

United Cities and Local Governments

CONSULTATION PAPER FOR UCLG MEMBERS

**Development Cooperation and Local Government:
Towards a Policy and Advocacy Strategy for UCLG**



Introduction

UCLG's Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy (DCCD) Committee, with the Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group, have taken the initiative to draw up a UCLG policy paper and advocacy strategy for decentralised cooperation, to promote the messages that

- Local governments play a critical role in the development of a country
- Local governments' decentralised cooperation, and municipal international cooperation, represent effective means to build local government capacity to play this role, and
- These forms of cooperation merit strong support from national governments and donors

This work, undertaken in cooperation with the World Secretariat, will supplement and enrich the UCLG Position Paper on Local Government and Aid Effectiveness.

Objectives

The UCLG policy paper will aim to make a powerful case for local and regional governments' decentralised cooperation for development, highlighting the strengths, but also looking at the weaker aspects of current practice.

It will include a set of key principles and recommendations to promote good practice in our development partnerships and cooperation. The policy paper will provide the basis for developing UCLG's advocacy strategy, which will include a set of key advocacy "messages", and seek in particular to achieve wider recognition of the importance of decentralised cooperation and municipal international cooperation (DC / MIC), and to increase governmental and donor support for our activities.

Taking the work forward

The Committee and Working Group have set up a 'reference group' of members with a substantial expertise and experience in this field, to take forward the initiative. As a first step, a workshop was organised in London in January 2011, to discuss the objectives and process for the policy paper and advocacy strategy, and to analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats ("SWOT analysis") of DC / MIC.

Your input is needed – responses by 22nd August please!

The reference group agreed that the next priority is to consult all parts of UCLG's membership (regional sections, national associations, cities, regions, municipalities...), in order to benefit from the network's huge practical experience and wisdom. To ensure that the policy paper takes full account of our members' contributions, you are asked to complete and return the attached

UCLG members' consultation questionnaire on development cooperation
Please email completed questionnaires to: uclg.cib@vng.nl

questionnaire no later than 22nd August 2011. The Consultation Paper is available in UCLG's working languages of English, French and Spanish, and you are asked to use one of these for your responses. We thank you in advance for taking the time and trouble to give us your views on these important issues.

This Consultation Paper asks for your views on a range of issues, drawing on the London workshop's outcomes, including:

- Your organisation's experience and reasons for working in DC / MIC
- What are the main strengths of DC / MIC?
- What are the main weaknesses?
- What are the opportunities and threats we face in this work?
- What principles and recommendations should UCLG propose to its members?
- What should be the main components of UCLG's advocacy strategy?

Timetable

The policy paper will be available for discussion by the Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy Committee in October / November 2011, and if a consensus has been reached, it could also be put before the World Council for debate and adoption at its autumn 2011 meeting. During this time, a set of key advocacy messages will also be drawn up, which can be recommended to UCLG's representatives for use at important meetings during 2011.

The DCCD Committee and the CIB Working Group will also hold a first discussion on the issues raised in this Consultation Paper, during the meetings organised in the framework of the UCLG Executive Bureau meeting in Rabat, Morocco, on 22-23 June 2011.

UCLG's commitment

Since its formation in 2004, one of UCLG's main areas of focus has been decentralised cooperation – the contribution of local and regional governments to development through their international partnerships. This commitment is reflected in UCLG's statutes, which include the following objectives:

- To promote decentralized cooperation and international cooperation between local governments and their associations
- To promote twinning and partnerships as a means for mutual learning and friendship between peoples

UCLG has established, at political level, the Decentralized Cooperation and City Diplomacy Committee, which is supported by the Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group.

Abbreviations used in this Consultation Paper:

CIB Working Group	Capacity and Institutions Building Working Group
DC	Decentralised Cooperation
DCCD Committee	Decentralised Cooperation and City Diplomacy Committee
LG	local government
LRG	local and regional government
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIC	Municipal International Cooperation

Issues for Consultation

A. Decentralised cooperation /municipal international cooperation (DC/MIC) – what does this mean for UCLG’s Policy Paper and Advocacy Strategy?

At present, UCLG does not have a single agreed *definition* or *description* of what some call ‘decentralised cooperation’, others ‘municipal international cooperation’ or ‘city-to-city cooperation’, and so on... The January workshop participants agreed to recommend the following starting-points for UCLG:

- (1) *UCLG and its members should make explicit its support for all forms of international cooperation between local governments.*
- (2) *UCLG should also promote, explicitly, all forms of local governments’ support for development, for example through their financial or practical support for development NGOs, or through development education, as well as through their own DC / MIC partnerships.*
- (3) *But the focus of the advocacy paper should be on local and regional government partnerships for development, which play a special role and require special consideration.*

Questions:

A1. Do you agree with the above three “starting points”?

Yes No

A2. If not, please specify what you would propose to change in relation to them:

A3. Does UCLG need to develop any tighter definition of what we mean by DC / MIC (which in point 3 above are together described as ‘local and regional government partnerships for development’)? If so, please set out your ideas.

B6. Looking to the future, what is your organisation's main interest in DC / MIC? For example, which type of activity, or programme, and on what kind of subject-matter(s)?

The January workshop also identified a set of reasons for involvement in DC / MIC, and you are also asked to assess, in question B7, which of these apply to your organisation.

B7. If your organisation is involved in DC / MIC, please tick the relevant box against each "reason" that has motivated your involvement (there may be more than one). You can select "important" or "very important".

The moral imperative

	Important	Very important
To show solidarity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have co-responsibility for development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We can help to meet basic human rights and MDGs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Self-interest of the 'north'

	Important	Very important
Generally, if we don't together achieve development in poorer countries, many people and problems may 'migrate' towards our countries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It offers professional development for our staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our area can gain possible longer-term economic benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It gives a way of positive working ('at home') with diaspora communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We can develop our international 'image' and branding as an outward-looking, forward-thinking authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Self-interest of the 'south'

	Important	Very important
We can enhance our resources and capacity for development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It offers a chance of learning through 'south-south' partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We can gain longer-term economic benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our political leaders have an electoral interest at home in having active international partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Common interest, 'north' and 'south'

	Important	Very important
We share a mutual interest in dealing with the impacts of the global crises (economic, power imbalances etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We need to deal with the impact of increased population and urbanization on our planet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a new generation of Mayors in the south with a real interest in development, wanting to exchange and learn from others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We need to create local coalitions in and between our communities, north and south	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other reasons – please add

C. Assessing the most important strengths and advantages of DC / MIC

The January workshop participants carried out a short 'SWOT' analysis of the role and practice of DC / MIC, i.e. analysing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The perceived strengths are summarised in this section, and you are asked to assess whether you agree or disagree with them, or wish to suggest other ones. The "quotes" under each heading summarise points made during the workshop.

You are asked to answer twice, once to give your organisation's view, the second to say how important you feel each suggested 'strength' is, from the perspective of potential donors/funders.

Questions:

How do you rate each of the following as 'strengths', and do you wish to add any comments or points?

C1. Proximity and local democracy

"Local governments are closest to the citizen; through elections they have democratic legitimacy; they understand how local democracy operates."

For your organisation:	major strength <input type="checkbox"/>	strength <input type="checkbox"/>	not a strength <input type="checkbox"/>
For donors/funders:	major strength <input type="checkbox"/>	strength <input type="checkbox"/>	not a strength <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

C2. Local and Regional Governments (LRG) are key institutions for the long-term,

"Building LRGs' capacity is an investment for the future (even if they are weak at present); LRGs need to become transparent and accountable *institutions* for the long-term benefit of their people."

For your organisation:	major strength <input type="checkbox"/>	strength <input type="checkbox"/>	not a strength <input type="checkbox"/>
For donors/funders:	major strength <input type="checkbox"/>	strength <input type="checkbox"/>	not a strength <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

C3. LRGs are actors in national policies on decentralisation and in multilevel governance

“By their nature, LRGs understand issues of decentralisation and relationships between the different levels/orders of government.”

For your organisation: major strength strength not a strength
For donors/funders: major strength strength not a strength

Comments:

C4. In-depth knowledge of local government’s role and operations

“Local and regional governments and LGAs are well placed to design and manage local government interventions as they understand the milieu, understand local capacity-building, and are able to build partnerships involving a wide range of actors.”

For your organisation: major strength strength not a strength
For donors/funders: major strength strength not a strength

Comments:

C5. LRGs are providers of concrete basic services that enhance local communities’ quality of life

“LRGs exist to provide vital basic services, and helping build their capacity for this provides tangible benefits to their people.”

For your organisation: major strength strength not a strength
For donors/funders: major strength strength not a strength

Comments:

C6. DC / MIC partnerships are based on trust and reciprocity between LG partners

“Local governments are willing to accept honest feedback from peers, because of the relationship between LG partners; cooperation and solidarity can continue between LG partners even when there is an impasse at national level.”

For your organisation: major strength strength not a strength
For donors/funders: major strength strength not a strength

Comments:

C.7 LRG relationships are well placed to achieve long-term sustainability

“Partnerships are often built for the long-term, and these can lead to better understanding and successful joint working over an extended period.”

For your organisation: major strength strength not a strength
For donors/funders: major strength strength not a strength

Comments:

C8. DC / MIC provides a strong basis for scaling up from partnership to programme

“A city-to-city partnership, for example, can lead on to a wider programme involving groups of municipalities at both ends, with a wider potential impact.”

For your organisation: major strength strength not a strength
For donors/funders: major strength strength not a strength

Comments:

C9. DC / MIC provide cost-effective tools for local development

“Through in-kind contributions via their own staff and elected representatives, LRGs are able to work productively and inexpensively.”

For your organisation: major strength strength not a strength
For donors/funders: major strength strength not a strength

Comments:

C10. In ‘northern’ local governments, DC/MIC helps to strengthen support for international development, MDGs etc, through practical examples of cooperation.”

For your organisation: major strength strength not a strength
For donors/funders: major strength strength not a strength

Comments:

C11. Other main strengths

Please identify any other main strength(s), from the perspective of your organisation, or from the donors’ perspective:

D. Assessing the most important weaknesses, disadvantages or criticisms of DC / MIC

Some perceived weaknesses of DC/MIC are summarised in this section, and you are asked to indicate whether you agree or disagree with them, or wish to suggest other ones. You are again asked to answer twice, once to give your organisation's assessment, the second to say how important the 'weakness' is from the perspective of potential donors/funders of DC / MIC.

Questions:

How do you rate each of the following as 'weaknesses', and do you have additional comments concerning each point?

D1. Risk of lack of continuity due to political or administrative change

"LRG partnerships can lose impetus or political support when there are changes in elected representatives and staff, both north and south – and especially after elections".

For your organisation:	major weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	not a weakness <input type="checkbox"/>
For donors/funders:	major weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	not a weakness <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

D2. Lack of professional development approach

"LGs don't always understand development problems; often those involved in international work are not professional in their approach; there is sometimes a negative perception that 'international partnerships' equals 'development tourism' for politicians."

For your organisation:	major weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	not a weakness <input type="checkbox"/>
For donors/funders:	major weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	not a weakness <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

D3. DC / MIC is often supply-driven 'development', not 'owned' by the partner

"It is often more about what 'northern' LG can offer than what is really needed for development by the 'southern' partner."

For your organisation:	major weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	not a weakness <input type="checkbox"/>
For donors/funders:	major weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	weakness <input type="checkbox"/>	not a weakness <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

D4. Too little focus on results

“Often, there is little clarity on what should be or has been achieved, or there are exaggerated claims for positive results; there are weaknesses in evaluation; it is hard to find good case studies demonstrating outcomes.”

For your organisation: major weakness weakness not a weakness
For donors/funders: major weakness weakness not a weakness

Comments:

D5. Not strategic enough, and too little transferability

“DC / MIC is not used enough for replication or multiplier effect; there is a lack of wider learning from experience gained; or a scatter-gun approach that lacks focus and impact; there is a lack of co-ordination among LG actors, and therefore weak impact.”

For your organisation: major weakness weakness not a weakness
For donors/funders: major weakness weakness not a weakness

Comments:

D6. The value of focusing on LG sector has not been demonstrated

“For donors, the cost-benefit of working with LG is not demonstrated; LG is often too weak therefore investment in sector is not good value – why invest in the level of government with lowest capacity? Elite ‘capture’ of LGs often means that they do not deliver good development for whole population.”

For your organisation: major weakness weakness not a weakness
For donors/funders: major weakness weakness not a weakness

Comments:

D7. It is hard to show clear results from organisational capacity-building

“There is a problem in showing measurable results to donors from “soft side” work on capacity-building, especially where the DC / MIC projects are relatively small.”

For your organisation: major weakness weakness not a weakness
For donors/funders: major weakness weakness not a weakness

Comments:

D8. Most programmes are not designed for LGs, so difficult to obtain funding

“We have to follow donors’ priorities, guidelines and rules set for the different world of NGOs etc., rather than having programmes designed for LRGs’ cooperation.”

For your organisation: major weakness weakness not a weakness
For donors/funders: major weakness weakness not a weakness

Comments:

D9. High transactional costs of DC / MIC

“A high proportion of project funding is spent on travel and staff costs, leaving less for practical activities.”

For your organisation: major weakness weakness not a weakness
For donors/funders: major weakness weakness not a weakness

Comments:

D10. Other main weaknesses or criticisms of DC / MIC

Please identify any other main weakness(es), both generally, and/or from the donors’ perspective.

D11. How can we best respond to the identified weaknesses, and to the criticisms of DC / MIC? Please add any further points not dealt with under ‘comments’ above

E. DC / MIC - assessing the opportunities and threats

In this section, we set out the perceived opportunities for DC /MIC, and the threats which we face in this field, as seen by the January workshop participants. You are asked to indicate whether you agree with these or not, and to add other main opportunities or threats which are not listed.

Questions on opportunities:

E1. "Donors are sensitive to what the 'south' is saying, but the LG voice from the 'south' has not been strong enough so far – this could be developed and improve our chances of success in lobbying/advocacy."

Do you agree this is an opportunity?

Yes No

If so, how can we use it and enhance the voice of the 'south'?

E2. "During the last 10 years, more international and domestic donors are targeting regional or local government levels."

Do you agree this is an opportunity?

Yes No

If so, how can we use it?

E3. "Despite shortcomings to date, the general trend towards decentralization gives (or should give) a bigger place to LGs in taking forward decentralization policies."

Do you agree this is an opportunity?

Yes No

If so, how can we use it to obtain a greater role in decentralization policies?

E4. Are there other important opportunities for local and regional governments to strengthen DC / MIC? If so, please list them:

Questions on threats:

E5. "Donor funding levels for DC / MIC are declining."

Do you agree this is a threat?

Yes No

If so, what are the main reasons for the reduction in funding:

- a) the global financial / economic crisis
- b) lack of clear evidence of effectiveness of DC / MIC
- c) changing donor priorities
- d) other (please specify)

How can we best respond to this threat?

E6. "Less money is also available from local governments for LG international partnership work."

Do you agree this is a threat?

Yes No

If so, how can we best respond to it?

E7. "Development priorities are increasingly linked to other issues such as security, food security and economic and business development, where the contribution of LG is harder to provide or demonstrate."

Do you agree this is a threat?

Yes No

If so, how can we best respond to it?

E8. "The issue of governance is no longer a key pillar for development donors, which again limits the opportunities for LGs."

Do you agree this is a threat?

Yes No

If so, how can we best respond to it?

E9. "Decentralization processes have been blocked or stalled, in both southern and northern countries."

Do you agree this is a threat?

Yes No

If so, how can we best respond to it?

E10. Are there any other significant threats to local and regional governments' DC / MIC? If so, please list them:

F. How far does DC / MIC meet the main goals of “aid effectiveness”?

National governments and international organisations have in recent years been assessing the steps they believe are needed to enhance aid effectiveness. In this section we look at DC / MIC in relation to some of the main principles identified, adapted to the local and regional government context.

Questions

F1. The principle of *ownership* means that developing country partners (for us, including local and regional partners) should take the lead in setting their own strategies and objectives for development. In your experience, does your current practice of DC/MIC comply with this principle?

Yes fully

Yes to some extent

No

Comments / ideas for improvement:

F2. The principle of *harmonisation* means that donors and northern partners should coordinate their actions, programmes and contributions, and avoid duplication. In your experience, does your current practice of DC/MIC comply with this principle?

Yes fully

Yes to some extent

No

Comments / ideas for improvement:

F3. In relation to *coordination*, how far should local and regional governments try to enhance coordination of their activities – e.g. within a country, between countries, within UCLG, in other ways?

F4. Under the principle of *mutual accountability*, donors and partners are jointly accountable for development results. In your experience, does your current practice of DC/MIC comply with this principle?

Yes fully

Yes to some extent

No

Comments / ideas for improvement:

F5. In relation to the principles of aid effectiveness, do you have any other suggestions for improvement in the practice of DC / MIC?

G. Improving practice in DC/MIC

G1. While some points may have arisen in previous answers, please set out here any major improvements you would like to see in how DC/MIC is organised and practised, in relation to:

(a) Donors and funders

(b) Local and regional governments

G2. What, if any, are the barriers or obstacles that make it hard to improve practice?

G3. In what circumstances or conditions is DC/MIC most likely to be effective?

G4. In what circumstances or conditions is DC/MIC most likely NOT to be effective?

H. Developing the UCLG advocacy strategy

We need to ensure that UCLG’s advocacy strategy for decentralised cooperation / municipal international cooperation is well targeted and promotes the right set of messages for each ‘target’ audience. The following questions again draw on points raised in the workshop, and seek your views on them.

Questions

H1. Who are the main targets of a UCLG advocacy strategy? Please tick whichever of the following you consider are important, and add any other category you wish to add:

- National governments
- Political parties,
- Bilateral donors (ministries or development agencies)
- UN agencies (e.g. Habitat, UNDP)
- World Bank / regional development banks
- Local and regional governments
- Foundations
- NGOs – as potential partners or allies
- Other

If other please specify:

H2. What should be our main objectives in drawing up UCLG’s advocacy strategy? Please tick whichever of the following you consider are important, and add any other main objective you consider should be included:

- To be a partner with a seat at the table vis-a-vis international organisations
- To influence development policies
- To persuade donors / funders that there should be more, better-funded programmes for LG partnership work in this field
- To achieve recognition that decentralised cooperation is a positive public policy which should be supported
- To advocate for direct access of LGs in the south to financial resources
- Other – please specify:

If other please specify:

H3. .What policy recommendations should be included in UCLG’s advocacy strategy, directed towards *national governments and the international community*?

H4. If UCLG decides to draw up a list of principles or recommendations to guide local and regional governments in their DC / MIC activities, please state which you consider are the most important ones:

H5. If the advocacy strategy includes “messages” directed towards local and regional governments, which arguments do you consider are most likely to persuade them to become involved in DC / MIC? (You may wish to cross-refer to the list of reasons set out at Question B6. above)

H6. Are there any other main points which you consider should be included in UCLG’s policy paper or advocacy strategy? If so, please specify:

H7. Apart from adopting a UCLG policy and advocacy strategy, what if any role(s) would you like UCLG to play in future in the field of DC / MIC?

I. General comments and proposals

11. Do you have any other comments or points you would like to be taken into account, in drafting the UCLG policy paper and advocacy strategy?