

Mindcraft

Bridging and Mapping Knowledge
Gaps in Decentralised Cooperation

Decentralised Development Cooperation Report #2

ABOUT

Following the Decentralised development cooperation **DDC Report#1**, this DDC Report#2 presents additional set of survey findings¹, based on the same survey on DDC projects and partnerships. The survey response options in DDC Report#2 build on success factors, challenges, and dimensions of achievements of DDC partnerships and projects identified in available reports, including, OECD (2023), **Reshaping Decentralised Development Co-operation in Germany**², OECD (2023), **City-to-City Partnerships to Localise the Sustainable Development Goals**³, and Bossuyt et al. (2024), **Partnerships for Sustainable Cities – Second Monitoring and Evaluation Report**⁴ to strengthen links with existing evidence on DDC.

¹ This report presents survey findings on opportunities and challenges for DDC, results that DDC partnerships aim to achieve and examples

² OECD (2023), *Reshaping Decentralised Development Co-operation in Germany*, OECD Urban Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris

³ OECD (2023), *City-to-City Partnerships to Localise the Sustainable Development Goals*, OECD Urban Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris

⁴ Bossuyt, J., Bragagnolo, F., Garcia, A., Rodriguez Bilbao, J. and Sanz, B. (2024) *Partnerships for Sustainable Cities: Second Monitoring and Evaluation Report (2024)*. Capacity4dev, European Commission

HOW ?

Period: 3 March > 12 May 2025
Distributed to: CEMR members and PLATFORMA partners

54
contributions

37 selected
after review*

*Some contributions did not qualify as decentralised development cooperation partnerships and/or projects.

11
countries
covered

Belgium,
Germany,
Latvia,
Malta,
Montenegro,
Netherlands,
Portugal,
Romania,
Serbia,
Spain,
Switzerland

Including:



27 Local and
Regional Governments (LRGs)

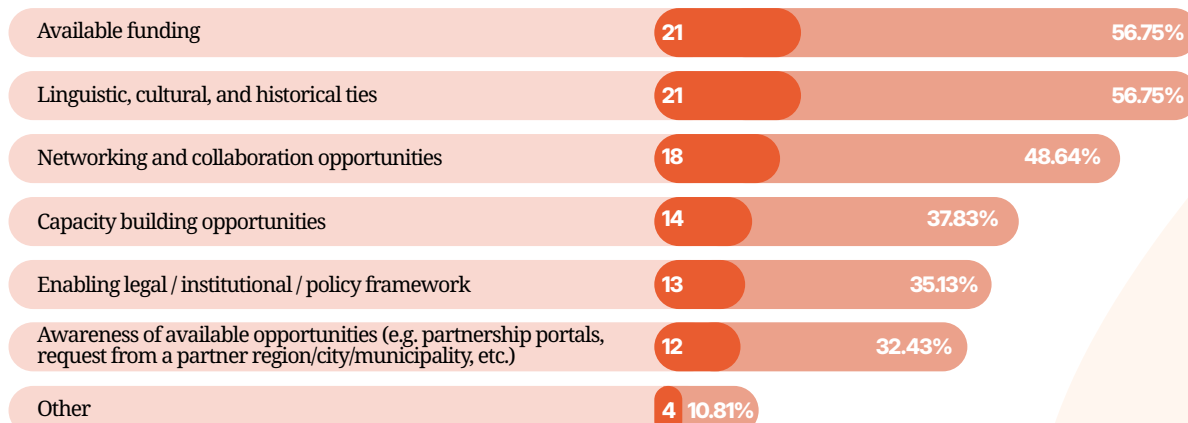


9 LRG Associations



1 NGO

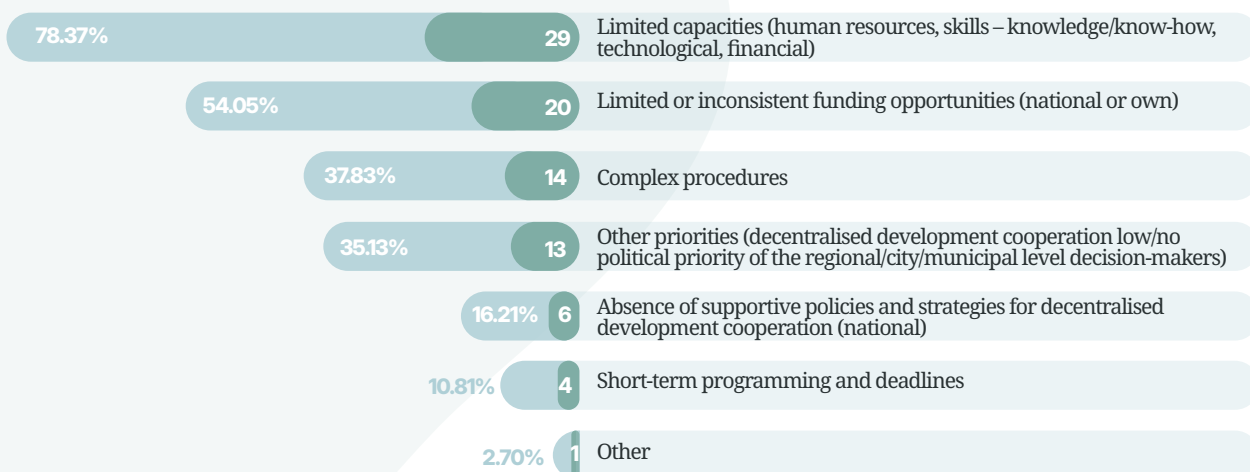
1. Factors contributing to the involvement in DDC (multiple answers possible)



- Moral responsibilities, international exposure
- Global Citizenship Education

● Number of responses
● Percentage of responses

2. Challenges for the involvement in DDC (multiple answers possible)

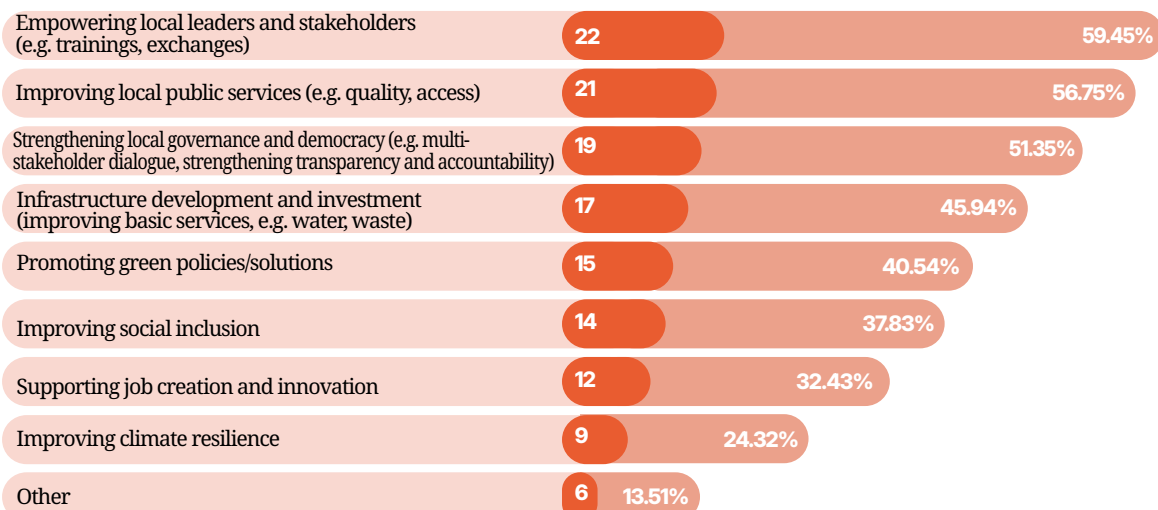


- Procedures for applying for donor funds, mandatory co-financing for Interreg IPA funds
- Limited jurisdictions as the city municipality, which leads to limited funding opportunities

● Number of responses
● Percentage of responses

3.

(Expected) DDC partnership(s) results in the partnering city/region/ municipality (multiple answers possible)



- Civil status (improving the registration of citizens, strengthening transparency and local governance, training administrative agents)
- Social issues (through initiatives for vulnerable populations, improving access to social services, strengthening the local associative fabric)
- Overall objective: sustainable local development
- Gender perspective; empowerment of women and fight against gender violence

4.

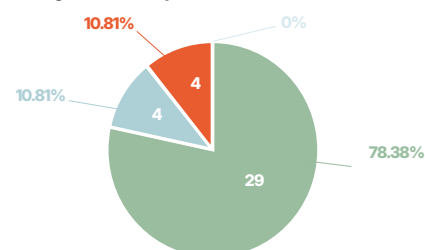
(Expected) DDC partnership(s) results in own city/region/municipality? (multiple answers possible)



- Valorisation of multiculturalism and cultural fabric
- Education for global citizenship and solidarity
- Offering international exposure to local staff
- Sharing knowledge, making use of the existing expertise
- Gender perspective

Intention to continue cooperating with DDC partner(s)

- Yes
- Don't know
- Depends on the context
- No



SOME EXAMPLES OF PROJECT(S) / INITIATIVE(S) IMPLEMENTED

Three presented examples are selected from the projects reported by the respondents to offer further insights into DDC projects. The examples show the contribution to strengthening local governance and empowerment of LRGs and stakeholders through exchange knowledge and experience.

Adding a supramunicipal dimension into the planning and management of local governments in Latin America

About: This project contributed to the improvement of strategic planning with a supramunicipal dimension in Latin American cities. It involved 8 cities in Latin America and 8 municipalities in the Province of Barcelona. The project focused on increasing capacities of Latin American local governments to incorporate the supramunicipal dimension in the planning and management of their territories, supporting local governments exchange of knowledge and experiences on supramunicipal planning in technical cooperation spaces as well as learning obtained from the project implementation.

Duration: 15 July 2024 – 15 March 2026

Total budget of the project: EUR 152.416,00

Funding source(s): Barcelona Provincial Council – DIBA

Digitalisation of the population register in Kintambo, Democratic Republic of Congo

About: This pilot project for digitalising the population register in the Kintambo municipality of Kinshasa was launched in 2023. It is part of the cooperation agreement between the City-Province of Kinshasa and the Brussels-Capital Region. The aim of the initiative to support modernisation of the civil registration service and population management aligns with the «National Digital Plan» of the Democratic Republic of Congo and joint expectations of the City-Province of Kinshasa and municipal partners. Activities included software configuration, training of local stakeholders, and digital updating of the population register. The overall goal of the project was to create secure and dynamic digital register of population in Kintambo, interconnected with the Province. See: p.7 Brussels International (2024) *Rapport Annuel 2024 de la Coopération Bruxelloise au Développement*

Duration: 1 January 2023 – 28 February 2025

Total budget of the project: EUR 350.000,00 (EUR 200.000,00 provided by the Brussels Capital Region and EUR 150.000,00 in-kind contribution by the City-Province of Kinshasa)

Funding source(s): Brussels Capital Region

FRIENDSHIP – Strengthening EU-Mongolia Friendship through Equitable, Resilient, and Innovative Growth in Darkhan City

About: This initiative promoted inclusive and sustainable growth in Darkhan City and its province through collaborative, multi-stakeholder, participatory, and knowledge-sharing approaches and learning between partners. With NALAS as a key partner, the project involved local governments from Croatia (Rijeka), Montenegro (Bar) and Slovenia (Ajdovščina). Key focus areas of the project included enhancing resilience, accelerating digital transformation, fostering innovation, and creating employment opportunities to contribute to Darkhan-Uul of becoming a national model city for urban sustainability and livability, with a vision of becoming a “smart and green city” by 2032.

Duration: 1 January 2022 – 30 June 2025

Total budget of the project: EUR 3 million (EUR 2.7 million provided by the European Commission)

Funding source(s): European Commission (EuropeAid/171273/DH/ACT/Multi)

Other examples

AKUAL: Advancing water and sanitation through decentralised cooperation program, Local Governments Response, Recovery and Reconstruction following the Earthquakes in Türkiye, International municipal cooperation with Ukrainian partners implemented by **Bridges of Trust** Community Actors, supported by the **European Partnership Hub (EPH)**.

Publisher: Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

Managing editors: Durmish Guri, Director Projects and Programmes – CEMR and Boris Tonhauser, Director – PLATFORMA

Author: Dr. Ivana Skazlic, Research Analyst – CEMR

Communication and editorial coordination: Léa Hetz, Project Officer, Communications and Events – CEMR

Design: ACAPELLA

Funding acknowledgement: This measure/project (Bridging and Mapping Knowledge Gaps in Decentralised Cooperation (Mindcraft)) is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Publications disclaimer: The content of this publication is the responsibility of its author(s) and does not reflect the views of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

© CEMR and GIZ, 2026. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0)



CCRE-CEMR
1 Square de Meeûs
B-1000 Brussels

info@ccre-cemr.org
ccre-cemr.org



PLATFORMA
1 Square de Meeûs
B-1000 Brussels

platforma@ccre-cemr.org
platforma-dev.eu