

New CLGF Four-Year Grant to Help Local Government Service Delivery and Boost CLGF's Research Capacity

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The UK Department for International Development (UK AID) has agreed £4.5 million funding for a four-year CLGF programme to improve governance and service delivery at local level in several areas of the Commonwealth including Africa and Asia from 2012-16. It will also help to support national policy frameworks for local government service delivery, and increase engagement of local government in regional policy planning and implementation. CLGF will continue to work with its members, UN partners and others to mobilise more resources towards the support of local government in the Commonwealth.

The new programme will focus on local government pilot projects in LED, supporting ministries and local government associations in strengthening their national policy making for local government, and establish regional forums to enable local government to engage in and influence regional policy making to reflect the needs and priorities of local government. It will also boost CLGF's research capacity with targeted research to strengthen CLGF's policy making and advocacy, including more sustained engagement in international policy debates on key issues affecting local government, such as climate change.

Introduction

Through UK Aid, CLGF will be supporting a range of activities in South Asia, West Africa and southern Africa aimed at improving service delivery to achieve poverty reduction and contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The programme supports CLGF's strategic decision to strengthen its presence at regional level to enable it to provide better interface with its members, following its successful regional programme in the Pacific region. The programme also builds on CLGF's partnership work with UNDP and UNCDF which has led to the commissioning of studies on the state of local governments in Africa. The programme responds to issues emerging from these and other studies and will be mostly guided by members' priorities.

The programme will contribute to the improvement of service delivery to achieve poverty reduction against the MDG framework by local governments in the Commonwealth. The main strategy/approach of the programme is to ensure that local governance is placed at the centre of poverty reduction and sustainable development initiatives of member countries and to support local governments to perform their functions to ensure better service delivery. The expected outcome of the programme is improved capacity (individual, institutional and organisational) for better local government service delivery.

The programme is also expected to improve skills and knowledge at the local level and improve national policy and administrative frameworks for local government and service delivery. The regional programme will lead to stronger regional policy making support for local government. CLGF's research and advocacy capacities will be strengthened by the programme.

The programme time frame is four years from September 2012 to September 2016.

Methodology

To achieve the planned results mentioned above CLGF will support a range of activities as follows.

Local level: At the local level CLGF will support pilot projects focusing on Local Economic Development. The pilot projects will strengthen skills, knowledge and organisational capacities for local government to deliver local economic development services. CLGF will support local government associations in the pilot countries to identify the emerging policy issues coming out of the pilot projects and make national policy recommendations to support their members.

During the first year of the programme, CLGF with its members will select the pilot project sites, establish the baseline through carrying capacity assessments of the targeted pilot sites and design the pilot projects. Pilot projects will be implemented from year two for two and half years and the final half year of the programme will be dedicated to dissemination of pilot project results and project lessons. The pilot projects are expected to strengthen the skills, knowledge and organisational capacity for local governments to deliver local economic development services.

National level: CLGF will support the development and strengthening of national policy making and supporting framework for local government to enhance service delivery. During the first year of the programme CLGF will consult its members on their policy priorities and where they need support. Following consultation CLGF will develop a programme of action for implementation.

The support will also enable CLGF to undertake a more sustained programme of advocacy working with its members and partners to respond to challenges to local democracy, and to support and strengthen local democracy in the region in line with the Aberdeen Principles, endorsed by the CLGF membership and Commonwealth Heads of government in 2005.

Regional level: CLGF will continue to support regional policy dialogue processes to ensure better regional engagement on local government. CLGF will work with existing regional bodies supporting and complementing their existing work. CLGF will also consult with stakeholders and members to shape the agenda of the regional dialogue. A regional dissemination and planning event will be held in early 2013.

Programme structure

CLGF through its regional programme office will have overall oversight and management of the implementation of the programme. A programme technical committee comprising of Permanent Secretaries and Secretary Generals of Local Government Associations (where appropriate) in the regions will provide strategic guidance, monitor progress and provide quality assurance for programme results. CLGF Board members in the region will provide leadership and participate in the lobbying and advocacy work of the programme as needed. In addition to staff appointed in the regions, CLGF is appointing a programme officer to support the programme, including on monitoring and evaluation, and a research officer to provide research support and advice to strengthen CLGF's advocacy work, develop a research and knowledge management strategy to guide research support to CLGF's DFID funded regional programme and develop materials and tools to ensure that the lessons from the DFID programme and other CLGF initiatives can benefit a broad cross-section of the CLGF membership.