany-Peru Fund	23.4 million euros	Fostering municipal development and the improvement of the economic and social infrastructure of the selected districts	FONCODES and municipalities in Lambayeque and in the north of Cajamarca

pfmcm

Table 67 / French-Mexican Program of Municipal Cooperation

The **French-Mexican Program of Municipal Cooperation** (*Programa Franco-Mexicano de Cooperación Municipal*) was created in 1998 as an initiative of the now dissolved Federation of United Cities (WFUC) in collaboration with the national associations of Mexican city councils and the French Centre of the Territorial Public Function (CNFPT).

Its objective was to assist Mexican local governments in facing two major challenges, on the one hand, the lack of continuity of public municipal management in view of the new rotation of parties, and on the other hand, assisting municipalities in becoming wealth and employment generating entities. It was decided to work with four strategies:
1. Professional development of public management and Civil Service Careers
2. The city council as a promoter of local economic development (generator of wealth and employment)
3. Inter-city collaboration guidelines
4. Solidarity tourism
5. Support to decentralised cooperation

Cooperation is carried out through different activities: technical assistance missions, exchange of experiences, fostering of decentralised cooperation, training and technical visits to both countries, publications, national seminars and workshops, creation of an agency and specific projects for local development, and the establishment of a Permanent Forum for the Professional Development of Local Governments in Mexico.

During more than eight years of existence the program has involved one hundred institutions from both countries and has triggered all types of initiatives, including actions funded by the EU and the World Bank. The program is carried out with the collaboration of the Mexican federal government and has been recognised as a priority action of the France-Mexico cooperation by the Binational Commissions of 1998, 2001 and 2004.

More information: <www.francia.org.mx>, <www.inafed.gob.mx>

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It is important to consider that the existence of national cooperation agreements may facilitate the relation between the regions or cities of two countries. When a local government wants to participate and benefit from such programmes, it will most probably have to do it in direct coordination with the national authorities.

National governments often program their cooperation relations in terms of several years and formalise the thematic priorities of joint collaboration through the organisation of the denominated "mixed commissions".

Local governments are occasionally allowed to attend these meetings, be given the opportunity to express their concerns and influence the contents and the form of cooperation between the two States.

Multilateral programmes

In addition to attracting the interest of the States, decentralised cooperation is becoming a new technical paradigm for the United Nations agencies, which are changing their traditional forms of operation to open their work towards local governments.

Without intending to provide details on the specific programmes, which will be discussed in volume 2 of this Manual, it is important to mention Cities Alliance, created in 1999 as an initiative of the World Bank and UN-Habitat in order to support the implementation of urban development policies and improve the living conditions of the population in slums in urban areas (see table 68).

Another well known program is **URB-AL**,[80] of the European Union, now finished, which was specifically crea-

ted to promote the cooperation with local Latin American governments.

Although accompanying programmes, either bilateral or multilateral, are not strictly decentralised cooperation actions in the sense of the definition proposed in this Manual, their potential in order to increase contacts and access funding and technical assistance should not be overlooked.

Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums

Table 68 / Cities Alliance: Cities without slums

What is the cities alliance?

• It is a world coalition of cities and partners devoted to development with the commitment of expanding plans which have proved successful in reducing poverty;
• The Alliance engages cities in a direct dialogue with bilateral and multilateral financial organisations and institutions;
• Its members promote the development of local governments and help cities of any size to obtain a more consistent international support;
• While promoting the positive effects of urbanisation, the Alliance helps local authorities to plan and prepare for future growth;
• The Alliance helps cities devise sustainable financial strategies and attract long term capital investment in infrastructure and other services.

What aims does the alliance support?

The Alliance gives donations to support:
• Urban development strategies that link the view of the city, its economic growth, its environmental goals and the reduction of poverty, subject to a clear prioritisation of the measures and investments required;
• Municipal and national programmes of regeneration of marginal neighbourhoods, including the promotion of private property safety, access to financing for housing and policies to help avoid the emergence of new slums;
• Sustainable financing strategies for the cities to attract the long term capital investment needed for infrastructure, including improvements in the rendering of accounts on services provided and the demonstration of a stable flow of income in order to mobilise national capital more effectively. .

The second volume of this Manual will deal more thoroughly with the forms of obtaining funding for international projects and actions, including details of the different existing programmes.

6.3. Inter-governmental organisations

International organisations also provide many possibilities for establishing contacts and obtaining useful data. Even when practically all the agencies of the **UN**[81], either work or have worked directly or indirectly with local authorities, there are some that due to the nature of their mandate have developed more specific relations and activities.

Without the intention of accounting for all UN bodies, we briefly present below those institutions that maintain close collaboration with local governments and that may be of great help in obtaining information and potential partners.

UN-Habitat [82]

The United Nations Human Settlements Program is undoubtedly the UN body with more information on local government activities and projects. With headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya and regional offices in Latin America,[83] UN-HABITAT publishes annually the *World Report on Human Settlements*.

One of the main events where local governments may establish international contacts is the **World Urban Forum**, organised by UN-HABITAT every two years. This event is attended by practically all the institutions, organisations and experts associated to the world of local governments and their international relations. The latest Forum was held in 2006 in Vancouver, Canada and gathered over ten thousand delegates. The next one will be held in Nanking, China in 2008.

Moreover, Habitat publishes the following newsletters and periodicals: *Habitat Debate*, *Urban Governance*, *Urban Environment*, *The Urban Observer and Water in the Cities*. In 2006, UN-HABITAT created the Centre of Best Practices in Decentralised Cooperation in Seville with the aim of systematising and accompanying local government programmes in the area of international relations.[84] Table 69 shows the main areas of work of UN-Habitat.

6

81 <www.un.org>
82 <www.unhabitat.org>
83 Regional Office in Latin America: <www.unhabitat-rolac.org>
84 More information at: UN-Habitat Best Practices Seville Centre for city-to-city cooperation. <www.unhabitat.org/programmes/bestpractices>
Contact: <sevillec2c@unhabitat.org>

Table 69 / UN-Habitat: Work areas

- Best Practices Programme
- Gender Policy Programme
- Global Urban Observatory
- Housing Policy Programme
- International Forum on Urban Poverty
- Land and Tenure Section
- Localising Agenda 21
- Risk and Disaster Management Program
- Safer Cities
- Sustainable Cities Programme
- Training and Capacity Building Branch
- Urban Energy Programme
- Urban Economy and Finance Branch
- Urban Transport Programme

UNESCO [85]

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, with headquarters in Paris, France, works with local governments in the framework of some of its technical assistance programmes. For example, in the field of the conservation of the world heritage through the Network of World Heritage Cities, UNESCO had the prize "Cities for Peace" that is no longer awarded.

World Health Organisation [86]

The WHO has a long history of work with local governments, in particular in providing specialised technical assistance. In particular, the WHO supports the Network of Healthy Cities that works in establishing minimum health standards in local governments and in helping the training of public officers. In Latin America the **Network of Healthy Municipalities** is supported by the WHO's continental counterpart, the Pan American Health Organisation, **PAHO**.

FAO [87]

In 2002, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations created a **Decentralised Cooperation Program**, with the support of the governments of Italy, France and Spain. The program supports projects in the areas of urban and peri-urban agriculture, food security, micro-gardens, regional economic development and the creation of agricultural professional associations.

85 <www.unesco.org>
86 <www.who.org>
87 <www.fao.org>

UNPAN [88]

The mission of the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance is to promote the sharing of knowledge, experiences and best practices throughout the world in public policies, administration and government. It provides training and technical assistance for capacity-building, with emphasis on the cooperation among developing countries. UNPAN has a very useful internet page that has links to valuable information sources throughout the world.

UNITAR [89]

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research, UNITAR, with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, conducts training programmes and seminars in two main to-

pics: international affairs and capacity-building in social and economic development.

UNITAR works with local governments through its **Decentralised Cooperation Programme**,[90] with training programmes developed around three topics: sustainable urban development and the environment; social and human development; the information society. Activities are implemented through an international network of training centres: **International Training Centres for Local Authorities/Actors**, CIFAL,[91] which trains around one hundred local authorities annually, has a database of actors and issues a number of publications.

In Latin America, CIFAL has a training centre in Curitiba, Brazil and four in Europe in Findhorn, Barcelona, Bilbao, Lyon, Plock and Tallinn (see table 70).

Table 70 / International Centre for Training of Local Agents, CIFAL

Location of training centres:

88 <www.unpan.org>
89 <www.unitar.org>
90 <http://dcp.unitar.org>
91 <www.unitar.org/cifalweb/>

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is the UN body responsible for tracking the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. With headquarters in New York and offices in 166 countries, the UNDP's work focuses on the issues of democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, energy and environment and fighting HIV-AIDS.

In each country office, the UNDP Resident Representative normally also serves as the general coordinator of development activities for the United Nations system as a whole, and is therefore an important source of information.

The main UNDP program for the support of local governments is the LIFE program, created in 1992. LIFE (Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment) is a programme for the support of participative local governance.

The aim of LIFE is to promote "local dialogues" and the cooperation among local governments, NGO's and the private sector, in order to combat urban poverty. Other UNDP activities are the Decentralised Governance Programme, the Urban Management Programme, and the latest, the ART Initiative (see table 71).

Table 71 / ART Initiative: "Support to territorial and thematic cooperation networks for human development"

ART is an international cooperation initiative that brings together programmes of several United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNESCO, UNIFEM, WHO, UNPAHO and others). The Initiative promotes a **new type of multilateralism** in which the United Nations works together with governments to promote the active participation of local communities (including local authorities) and social stakeholders.

In agreement with central governments, ART supports local communities in the South and the North to set up **development alliances-partnerships**.

More than 300 decentralised cooperation partnerships operate in different countries and, in the North, include regional and local governments of Canada, Belgium, Spain, France, Greece, Italy and Switzerland. Decentralised cooperation projects may include all or only some of the fields of action of the framework Programmes. What is important is that they must be defined in cooperation with Local Work Groups and must be within the framework of regional and local international cooperation Plans.

> **Decentralised cooperation** partnerships are laboratories for innovation in the different areas of human development, moved by the spirit of reciprocal dignity and mutual learning. In this sense, they are also vehicles for sharing solidarity, professional, training, economic and trade initiatives that thrive on an open and international vision of development.

> The ART initiative, through its international services and framework Programmes, provides technical and organisational support to local communities and their national and international organisations to set up and operate decentralised cooperation alliances-partnerships oriented to fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals. If requested, ART may also provide management for the funds moved by local communities.

> **Contact:** Giovanni Camilleri, ART Coordinator, UNDP, (Geneva) <giovanni.camilleri@undp.org>

Organisation of American States [93]

The Organisation of American States, **OAS**, has created a **High Level Inter-American Network on Decentralisation, Local Government, and Citizen Participation** (RIAD).[94] The RIAD is an Inter-American cooperation entity that links high level authorities and experts from ministries and government agencies responsible for decentralisation, building the capacity of regional and municipal administrations and citizen participation.

Among other objectives, it aims to provide a space for sharing experiences and information, developing general and strategic guidelines for public policy on these issues, promoting activities with international organisations and facilitating cooperation and organising forums at the sub-regional and national levels, electronic and virtual links, horizontal technical consulting, courses and training programmes, research and publications.

Council of the European Union [95]

The Council of the European Union has 46 member countries, among which there are 21 States of Central and Eastern Europe. With headquarters in Strasburg, France, its political mandate is "to be the guardian of democratic security based on human rights, democracy and the law".

It has a **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**, a political assembly composed of 315 representatives elected among the more than 200 thousand sub-national governments of Europe. The Congress has two chambers (local governments and regional governments) and it is a dialogue forum to discuss common problems and adopt joint positions before the States. A major accomplishment of this Congress has been the preparation and adoption of the **European Charter of Local Autonomy** (see section 2.2.1).

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93 <www.oas.org>
94 <www.upd.oas.org/riad/>
95 <www.coe.int>

Table 72 / Beware of misunderstanding

Council of Europe	European Union

1. COUNCIL OF EUROPE: forty-five member States, headquarters in Strasburg, "guardian of post-communist democracy in Europe"

2. EUROPEAN UNION[96]: twenty-five member States,[97] with a single market and common policies in various sectors. It is organised in: the European Parliament, The Court of Justice, The Court of Auditors, The European Social and Economic Committee, The Committee of the Regions, The European Central Bank, The European Investment Bank, and:

• **Council of the European Union:** is the meeting (at least biannually) of Presidents and/or Prime ministers of the member States of the European Union whose aim is to plan community policy. It is the highest decision-making body of the E.U.

• **European Commission:** is the executive body of the European Union with headquarters in Brussels that oversees compliance with treaties and decisions adopted by other EU institutions.

Note: Although they are entirely different institutions with different logos, the Council of Europe and the European Union share the same flag, which often leads to misunderstandings.

6.4. International associations of local governments

One of the main sources of information on cooperation and international relations are undoubtedly the local governments' associations and networks at the global, regional and national levels.

Almost every country in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean has local governments' associations grouped under various criteria (geographical, thematic, political, etc.)

There is a lengthy list that exceeds the one hundred associations. For this reason, we include below only some of the associations with a wider experience in international cooperation, which may be a valuable source of information.

United Cities and Local Governments [98]

UCLG is the main world organisation of city councils and local governments. UCLG has its headquarters in Barcelona, Spain, and was created in 2004 following the unification of two large pre-existing associations.[99] UCLG maintains formal cooperation links with **UNDP, UNCHR, UN-HABITAT, UNIFEM, UNITAR, UNESCO** and **WB**.

UCLG has a **"Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralisation"** (GOLD), an internet gateway to world information on issues related to local governments. The UCLG has also created a **"Committee on Decentralised Cooperation"**, currently formed by approxi-

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96 <www.europa.eu>
97 Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Hungary, Malt, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
98 <www.cities-localgovernments.org>
99 The World Federation of United Cities (WFUC-UTO) and the international Union of Local Authorities (IULA), currently terminated.

mately one hundred local government members. The Presidency and the Secretariat of the Committee are carried out by the City of Lyon (France) (see table 73).

Metropolis [100]

The world organisation of the major cities (Metropolitan Section of the UCLG) gathers 80 urban areas with a population over one million inhabitants. Created in 1985, Metropolis operates as a world forum for exploring issues and concerns common to all big cities and offers opportunities for international cooperation. Metropolis organises

triennial congresses and publishes books, reports and newsletters on issues related to large cities.

International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives [101]

ICLEI, the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives, is an important centre of resources, cooperation and information on sustainable development and environmental protection for local governments. ICLEI generates a huge array of publications, newsletters, regional reports on activities, courses and seminars, as well as statistics and data.

United Cities and Local Governments
Cités et Gouvernements Locaux Unis
Ciudades y Gobiernos Locales Unidos

Table 73 / United Cities and Local Governments

Mission:

To be the **voice and world advocate** of democratic local self-government, promoting its values, objectives and interests within the international community, through the cooperation between local governments.

Objectives:

• Promote **strong and effective democratic local self-government** throughout the world.
• Promote **unity and cooperation** amongst members.
• Ensure the effective **political representation** of local government to the international community, in particular the United Nations and its agencies.
• Be the worldwide source of key **information** regarding local government.
• Be the worldwide source of **learning and exchange** among local governments.
• Support the establishment and strengthening of **free and autonomous local governments** and their **national associations**.
• Promote **economic, social, cultural, vocational and environmental development and public service** based on the principles of good governance, sustainability and social inclusion.
• Promote **race and gender equality** and combat all forms of discrimination.
• Be a strong democratic organisation reflecting the **diversity** of the local spheres of governance.
• Promote **decentralised cooperation, international cooperation, twinning and partnerships** between local governments and their associations.
• Develop **programmes and initiatives**.

. . . .
100 <www.metropolis.org>
101 International Council on Local Environmental Activities <www.iclei.org>

Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations [102]

FLACMA, the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations, is the Latin American Section of UCLG. Headquartered in Quito, Ecuador, FLACMA has members throughout the continent and participates in cooperation and technical assistance programmes for Latin American city councils.

FLACMA is an international, non-profit and private organisation for the social and public good. Most of the national associations of Latin American governments are members of FLACMA. Its internet page has useful links to information sources and international programmes.

Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus [103]

FEMICA, the Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus, gathers national and regional associations, unions, leagues and federations of municipalities in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama and Nicaragua. Created in 1991, FEMICA has ample experience in international cooperation and has a Central American file, which is an internet tool for information, training and technical assistance, useful for the dissemination of successful local management experiences.

MERCOCITIES [104]

MERCOCITIES (Mercociudades) is the main network of MERCOSUR municipalities, actively collaborating in the regional integration process. Born in 1995, it promotes the exchange and horizontal cooperation between the region's municipalities and between those of other world regions. It currently has 181 associated cities in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia and Venezuela. For networking purposes, it is organised in Thematic Units, under the responsibility of one city at a time, on around ten different themes. It is important to point out that MERCOCITIES had an International Cooperation Thematic Unit, which is unfortunately no longer active.

Latin American Organisation of Intermediate Governments [105]

The Latin American Organisation of Intermediate Governments, OLAGI, was created at the First Latin American Summit of Regional Governors, Mayors, Prefects and Presidents, held in Ecuador in 2004. OLAGI gathers the intermediate level governments in Latin American countries (sub-national states, regions, departments and provinces). One of its objectives is to be the associative interlocutor and link body between intermediate governments, their national associations, and international cooperation institutions, promoting inter-regional twinning.

102 <www.flacma.org>
103 <www.femica.org>
104 <www.mercociudades.org>
105 <www.olagi.org>

Andean Network of Cities [106]

The Andean Network of Cities, RAC, was created in 2003, according to its statutes, it is a "valid instrument to secure the necessary mutual support and joint work to permit the Municipalities to efficiently manage urban areas, improve the living conditions of their inhabitants and build competitive local societies in the globalized world of the 21st century". Within the network there exist the following areas of work under the responsibility of one city council: promotion of trade relations and business mainly with Small and Medium Sized Companies (Bogotá), connectivity between cities and regions (Lima), exchange of experiences and initiatives on municipal public policy (La Paz), cultural and artistic cooperation (Quito), and academic and professional exchange (Caracas).

Council of European Municipalities and Regions [107]

The CEMR, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, the European Section of the UCLG, is the main association of European local governments. With headquarters in Paris and Brussels, the CEMR was created in 1951 and gathers associations from thirty countries. The CEMR is very active in the promotion of town-twinning and decentralised cooperation and is a very valuable source of information on these issues in Europe.

In 2005, the CEMR published, in English and French, the book **North/South Cooperation: the action of Europe's local government associations**, which includes details on the international cooperation activities of local government associations in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The book contains examples of projects, financial amounts and contact data of individuals. The documentation centre of CEMR is located in the **European Institute of Florence** (Italy).[108]

EUROCITIES [109]

EUROCITIES (Eurocités) is a network integrating the main European cities. Founded in1986, Eurocities has 120 members in 30 countries. Its goal is to be a platform for sharing and exchanging experiences among members through the organisation of forums, working groups, projects, workshops and publications. Eurocities works through committees, among which there is one devoted to international cooperation.

6.5. National associations of local governments

The national associations of local governments are the first source of access to information. Without the aim of including a thorough list, there are some associations in Latin America with a lengthy experience in this issue, but almost all of them have already worked to a higher or lesser degree in international cooperation.

Such is the case of Association of Municipalities of **Nicaragua** (*Asociación de Municipios de Nicaragua*) (AMUNIC)[110], the **Chilean** Association of Municipalities (*Asociación Chilena de Municipalidades*)[111], National Union of Local Governments of **Costa Rica** (*Unión Nacional de Gobiernos Locales de Costa Rica*) (UNGL)[112], the **Colombian** Federation of Municipalities (*Federación Colombiana de Municipios*)[113], and the Association of Municipalities of **Ecuador** (*Asociación de Municipalidades Ecuatorianas*)[114], among others.

These associations are active internationally and have participated in several cooperation programmes in the region, which makes them important sources of information and contacts.

From the European side, and due to their lengthy history of decentralised cooperation, it is useful to go a little deeper into some of the national associations with a wider experience and links with Latin America.

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106 <www.comunidadandina.org>
107 <www.ccre.org>
108 <www.iue.it>
109 <www.eurocities.org>
110 <www.amunic.org>

111 <www.munitel.cl>
112 <www.ungl.org>
113 <www.fcm.org.co>
114 <www.ame.gov.ec>

Spain:

The **Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces** (Federación Española de Municipalidades y Provincias, **FEMP**),[115] established as one of its institutional objectives "to promote and develop cooperation links between local and regional authorities and their international organisations, with special emphasis on Europe, Latin America and the Arab world".

The FEMP has a "Cooperation with Development Committee" ("Comité de Cooperación al Desarrollo") composed of 25 mayors or Presidents of Provincial Councils, which defines the annual agenda of cooperation activities in other countries.

In addition to the FEMP, Spain has the Confederation of Cooperation and Solidarity Spanish Funds (Confederación de Fondos Españoles de Cooperación y Solidaridad[116]), which are supranational, non-profit organisations that gather and coordinate city councils and other public and private institutions. The Confederation currently gathers nine funds (*Fons Catala, Euskal Fondoa, Fons Valencia, Fondo Mallorquí, Fondo Menorquí, Fondo Gallego, Fons Pitius, Fondo Andaluz* and *Fondo Extremeño*).

The Funds are one of the main vehicles for cooperation and funding of projects with local governments of Latin America, and a valuable source of information.

Holland:

The **Association of Netherlands Municipalities** (VNG),[117] was created in 1912 and is definitely one of the European associations with the widest experience in international cooperation. In 1993, VNG established **"VNG International"**, which in 2001 became an autonomous administrative body, under the corporate ownership of VNG.

Its objective is to offer international technical assistance through a network of 575 experts. VNG currently tracks over 800 decentralised cooperation relations throughout the world and offers co-financing programmes.

Additionally, along with UCLG, VNG conducts the program of **"Creation of Associations for the Good Local Government"** (known as ACB, Association Capacity Building) to build the capacity of national associations of local governments in developing countries. The objective is to help them face tasks and duties in a responsible way, including actual support to members in adopting good democratic practices and local government.

The program makes calls and responds to recently established associations or associations in the process of being established that require assistance. Financial support may include processes for the building of capacity in their key functions and actions to promote and effectively guide the implementation of good governance practices in the member municipalities.

The VNG also sponsors the Internet site "Stedenbanden", a source of useful information where you can find data on all town-twinning efforts and cooperation partnerships of the local Dutch governments.[118]

France:

United Cities of France (CUF),[119] was created in 1975 as the network of French local authorities involved in international cooperation. CUF has nearly 500 members (regions, provinces and municipalities) from all political orientations. By means of 21 "Country Groups" and four "Thematic Groups", CUF supports the decentralised cooperation projects of its members throughout the world. CUF has a "Latin America Group" and has participated in cooperation programmes in the Central American re-

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115 <www.femp.es>
116 <www.confederacionfondos.org>
117 <www.vng-international.nl>
118 <www.stedenbanden.nl>
119 <www.cites-unies-france.org>

gion. In addition to providing technical assistance and training, CUF provides assistance to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in channelling co-financing for projects.

Also, the **Association of Mayors of France**[120] has an area devoted to European and international cooperation. Another interesting body, which may be a good source of contacts and information is the *National Association of international relations and decentralised cooperation directors and professional heads of local governments* (ARRICOD, in French).[121] **ARRICOD** is the annual meeting of officers entrusted with cooperation in the regions, provinces and municipalities of France. ARRICOD has established links with peer organisations in other countries of the EU and is currently promoting the creation of a European network.

Italy:

The **National Association of Municipalities of Italy** (ANCI) has an area devoted to international policy and cooperation with development.[122] In particular, it is involved in cooperation projects in the Mediterranean and African regions through the *Euro-African Program for Decentralised Governance.*

The ANCI has participated in cooperation activities with Latin America, mainly in the Central American region. With the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, ANCI supports the program "Solaria" for the exchange of experiences and training. ANCI is also a member of the Inter-regional **Observatory on Cooperation with Development** (*Osservatorio Interregionale sulla Cooperazione allo Sviluppo, OICS*),[123] the most important training and capacity- building initiative in the area of decentralised cooperation in Italy.

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120 <www.amf.asso.fr>
121 <www.arricod.free.fr>
122 <www.anci.it>
123 <www.piazzadellacooperazione.oics.it>
124 <www.lgib.gov.uk/lg-alliance>
125 Commonwealth Local Government Forum, CLGF, Improvement and Development Agency, IDeA, National Association of Local Councils, NALC, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers, SOLACE and Local Government International Bureau, LGIB.
126 <www.lgib.gov.uk>

United Kingdom:

The **UK Local Government Alliance for International Development**[124], has been recently created in the United Kingdom. This Alliance gathers the main bodies and agencies of the country working on these topics.[125]

The Alliance also gathers local governments on an individual basis, British government agencies and organisations, NGOs and base community groups. The objective of the Alliance is to foster the international development of local governments in various ways:

- Production of educational and training materials;

- Dissemination of information and resources (workshops, publications, newsletters, webpages);

- Establishment of new cooperation networks with key British and international organisations and strengthening of existing networks;

- Establishment of relations with foreign local governments and other groups for sharing and exchanging experiences and good practices;

- Analysis and documentation of cases and lessons learned;

- Report on the international activities of British local governments;

- Links between local government and central government in cooperation and development issues.

The Alliance has a subsidy of the British government through a strategic agreement with the *UK Department for International Development*, DFID. Among other members of the Alliance it is important to mention the **Local Government International Bureau**, **LGIB**,[126] which is

very active in cooperation and participates in various programmes and projects, for example in Bolivia supporting the Bolivian Federation of Municipal Associations.

Germany:

The **German Cities Association** is the most important local government organisation with over 5500 members.[127] The association co-operates with the international activities of the official cooperation agency of the German government, the GTZ.[128] With the support of the GTZ, it provides technical assistance and consulting to local governments in developing countries. For example, since 2001 it has supported an exchange program with Paraguay and Chile in youth insertion policies. An important number of cooperation activities are channelled through the GTZ and deal with the issues of democratic governance and environmental protection.

6.6. Other useful resources

In addition to the official information sources existing in international governments and organisations, and in local government associations and networks, there are non-governmental organisations, consulting firms, companies, institutes, centres and all kinds of institutions related to the subject.

The aim of this section is not to provide a thorough catalogue of these institutions but rather to list the ones that are most active or recognised in decentralised cooperation in Europe-Latin America. Through them it is possible to find recent information on ongoing cooperation programmes or initiatives, as well as events, publications, call for bids on projects, etc.

European Union-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation [129]

Created in 2005, the European Union-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation specialises specifically in cooperation between local governments in both continents. Among others, its objectives are the compilation of information, the standardization of data and the creation of a centre of on-line resources including a database on operators, programmes, projects, statistics, document references, publications and articles, a financial resources guide, a catalogue of good practices and this Manual. Additionally, the OCD supports research and offers both distance and local learning courses in decentralised cooperation. Its headquarters are in Barcelona, Spain and has regional antennas in Montevideo, Uruguay and San José de Costa Rica.

Foundation for Local Development and Municipal and Institutional Strengthening of Central America and the Caribbean [130]

FUNDEMUCA was created with the support of the official Spanish cooperation in the field of municipal strengthening. The foundation is currently an autonomous organisation with the participation of the main municipal associations of Central America. Its main activity is the training of the technical and political staff of municipalities. It also offers technical assistance services for the improvement and innovation of local management, has a publication service and carries out research on the situation of municipalism in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean.

Documentation Centre of the URB-AL Programme [131]

The Centre of Documentation of the URB-AL Programme gathers all the historical records and minutes of the decentralised cooperation programme of the EU and Latin America, including thematic networks and common projects. The objective of the Centre is to recover, centralise, systematise, and disseminate all the common projects developed in the networks of the URB-AL Programme.

127 <www.staedtetag.de>
128 <www.gtz.de>
129 <www.observ-ocd.org>
130 <www.demuca.org>
131 <www.centrourbal.com>

Accessed through a multi-variable browser, the Centre has an excellent database on good practices in problem solving for common urban problems on social cohesion, urban configuration, local development, tourism, natural resources, waste management, governance, safety, information society, etc.

The headquarters of the Centre of Documentation of URBAL Programmes is located in the city of Malaga, Spain and it has Latin American offices in Valparaiso, Chile.

Ibero-American Centre for Strategic Urban Development (CIDEU) [132]

The CIDEU is an association of 69 cities joined by strategic urban planning. It was established in Barcelona in 1993 in order to share the benefits derived from tracking urban strategic planning processes: continuity of strategic lines and projects over time, higher participation of social and economic actors, the opportunity of sharing and managing common knowledge, and the improvement provided by the competitive positioning of network organisations.

CIDEU promotes the discussion of urban strategies and facilitates their circulation. It is structured as a network of cities in order to improve their strategic positioning. Since 1995, CIDEU has been the only cooperation programme of the Ibero-American Presidents and Prime Ministers summits linked to cities specialised in urban strategic thinking.

Ibero-American Municipal Union (UIM) [133]

The UIM is an NGO that promotes cooperation and exchange between city councils, experts and researchers in Spain and Latin America.

Headquartered in Granada, Spain, the UIM has a Technical Cooperation Agency (ACT-UIM) that provides orientation and technical assistance in various issues including international cooperation for municipal strengthen-

ing and local development (through the network of international cooperation with local development, **RUCIDEL**).

Centre of Municipal Studies and International Cooperation (CEMCI) [134]

The CEMCI works mainly on projects with Latin America. Headquartered in Malaga, Spain, its activities have mainly addressed training and the exchange of experiences in "Government Science, Public Management and Local Administration".

Latin American Centre of Administration for Development (CLAD) [135]

The CLAD is a public international inter-governmental organisation. Create in 1972 under the initiative of the governments of Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela, its objective is to promote the reform of the State and the modernisation of public administration including local governments. Its activities are connected to the analysis and exchange of experiences, the organisation of specialised international meetings, publications, documentation and information services, studies and research, and the performance of technical cooperation activities.

Its headquarters are in Caracas, Venezuela and it is the permanent technical secretariat of the Ibero-American Conferences of Ministries on Public Administration and Reform of the State, held in the framework of the Ibero-American Summits of Presidents and Prime Ministers. The CLAD's Congress is an important meeting point to obtain information and establish contacts.

Observatory on Changes in Latin America (LOCAL) [136]

The Observatory of Changes in Latin America is part of the Institute of High Studies on Latin America (in French, IHEAL) of the University of Paris III, (Sorbonne Nouvelle). The mission of the "International Cooperation Department" of LOCAL is to set up and develop cooperation links between France and the local governments of Latin America.

132 <www.cideu.org>
133 <www.uimunicipalistas.org>
134 <www.cemci.org>
135 <www.clad.org.ve>
136 <www.iheal.univ-paris3.fr>

Its aim is to promote the development of new territorial governance practices providing technical assistance and funding of bilateral, multilateral and decentralised cooperation. LOCAL supports students of the Professional Master's in Europe-Latin America Relations, of IHEAL, to participate in internships in the Latin American local governments that are the beneficiaries of cooperation.

Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies [137]

The Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies is associated to the Erasmus University of Rotterdam (Netherlands) and works in cooperation projects on urban development and housing. The IHS has recently developed cooperation projects in Recife, Brazil, Central America and Lima in Peru.

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137 <www.ihs.nl>
138 <www.coopdec.org>
139 <www.pontisweb.com>

Private consulting companies

In addition to the abovementioned organisations, consulting firms in Europe and Latin America have specialised in international relations of cities and decentralised cooperation. The **Agency Coop-Dec Conseil** is a French consulting firm,[138] specialised in capacity-building and support of decentralised cooperation projects, which issues a monthly newsletter with data on town twinning, calls for programmes, projects, calendar of events and job offers on these issues. In Latin America, the Argentine consulting firm **PONTIS**,[139] specialises in selling consulting for the support of international relations of provinces and city councils.

7. Decentralised cooperation: On what topics?

*b*UT ON WHICH SUBJECTS may a municipality or a city have international relationships? It is known from experience that cooperation between local governments of different countries may take place based on a varied range of criteria: geographical, political, sector, of temporary factors, etc. This has given place to the emerging of a surplus of networks, groups, associations, coalitions, programmes, projects and other cooperation methods between local governments who share common concerns and wish to work together. In practice, the list of subjects is very long, since it deals with all aspects of local life.[140]

With no intention of being thorough, following are noteworthy examples of international cooperation between local governments in subjects such as institutional strengthening and decentralisation, local governance, citizen participation, infrastructures and basic services, social policies, solidarity against poverty, emergency aid against natural disasters and humanitarian help in the event of conflicts.

7.1. Political cooperation

The objective of political cooperation is to strengthen forces when facing common claims and having an influence over the State's and International Organisations' decisions and policies. This cooperation often takes place within local authorities' associations, which allow a unified and strong communication, as well as procedures for assuming common stances.

Even though it is not a rule, it is common for local governments to collaborate with partners of the same political tendency. This has been a determining factor in great part of the collaboration agreements with the municipalities of Nicaragua, where the *Sandinista* Revolution in 1979, gave place to the establishment of 19 agreements between Nicaraguan municipalities and European municipalities ruled by leftist parties.

In the European case, this party solidarity has materialised in the constitution of work networks and even in the support of some mayors and local governors of their colleagues abroad during electoral campaigns. Other groups have been formed around specific approaches of public policy.

Such is the case of the Local Authorities' Forum for Social Inclusion (FAL, for its initials in Spanish), which was born at the meetings of local governments who attended the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre which gathers some hundred member cities, municipalities and regions concerned with social inequality (see table 74).

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140 Even though decentralised cooperation responds to thematic priorities of local governments, it is worth mentioning that for official cooperation between the European Union and Latin America, the third Chiefs of State and Government Summit (Guadalajara, 2004) established three priority subjects: **(i)** promotion of social cohesion (through poverty, inequality and exclusion reduction policies), **(ii)** democratic governance and **(iii)** regional integration.
For more information, see: <http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/la/index.htm#1b>

Table 74 / Local Authorities' Forum for Social Inclusion (FAL)

The FAL was born in 2001 in Porto Alegre (Brazil) when a group of mayors and local governors meet within the frame of the first **World Social Forum**. With the establishment of the FAL as a network of local governments committed with social inclusion, works start in various fronts and annual meetings are organised. In the 5th FAL's meeting, the decision of creating a Permanent Secretariat was taken. This Secretariat now also acts as UCLG's **Participative Democracy and Social Inclusion Commission Secretariat**.

Strategic central themes:

1. To reaffirm the link between municipalities and social movements through a strategic coordination between WSF and FAL.

2. To strengthen the commitment of municipalities, at an international level, of the enhancement of inclusion, participative democracy and peace promotion public policies.

3. To acknowledge that despite the short but intense, productive and creative history of FAL, new challenges are faced based on the established political strength and the strategic coordination with WSF actors.

4. To strengthen and claim an active prominence of local authorities and cities in the international sphere and their role in the planet's transformation and the building of a different, possible world.

5. To keep working as an horizontal network, which up to now has allowed the development of a strong coordination between cities, networks and social movements.

6. To propose that the future of FAL develops in thematic and regional forums in coordination with WSF's processes.

Work lines:

1. Democratic local public policies for social inclusion fight against poverty and famine.
2. Participative democracy as the core for local democracy strengthening.
3. Promotion of decentralised cooperation: solidarity and cooperation of cities and their people.
4. Advance towards a *Universal Human Rights' Constitution in the City.*
5. Culture of peace, non violence and political resolution of conflicts.
6. Peripheral cities as promoters of social inclusion and equality policies.

Contact: *Vanesa Marx*, FAL's Technical-Executive Secretariat (central offices at the UCLG's World Secretariat). Tel.: (34 93) 342-9470 v.marx@cities-localgovernments.org, vmarxfal@yahoo.com.br

7.2. Institutional capacity building and decentralisation

One of the main themes of international cooperation between local governments has to do with the actions for institutional strengthening and decentralisation. Institutional strengthening projects seek the improvement of the local government's administrative and management capacity and the day-to-day improvement of its democratic political practice. Training of municipal staff and the improvement of government processes is often prioritised in these issues.

As known, institutional strengthening is a priority subject due to the fact that decentralisation processes developed in the majority of countries have assigned more competences, faculties and responsibilities to local governments, without them necessarily having the technical capacities or the resources to deal with those processes.

These subjects touch the essence of local administration, not only in aspects of the organisation of its internal structure, but also in work procedures. Areas usually approached are strategic planning, public service professionalisation, local finances improvement (accounting, transparency, tax collecting, etc.), the use of new information and communication technologies and the improvement of attendance to citizens.

Table 75 shows an innovative example of decentralised cooperation between some local governments in France and nine Latin American countries as regards institutional strengthening and public service professionalisation.

In addition to aspects exclusively related to the strengthening of the institution as such, there are also exchange of good experiences programmes on governance and citizen participation. It has been one of the common subjects in the collaboration between local governments of Europe and Latin America, given that innovative strategies on these subjects have been developed in both continents. Table 76 shows a world network of exchange of experiences on citizen participation in local governments.

☀ îledeFrance

Cuadro 75 / Ile-de-France Region y Latin America

Decentralised cooperation to professionalise public service.

Since 2001, the region of Ile-de-France (regional local government where Paris is located) funds and technically accompanies an exchange and asístanse programme with Latin America in the subject of local public service professionalisation. The programme has proved being useful to promote collective learning amongst over twenty local governments in subjects such as human resources management, career professional service, administration and finance, performance assessment, training, recruiting, etc.

The richness of this decentralised cooperation lies on the great diversity of the confronted realities and on the different ways of approaching, by the local government, the city's expectations and demands.

Local governments that participate are: **Ile-de-France** Regional Council, **Cergy-Pontoise** Group (France), **San Salvador** Town Hall (El Salvador), State Governments of **Chiapas**, **Guanajuato**, **Michoacán**, **Puebla**, **San Luis Potosí** y **Yucatán** (Mexico), Metropolitan Regional Government of **Santiago** (Chile), Nacional Institute for Federalism and Municipal Development (**INAFED**, Mexico), Municipalities of **Canelones** and of **Montevideo** (Uruguay), Municipalities of **Morón** and of **Rosario** (Argentina), Municipality of **San José** (Costa Rica), Municipalities of **Arteaga** and of **Naucalpan** (Mexico), with the support of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú and the Universidad del Rosario (Colombia).

Table 76 / Tools for citizen participation in local governments:
world exchange of experiences

The "Participation TOOLKIT" is a group of local governments and civil society's organisations around the world that work together in order to promote a participative management of the local government.

The TOOLKIT has a useful Internet site that offers information about the **tools** that promote citizen participation, a database of experiences, a **discussion forum** and articles with complementary **information**. Specific cases may be presented on the site, and free registration to participate is available.

The philosophy behind the TOOLKIT is that participation strengthens the local government, contributes to development and improves the habitat's conditions. That is why **its objective is to strengthen competences as regards citizen participation in order for them to become involved in routine local government decision making procedures**.

The site has compiled and distributes a set of political tools and instruments in this area –developed in many countries and regions– in order to favour a more sustainable level of citizen participation in the local government, as well as promoting talks between local authorities and civil society's organisations. The site and its contents are available in English, French and Spanish.

The TOOLKIT is institutionally supported by Holland's Association of Municipalities (VNG) and by UCLG's Asian-Pacific Section.

7.3. Infrastructures and essential services

One of the main responsibilities of the local government is to ensure the provision of urban infrastructures and basic services for the people. It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that international cooperation between cities on these subjects is very intense. Significantly, local governments establish international relationships to exchange experiences, obtain funds and technical assistance for their projects as regards water and sewage, garbage and waste treatment, public transport, highway administration, housing, public security, etc.

Urban development is, undeniably, a significant issue of cooperation. For example, the **+30 Network**[141] international network, which gathers cities in different countries that wish to collaborate with the exchange of experiences on sustainable urban development for 30, 40, up to 60 years.

Table 77 shows a model case of cooperation between inter-municipal entities of France and the Southern Cone, for the exchange of experiences on local economic development, urban transport and waste management.

cités unies
France

Table 77 / Decentralised cooperation for the inter-municipal provision of essential services: France-South America

Under the government of the Municipalities of **Montevideo** and of **Canelones** in Uruguay and of **United Cities of France** (CUF) a decentralised cooperation programme between local governments of the Southern Cone and France on the subject of "inter-municipality" is enhanced. This programme refers to political, economical and administrative collaboration schemes between close and suburban municipalities for the joint provision of basic services.

Collaboration starts in 2005 with the celebration in Rosario, Argentina of a regional seminar organised with the support of the Latin American Change Observatory (**LOCAL**) with the purpose of offering knowledge of inter-municipal experiences at a regional level and facilitating the exchange with the French experiences.

Collaboration themes in 2006:

1. Transport common management
2. Inter-municipality for the local **economic development**
3. Inter-municipal management of **solid waste** and of the **environment**

Objectives:

• Contribute to the development of **inter-municipal structures** in the Southern Cone;
• Strengthen **complementarity** between bilateral cooperation and decentralised cooperation of France and the Southern Cone;
• Establish **new ties** of decentralised cooperation between France and the Southern Cone;
• Create a **dialogue** environment, of discussion of common management of public policies;
• Support the **decentralisation** process in Uruguay and the Southern Cone, strengthening municipalities' management capacities.

For more information: <www.montevideo.gub.uy> , <www.imcanelones.gub.uy>, <www.cites-unies-france.org>

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On the other hand, in the last years, collaboration projects related to new information and communication technologies have also been strengthened. The arrival of the Internet and citizenry's pressure for the local government to adapt to technological advancements has allowed for a series of significant decentralised cooperation on these issues.

At least three cities' networks outstand in their work on these issues: the **Local Authorities' Network for Information Society** (see table 78), **Global Cities Dialogue**,[142] and the **Latin American Network of Digital Cities**.

The latter is an initiative of the Ibero-American Association of Research Centres and Telecommunications Companies (AHCIET). It was created in May 2001, with the objective of promoting the development of information society in Ibero-America through the cooperation between cities. Its work includes all key actors: national and local governments, private sector, international organisations, municipal federations and other of local agents. Within the network's frame, the *Manual for the Development of Digital Cities in Ibero-America* has been published, and an annual prize is given to good practices in these issues.[143]

IT4ALL REGIONS

Red Mundial de Regiones para la Sociedad de la Información

Table 78 / World network of cooperation on information technologies

IT4ALL (Information Technology for All) - **Network of local authorities for the information society** is an instrument established in order to guarantee an effective cooperation of local authorities around the world (cities, regions and other entities of the decentralised Administration) for the access of all people to information society, favouring e-inclusion and digital decentralised cooperation policies.

Main lines of action:

1. Identification of potential cooperation projects that could have a high impact on the development of the Information Society and capable of being transferred to a wide group of regions.

2. Design and spread of a reference model based on local government's good practices that may serve as guidance to diagnose and plan strategies for local adaptation to the Information Society. (**Local Digital Agendas**)

3. Start of training activities that contribute to **sensitising and capacitation** of those local agents responsible for the establishment of the Information Society.

4. Support of the achievement and **funding of projects** for the development of the Information Society in less developed cities and regions.

For more information: <www.it4all-regions.org>

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142 <www.globalcitiesdialogue.org>
143 <www.iberomunicipios.org>

7.4. Social Cohesion

The term "social cohesion" has been widely used in the last few years in the context of cooperation between Europe and Latina America. Since the meaning of this term may be ambiguous in some countries, it deserves some clarification.

Social cohesion in Latina America often refers to policies in the fight against poverty and for the reduction of inequality. But en Europe, the focus is broader and it includes issues related to community integration, the respect of diversity, the fight against discriminations and for equal rights, etc.

It is not surprising that since the local government is the public administration level which is closest to the people, it is the one that systematically faces citizens' complaints and pressures in issues of social cohesion. This is why local governments have established international relations in topics such as education, local development policies for job creation, decent housing and suitable health services (fight against HIV-AIDS), etc. Table 79 shows the example of the World Alliance of Cities against Poverty.

Table 79 / World Alliance of Cities against Poverty [144]

Founded en 1997, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), (World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty, WACAP) is a contribution from cities of all the continents to the International Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), as proclaimed in the United Nations General Assembly. WACAP gathers cities that have decided to make a public commitment and mobilize all sectors of society, from individuals to governments, to do as much as they can to eliminate poverty both at home and overseas.

Their objectives are:

1. Connect: World and regional forums offer the chance for the city council heads in all the continents to get together to exchange information and be in touch with other key players in the fight against poverty. This is an opportunity to be informed directly about experiences carried out successfully in other city councils so they can responder better to their own local needs. Between forums, The UNDP circulates among the city government members of the network examples of actions that can be adapted in other locations while fostering direct exchanges between cities.

2. Dynamise: UNDP fosters cooperation between cities as well as access by city governments to the competencies and the support tools that can be offered by the UN institutions, governments and the different private development players.

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144 Not to be mistaken for the association **"United Cities against Poverty"**, founded in 2001 around the International Solidarity Fund of Cities against Poverty, under the leadership of the city councils of Geneva (Switzerland), Lyon (France) and Bamako (Mali) <www.vup-ucp.org>

3. Mobilise: The information spread through the network enables city councils to raise the awareness of their population efficiently and truthfully and to mobilise economic and social players to act locally or overseas. Additionally, being a member of the Alliance lends greater strength to their recommendations before national and international authorities.

4. Innovate: The network fosters the joint search of the city councils for new ways and means to fulfil the Millennium Objectives for Development at the local level.

The Alliance's activities are:

• "Exchanging experiences."
• Developing the competencies of the incumbents and municipal officials,
• Improving the management of local issues,
• Reinforcing the cities resources in the issue of fight against poverty,
• Creating international associations ,
• Mobilising and obtaining the commitment of citizens, associations, companies and governments in the fight against poverty,
• Spreading messages among the populations, State authorities and international events.

Contact: *Mr. Mohand Cherifi*, Coordinator of the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty, UNDP - WACAP 11-13 Chemin des Anémones CH-1219 Geneva, Switzerland Tel.: (41-22) 917 85 34, Fax: 917 80 05, mohand.cherifi@undp.org

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In addition to the work against poverty, the support of minorities or marginalized groups has achieved greater importance in the European-Latin American decentralised cooperation. For example, in the last few years, efforts to cooperate in gender issues have multiplied. A very valuable source of contacts and information in these topics is the association **Women and Cities International**,[145] a space for local governments to exchange information about policies in order to promote gender equality and the place of women in the cites of the five continents.

Additionally, the **Woman and Habitat Network in Latin America**,[146] a member of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), has a *Guide for formulating and applying municipal policies directed to women* and it fosters international exchange in these topics. Both initiatives are connected to the **Huairou Commission**,[147] main international coordinator in gender issues, born from the Beijing summit in 1995. Table 80 presents an example of decentralized cooperation between Europe and Latina America in this topic.

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145 <www.femmesetvilles.org>
146 <www.redmujer.org.ar>
147 <www.huairou.org>

The Political Training Centre "Woman and City" is a public international centre focused on European and Latin American women. It was born out of the work of Network 12 of the URB-AL programme of the EU for the promotion of women in local decision making spaces. Its European office is in Barcelona, it has another one in Buenos Aires and an antenna in Costa Rica.

The Centre's mission is to **leverage access and consolidation of women in decision making at the local level** to achieve greater political involvement of women in the advancement towards more democratic societies. The Centre presents a specific offer of **training**, **awareness raising** and the development of **practical skill** of women who are active in institutional political life and for the participation in local association spaces. It tries to foster women's capacities to defender their gender interests and to make proposals and influence local policies agendas.

The Centre promotes different activities to generate and transfer knowledge: An **annual competition** awarding research (for two year projects) about the **political participation of women**; the creation of a meeting and exchange platform for women of both continents and a telematic documentary resource centre.

This project, which is promoted and coordinated by the **Barcelona Council** of Representatives, has the participation of some of the member entities of Network 12 such as the Province of **Turin** in Italy, the Metropolitan City Council of **Quito** in Ecuador, the Government of the Autonomous City of **Buenos Aires** in Argentina and the City Council of **San Jose** in Costa Rica. The project is associated to the United Nations Development Fund for Women, **UNIFEM**.

More information: <www.diba.es/urbal12>

7.5. International Solidarity

For many local governments, cooperation is a way to express their international solidarity. It is a specific expression of a political and often ideological position about the need to do something to change the conditions of inequality, not just in the local territory but between the different regions in the world.

In this context, more than participating in the State cooperation programmes, local governments develop increasingly their own international cooperation y solidarity policy which is expressed by specific actions to fight poverty and unequal development.

Also, in recent years, there has been a greater social awareness towards problems derived from war, natural disasters and injustice in other parts of the World, giving rise to greater citizen pressure for local governments to participate and help.

This solidarity has been expressed very clearly in response to natural catastrophes or to promote the rebuilding and peacekeeping efforts in war zones.[148] This type of help is usually called "humanitarian" or relief aid, because it is aimed to saving the lives of the people affected by disasters, alleviating their suffering and protecting their dignity.

[148] An example of this type of actions is presented in the document: *Evaluate to evolve. Three years alter Mitch. The management of the FONS CATALÀ. Local Power in the context of emergency and reconstruction*. 2004.

Humanitarian help is thus a response to natural emergencies and disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes or droughts, or those caused directly by human intervention such as armed conflicts or massive refugee dislocations. Relief aid is oriented to the most vulnerable populations and it is devoted to satisfying their most immediate needs such as food, healing, shelter, security or family reunification.

A large number of local governments is mobilized when there are humanitarian crisis with great media impact, such as is the case of hurricane Mitch in Centre America or the Tsunami in South East Asia. However, experience shows that cities do not respond equally well to less publicised but equally serious crises, such as those caused by "forgotten conflicts" or by droughts in Africa.

The unpredictable nature of emergencies and the need for a fast response makes humanitarian assistance one of the most complex areas of international cooperation. To make it efficient there are two factors that have to be considered: speed and coordination between agents.

If a local government wishes to be able to help in emergency cases, they should set aside a budget that can be managed quickly, without bureaucratic delays. They should also have mechanisms and fast response networks available to facilitate coordination.

The idea is not just to respond to an emergency crisis but also to set the conditions for future development through the reduction of vulnerability and the reinforcement of the local reconstruction capacities. For example, it is advisable that the actions help to prevent the effects of future catastrophes.

Additionally, for help to be effective, it must meet minimum requirements of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Table 81 shows the case of the Catalonia for Iraq Campaign, a good example of how local governments can collaborate with civil society to respond collectively to conflict situations overseas.

Table 81 / Examples of Humanitarian Aid: Catalonia for Iraq

The relief aid campaign "Catalonia for Iraq" was created in 2003, with the support of the **Generalitat de Catalonia**, the **Barcelona City Council**, the **Barcelona Provincial Council**, the **Catalonian Fund** for Cooperation and Development and the Catalonian Federation of NGOs.

Its first action was to make a public statement about the importance of helping the population of Iraq, recommending the rejection of funds from the Spanish government for "reconstruction", a term they considered "immoral" because of the profit making implied. The campaign was launched before the Conference of Donors gathered in October 2003 in Madrid to denounce the war and the policy of making profits with the "reconstruction effort".

The campaign decided not to collect medicines and food because they have the opinion that donation in kind is not effective. Following the line of some NGOs they declared that "cooperating is not hading down leftovers". The campaign raised 30 thousand euros in donations from individuals which were included in a total 130 thousand euros used to help directly the population affected by the war.

More information: <www.catalunyaperiraq.org>

Similarly, table 82 shows some examples of relief aid actions by local European governments to responde to the catastrophe caused by the tsunami in South East Asia by the end of 2004.

Table 82 / European Local Governments' Solidarity in 2004

Tsunami Relief Aid [149]

Germany
Karlsruhe: Donation of 10 thousand euros.
Konstanz: Organization of a fund raising concert to benefit the victims.
Duisburg: The city council sent a fire-fighters' squad and rescue trained dogs.
Stuttgart: Water potabilizing machinery and technical staff.

Austria
Vienna: Medical materials and food.

Denmark
Copenhagen: Donation of 133 thousand euros.

Spain
Andalusia: The Andalusian Fund of City Councils for International Solidarity donated 200 thousand euros.
Barcelona City Government: Donation of 130 thousand euros for rebuilding devastated areas.
Generalitat de Catalonia: Donation of 400 thousand euros through the Catalonian Agency for **Cooperation.**
Zaragoza: Donation of 50 thousand euros for rebuilding Andhra Pradesh (India).

France
Ile-de-France Region: The Regional Council requested to the 562 thousand students and teachers of the Region to donate a euro each for the reconstruction.
Dijon: Donation of 150 thousand euros to the Red Cross International.

Lyon, Pays de la Loire Region, Toulouse, Marseille and Nice: Donation of 100 thousand euros each.
Paris: Collection of donations in the neighbourhood centres and offering of technical assistance to provide drinking water for the affected areas.
Nantes: Help for the evaluation of the reconstruction needs.
Mulhouse, Auvergne Regional council, Lille Urban Community: Donation of 50 thousand euros each.

Greece
Athens: Organization of a meeting of capitals cities of the EU to coordinate the aid. Support to rebuild schools and orphanages.

Italia
Roma: Support campaign for the children of areas affected by the catastrophe.
Tuscan Region: Donation of surgical material.
Venice: Coordination of the assistance with the Sri Lankan community in Venice.
Turin: Donation of medicines and hospital material.
Milan: Donation of 100 thousand euros.
Naples: Donation of 100 thousand euros and one euro from the salary of each member of the municipal trade union.
Genoa: Campaign "Send a message and donate a euro"

Netherlands
Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht: Donation of 1 euro per inhabitant (Total 2,085 thousand euros).

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149 Source: United Cities and Local Governments <http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/>

8. Ten tips for a successful international practice

*a*S SEEN throughout this Manual, a local government takes different paths to undertake an international strategy or establish long-lasting decentralised cooperation relations. This Manual has suggested that these are not "one-way" roads, nor do they necessarily entail a strict logical order or chronological sequence.

The recommendations set out in this Manual are intended to help local governments build their strategies and advance at their own pace, according to the priorities imposed by their specific realities. Practice shows that internationalisation strategy is progressive, and that the vision is continuously fed back by practice, experience and the passing of time.

Below are ten general tips that may prove useful to ensure the success of the local governments' internationalisation process, regardless of their specific situations.

Table 83 / Ten tips for a successful international practice

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1. Be proactive: take the initiative and open up to the world
2. Be receptive: bring the world to your city
3. Go beyond the notion "donor-beneficiary"
4. Be realistic and avoid dispersion
5. Secure support and political determination
6. Strengthen technical capabilities and skills
7. Coordinate and communicate within the local government
8. Limit red tape
9. Establish targets and impact
10. Anticipate changes and innovate

8.1. Be proactive: take the initiative and open up to the world

Just like in every other activity, determination and effort are key for advancing. A government's international strategy not only depends on a suitable legal and institutional framework, the necessary resources or the sheer desire to reach out to the world.

To develop successfully on the global stage, a local government must be proactive, that is, take the initiative and make sure not to impose limits on its own endeavour-knock at every door, search for information, ask for contacts, make appointments, attend conferences and network.

Contacts and long-lasting cooperation bonds will not magically or automatically appear without any effort. Experience shows that the initiative to go out into the world can come from different sources. It will normally consist of a political decision on the part of the mayor or head of

the local government, but we should not underestimate the initiatives of other officers, town council employees, extra-government actors and citizens in general.

Building fruitful and long-lasting relations with partners abroad can be a most rewarding activity. However, the process of finding a counterpart is not always easy and usually takes quite a long time. Consequently, the strategy to reach out to the world should be drawn up correctly. Some people compare a local government's international affairs with marriage: to have a good, long-lasting relationship you must continuously bear in mind the concerns and needs of your counterpart.

In order to be proactive and take the initiative it is essential to travel abroad. Tours, visits and technical missions are extremely impotant to forge and strengthen international bonds. It is further important to acknowledge that informal meetings should not be underestimated, as they represent a favourable environment for future links.

Travelling abroad is costly indeed. That is why it is often criticized as unnecessary squandering of town council resources. That is why it is important to conceive travelling as work missions, within the framework of a legitimate, lawful and agreed upon international strategy with absolutley clear goals. In some cases, travelling costs can be reduced by obtaining external funding. This is possible when the town council is a member of a network or an organisation that can provide funds for project identification, follow-up, evauation or institutional representation.

Experience demonstrates that long-lasting relations or cooperation projects can begin as a result of a mayor's visit or a town council officer's participation in an international seminar. Beyond any doubt, travelling gives the chance to establish new contacts, learn about new tools and upgrade skills.

After returning from abroad, the officer should talk to his peers about his mission and issue a comprehensive and thorough report in writing. This report should circulate and be made available all the relevant local government areas. A well prepared mission report should include conclusions and especially a duly scheduled outlook for future instances of cooperation.

Finally, opening up to the world means having a broad mind and be willing to collaborate with people whose idiosyncracy is different from ours. This should be born in mind when tackling international practice. Even the notion of time, work or courtesy can vary enormously from culture to culture.

Whoever undertakes international relations should be willing to face a different world where work processes, methods and rhythms are not the same. It is therefore essential to bear in mind that it is precisely this cultural clash that gives the local authorities to see existing problems in a new light.

Experience shows that it is often difficult to adapt to cultural differences. This is a normal aspect of any international strategy, and an invaluable opportunity to learn new lessons. That is why it is important to keep an open mind and try not to be demotivated by misunderstandings.

8.2. Be receptive: bring the world to your city

A city's international affairs are not only developed beyond the national borders. The government's strategy should also include international global actions at home.

For example, the local government should develop close relations with those international actors present in their country. To that end, they should carry out protocol and public relations activities with prospective foreign partners. These include meeting delegations and official guests from overseas, inviting the diplomatic officers in the country to cocktail parties, dinners or cultural events, presenting the key of the city or declaring distinguished visitors Guests of Honor.

Although embassies are always located in the capital cities, non-capital town councils can invite the Ambassador responsible for cooperation or another officer to visit the town, so as to familiarise with its needs and potential. The same applies to consulates, economic offices and chambers of industry and trade.

Furthermore, the local government can host events aimed at promoting a country or a region abroad. There are many examples of latin American cities organising the European Week to show the history, culture, art, technological developments and characteristics of Europe or a specific country or city in this continent.

Likewise, Europe often dedicate cultural festivals or conferences to one or more Latin American countries. Such

events are often carried out with the support of the Embassies or chambers of the country in question, within the framework of town-twinning.

When a local government reaches out to the world, it becomes more open ot other cultures and realities. As a result, it raises international awareness and elicits local population support for the government's international strategy. Giving a foreign partner visibility can pave the way to future cooperation projects and solidarity bonds in the long run.

8.3. Go beyond the "donor-beneficiary" notion

At present, two clashing visions of decentralised cooperation and international relations appear to coexist. To some it is an instrument for granting or obtaining aid for the development of the poorer nations. To others, it is a way to establish more balanced strategic associations.

While the above views do not necessarily clash –both perspectives coexist to a higher or lesser degree, depending on the actor and the time– some local governments clearly align with one or the other.

Though we are not attempting to caricaturise the above, it is true that some local governments in developing countries tend to align with the "donor-donee" view, which places them in a position of mere beneficiaries of technical assistance and money. This perspective obviously does away with the idea of reciprocitiy and mutual interest.

A number of development countries also advocate this vision. Many local governments in Europe continue to view cooperation as a way of providing aid. Indeed, in their policies they refer to "their responsibility" to "assist" the "Third World", and to resources to subsidise projects for the benefit of the populations in the "South".

To many local governments that view cooperation as a downward sloping avenue of assistance, international strategy is not based on local priorities but on the donor's terms and the availability of funds. Many a town council could be considered a "fund hunter". They are constantly on the lookout for funds and tailor their projects to suit pre-established requirements for international cooperation.

By contrast, some local and regional governments in Europe and in some cities in Latin America tend to go beyond the "assistentialist" concept and view cooperation as a more strategic relation where exchange is more balanced and agreements are based on mutual interest. At present, both visions coexist in response to the specific priorities of public policies.

It is absolutely clear that the best approach in the long term will be one based on respect for the autonomy and priorities of both parties. Indeed, practice demonstrates that those relation based on consensus and equitable collaboration terms tend to last longer.

However, we should be very careful when adopting this more horizontal approach. We cannot forget the dramatic inequalities between the different regions in the world. The challenged faced by every local government is to implement cooperation in such a way as to share technology, experience, resources (including financial ones) while ensuring that the local government will be the protagonist of its own development.

The objective is to turn collaboration into a two-way avenue guaranteeing mutual interest while maintaining solidarity whenever necessary.

Within this context, we suggest leaving behind the old paternalistic notions of cooperation that refer to "North-South", "centre-outskirts", "donor-beneficiary", "rich-to-poor assistentialism" and "aid to the Third World". These coined expressions are narrow-minded and distort relations in practice.

The regular use of the above expressions is not a minor issue at all. This language carries a historical and ideological meaning that is no longer valid today. The challenge is to view and carry out decentralised cooperation as a strategic association rather than charity or aid.

8.4. Be realistic and avoid dispersion

Obviously, international cooperation strategy should be realistic and focus on what can actually reasonably be achieved. Whenever initiatives are too ambitious, expectations are seldom fulfilled. This is dangerous as it may jeopardise the reputation and credibility of international endeavours in the long run.

Throughout the design and implementation stages, the local government should make sure not to go beyond its capacity or set targets beyond the reasonable potential of its partners abroad.

All too often, in an attempt to increase cooperation, local authorities undertake multiple initiatives at the same time. Too much can undermine the efficient attainment of specific results.

We should not forget that international relations offices and officers are in charge of affairs involving all the areas of local government, so they are often overworked and required to sort out urgent, rather than important problems. This is the case whenever many small projects are undertaken simultaneously and priorities have not been clearly defined by the authorities.

On the other hand, it is essential to bear in mind the time and pace of international actions. Some take a long time. Some are formalised only several months after they were originally conceived, and results are obtained after months or even years of hard work.

For example, in the case of projects financed through multilateral or bilateral cooperation, the bureaucratic cycle can take up to two years - including discussion, inicial profile, pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, technical missions, pre-pprogramming, identification and scheduling, and final approval of the project by headquarters.

Considering all of the above, and also bearing in mind that local authorities operate within a specific timeframe, we should be aware of the fact that the results of international strategies may take longer than expected. We should be perseverant yet patient.

8.5. Secure support and political determination

It is not enough that the political authorities of the local government are sensitive to the need, important and potential benefits of the international projection of their territory. This conviction must also be reflected in a clear determination and the consequent political decision making.

This political determination must be consistent and explicit at all levels among the public authorities. For this reason, it is important that the administrative personnel, officials and directors, politicians elected to the collegiate body (city council, city hall, etc.), the various political groups or parties, and obviously, the executive power representative: the mayor, president or head of the local government, are involved in the international strategy.

As with any other topic in the local political agenda, the success of the international strategy requires political determination and leadership, especially on the part of the highest rank figure, who will always attract the most interest and credibility from international partners.

In most European local governments there is generally an elected politician in charge of international affairs in

the local collegiate body. But, it is actually not unusual for international initiatives to be driven by lower rank officials, who deal with the everyday contacts with the various partners.

This fluent communication between directors often gives rise to the identification of potential projects or joint actions. The problem is that sometimes these initiatives advance without the approval and support of the political authorities, whose approval will sooner or later be needed.

What generally happens in such cases is that when the moment comes when actions need to be taken (such as a trip, incurring in expenses or implementing a specific activity), the political support is not secured and the process is aborted. This entails a loss of credibility before the external partners, jeopardizing the feasibility of future actions.

Therefore, in the international strategy it is recommendable to maintain political authorities permanently informed, and to advance in the implementation of everyday actions with their continuous support.

8.6. Strengthen technical capabilities and skills

The present complexity of international relations and the increase in decentralised cooperation requires the professionalization of local governments in these issues. To this date, professionalization is scarce and there are few programs for international capacity building.

As we have shown, it is always advisable to have a specific international relations and cooperation area, even if it is composed of only one or two people. But having an international relations area is not enough. It is essential for its personnel to be adequately qualified in the subject and proficient in foreign languages.

With the explosion of decentralised cooperation in the last years, some local governments have started to open to the world, taking on commitments and responsibilities without having the required technical capacity. As a consequence, it is not unusual to see cities entering the world context with random steps, improvising and learning from trial and error.

For a city to walk firmly in the international arena, building the capacity of personnel and systematizing processes is essential. The offer of training and capacity building for international professionals for cities has been growing and an increasing number of universities include this subject in post grade curricula.

International organizations and municipality associations have also developed training and capacity building actions in these issued. There are now training courses specifically devoted to the promotion and specialization of European-Latin American decentralised cooperation, such as the one delivered by the EU-LA Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation.

The objective is to build the capacity of local governments for international relations and cooperation, improving their organization, regulating processes and facilitating a better capacity for assessing, tracking and evaluating projects.

It is therefore very important for those responsible for cooperation, and for the officials in other areas where international relations are established to participate in meetings and debates on the subject and to attend the courses conducted by specialised organisations, both locally and abroad.

It is also advisable for the local government itself to organise internal capacity building activities to suit its own needs and priorities. The possible topics are varied and may include among others: the identification and prepa-

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ration of projects; the history of international relations and cooperation of the local territory; conflict solving, languages, cultural diversity, financial management and budget preparation, international law, etc.

On the other hand, in addition to the technical capacity in human resources and procedures, it is necessary to have the required infrastructure in order to carry out international operations adequately. This requires direct access to international telephone calls, unlimited high-speed internet access, conference facilities, network computer and printing equipment, fax, availability of meeting facilities and venues for seminars and events.

Volume 2 of this Manual will provide further advise for the creation of administrative structures, the organisation of procedures, and the specific capacity building needs of personnel.

8.7. Coordinate and communicate within the local government

The coordination within the government is one of the most important aspects in order to guarantee the success of the international strategy. Although this may seem obvious, it is not always easy, due to the fact that the areas that deliver services to the local community are often not used to working in international affairs or do not know the potentialities for strengthening their everyday tasks.

Officials in some of the key areas of the city, such as urban development, water or transportation, often have colleagues or referents abroad with whom they exchange technical information. This gives rise to the existence of sporadic, not coordinated and isolated international relations.

For example, it is common that officials who participate in international networks or attend conferences establish personal links with representatives of other cities or foreign institutions.

When these relations are restricted to the personal level, which is unfortunately the most common case, there is an inevitable loss of the possible multiplying effects of such links for the benefit of the institution as a whole.

Additionally, it is not unusual for the international affairs department to work relatively isolated and other areas do not always communicate their links with international partners. Sometimes, the opposite may occur and there are cases in which the international area monopolizes all the relations with foreign agents without participation of other departments.

This lack of coordination within the government is very common and dangerous and may result in the fragmentation of the international strategy making it, in the best of cases, inefficient, not credible and, in the worst of cases, obsolete.

In view of the above, the local authorities should make an effort to make communication flow among all areas and to call regular interdepartmental meetings to deal with international affairs. It should also involve all actors, from the major or head of government, to the base unionized personnel, including all administrative levels and the officials elected to the collegiate body (council, city hall, etc.).

In addition to this, it is important that a person from the international affairs area gets involved in the sector planning meetings of other departments and reports on the possible international affairs in such areas.

In conclusion, it is very important that the international relations department is not conceived as a mere liaison or coordination office for international links.

Its professionalization is aimed at producing systematic effects on the rest of the areas of administration, with the purpose of expanding the benefits of international relations across all the areas of the government.

8.8. Limit red tape

Local governments are not particularly known for their administrative agility and, in many cases, it would not be an exaggeration to say that they are well known precisely for the opposite.

As public institutions, local governments are increasingly required to be accountable for both their administrative processes and their decision making. This has resulted in a series of prior and post controls by internal and external supervisory bodies, which verify the legality of their actions. The objective is to make processes more transparent and avoid mismanagement of public resources.

Although this Manual contains concise recommendations to transform the international activities of cities into a formal government strategy, this should not, and need not, become a strait jacket.

As with any prospective process, planning international strategy is a future vision exercise based on past and present scenarios. Regardless of the anticipation capacity of the local authority concerning its objectives and the means to accomplish them on the long term, reality will always take unexpected turns.

Being aware of this element of uncertainty, and while actions are implemented, two paths open for local authorities: hold back into a legalist position trying to force a formalized strategy that does not match reality, or take advantage of the changing context taking it as an opportunity to innovate without getting sidetracked.

The first option is obviously the most comfortable since it does not present challenges or require adaptation. However, a stone engraved strategy will age rapidly and become inadequate to be finally fragmented and lose effectiveness.

The second option is the hardest, because it requires a high creativity and a capacity for innovation. It has the highest potential for turning the local government into an ever changing, updated international actor.

It is clear that staying updated requires flexibility. This flexibility must permeate all the decision making process, and even the regulatory framework, which should be liable to be modified as circumstances require it. Flexibility must start with the highest political authority and include all areas of the government, both in terms of decision making and of procedures and activities.

Prior to acquiring flexibility, the local government should become updated. The contents of this Manual may be updated as they are written but may age by the time they are read. Officials change, the political context evolves, the institutions are transformed and the world does not stop. For this reason the internationalisation of the city should not be conceived as a static procedure, isolated from the rest.

Information updating and the updating of institutional contacts is essential to stay effective. There should be a permanent dialogue between the international strategy and its practice, with mutual feedback and the generation of innovation.

Furthermore, local governments do not need to adopt the same sector priority criteria, work methods, or reproduce models using instruments conceived for international relations among States.

The international strategy of the city is a fertile soil for innovation both in the forms of cooperation with counterparts in other lands and for the innovation in new good government practices.

8.9. Establish targets and impact

An international strategy will not be efficient or credible if it involves developing activities and initiatives that do not translate into actual results for the benefit of the population.

As we all know, a local government is a public institution, and its authorities are elected by the citizens by casting their vote. The use of public resources for international affairs must therefore meet the requirement that the goverment should improve the standard of living of those living in the territory while helping improve the general living conditions on the planet.

With this idea in mind, the local authority should be extremely self-demanding when it comes to evaluating its international relations. This is important because international actions are often costly and could be easily be subject to ungrounded criticism on the part of political rivals.

International strategy must have tangible results and impact. It is not enough to organise or attend an international event whose only result are the minutes and a list of participants. Impact should be gauged by the changes brought about in the life of the city-dwellers and by its transformation potential in the medium and long term.

Such results are diverse in nature. Some are easy to measure in money, investment and trade, projects approved or number of tourists and visitors, etc. There are other ressults, however, that are not that easy to quantify yet as important. Those results have to do with a change in the mentality of public servants, opening up to other cultures, awareness-raising, international political presence, more capacity to negotiate, etc.

Whatever the indicators of results and impact, it is important to underscore that the city's international strategy should not be conceived as a goal in itself. It is an extremely useful channel for local, national and global development, whose ultimate purpose is to help improve the living conditions of people. Only if we achieve positive results and impact will we be endorsed by the population, and only with the support of the city-dwellers will a local government be able to ensure an active and sustainable international strategy.

8.10. Anticipate changes and innovate

Even though accurate recommendations have been given in this Manual to turn actions beyond national borders into a formal government strategy, this need not restrict freedom to the point of stifling initiative.

As any any prospective process international strategy is planned for the future on the basis of past and present circumstances. Much as a local authority may forecast its goals and the way to achieve them in the long term, reality is bound to take unpredictable paths.

Being aware of this uncertainty, while implementing actions, the local authority has two alternatives: either become imprisoned in a legal trench attempting to force a formalised, no longer suitable strategy, or take advantage of the changing context as an opportunity to innovate without losing the way.

The first alternative is obviously more comfortable as it entails neither challenges nor the need to adapt. However, a strategy carved in stone will soon turn old and outdated, and will eventually split into inefficiency.

The scond alternative, on the other hand, is harder as it calls for a remarkable degree of creativity and innovation. However, it has greater potential to turn the local government into an international actor who is always up-to-date and in full force.

To keep up-to-date you need to be flexible. Flexibility should percolate every decision-making process, and even the legal framework, so that it can be adjusted as approrpiate. Flexibility with regard to decisions, procedures and activities should come from the highest authority and percolate every are of government.

Apart from being flexible, the local government must keep up to date. We would like to note that what has been written in this Manual could have been accurate at the time it was written, but not necessarily now. Officers change, the political context evolves, institutions transform, but the world does not cease to revolve. Therefore, the internationalisation of the city cannot be conceived as a static, isolated procedure.

Information update and institutional contacts are essential to keep thriving. It all comes down to maintaining a continuos dialogue between strategy and pracitce where both feed eachother and generate genuine innovation.

Besides, local governments need not adopt the same sector priority criteria, work methodologies or models, using insturments that were conceived for State international relations.

A city's international strategy is a fertile soil for innovating with peers in other countries and creating new good government pracitces.
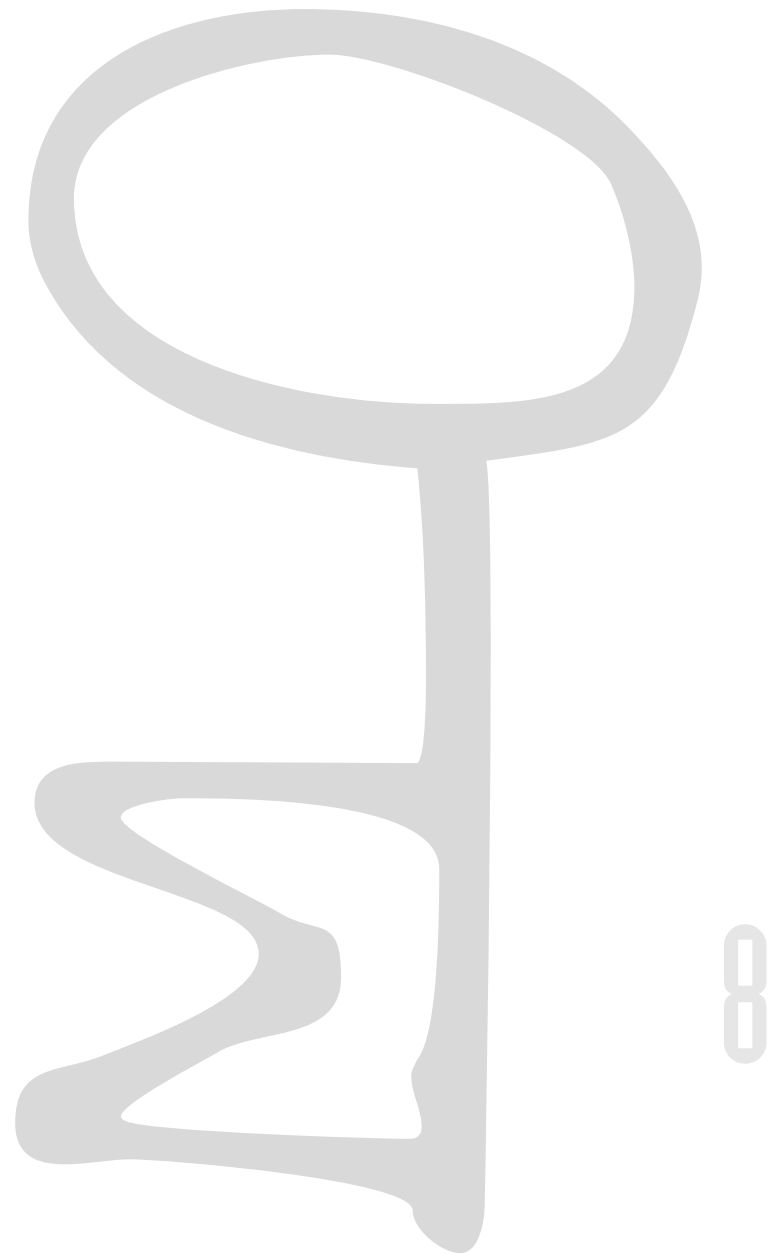
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