

External Cooperation Working Group

Chaired by



- MEETING REPORT - 3 MAY 2016

BASQUE GOVERNMENT DELEGATION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION, BRUSSELS

Attendees:

AQUITAINE LIMOUSIN POITOU-CHARENTES:

Elise BESSIERES, Policy Officer, Brussels Office

ASTURIAS

Jimena LLAMEDO GONZÁLEZ, Directora Agencia Asturiana de Cooperación al Desarrollo

CANARIAS:

Carmen M. DÍAZ FARIÑA, Intern, Canarias Government Delegation in Brussels

CATALUNYA:

Mireia SOLÉ LLORT, Policy Officer, Catalan Region in Brussels

EMILIA-ROMAGNA:

Graziana GALATI, Policy Officer, Emilia-Romagna Region EU Office

EUSKADI – BASQUE COUNTRY (WG Lead Region)

Camila DE EPALZA, European Union Policy Officer (Development Cooperation and Multilateral focal point), Basque Government Delegation to the European Union

PROVENCE-ALPES-COTE D'AZUR:

Gabrielle DUBOIS, Région Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur Brussels Office

VALENCIA

Zulima PÉREZ I SEGUÍ, Secretaria Autonómica de transparencia, responsabilidad social, participación y cooperación del Gobierno Valenciano

Gustavo MARTINIE, Valencia Brussels Office

UNDP-ART

Sébastien VAUZELLE, Policy Officer

CPMR GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Maruxa CARDAMA, Adviser to the External Cooperation Working Group

Claire STREET, Policy Assistant (by teleconference)

Apologies:

Remedios Bordiu, Principado de Asturias

Yannick Pont, Bretagne

Javier Sanchez Cano, Catalunya

1 WELCOME:

Camila De Epalza on behalf of the Basque Government and Maruxa Cardama, CPMR Consultant in charge of the CPMR External Cooperation Group, welcomed participants to the meeting.

2 PRESENTATION OF I-STEPS PROJECT by Sebastien Vauzelle, UNDP-ART

LINK to [Powerpoint Presentation](#)

When the goals of the 2030 Agenda were being decided in consultation with stakeholders, the regional and local authorities were successfully involved in the debate. This led to the implementation of the localisation of the 2030 Agenda and to specific dialogue being set up with RLAs

In the context of localising the Sustainable Development Goals, ISTEPS is an action-based project aimed at fostering harmonized European Decentralized Cooperation (DC) support to the partner countries' ongoing Local Governance and Local Development (LGLD) processes through the joint work of cities and regions from different EU countries.

The objectives are as follows:

- Harmonization platform to present a wide range of know-how and solutions to a given territorial organized demand
- Integrated approach, tackling priorities of partner countries/territories in a territorial and multilevel approach
- Articulation with national and territorial development processes
- Connection to global dynamics and debates for SDGs implementation
- Scaling up in the framework of national policies and replication in other countries/territories in the framework of SDGs localization

UNDP-ART is working in 25 countries helping to put in place integrated local development systems, bringing together local and regional authorities, ONGs, universities, civil society and other stakeholders to have an organised territory. This then allows the priorities and demands to be organised and for EU Regions to provide a harmonised offer.

This process of organising demand and harmonising the offer within ISTEPS lasted from 2013-2015 and involved a number of EU pioneer regions and local authorities and partners in Ecuador and Lebanon.

The first implementation mission took place in October 2015 in Ecuador by the participating Spanish (Basque Government, Bilbao City, Barcelona and Generalitat Catalunya) and Italian LRAs. The cooperation was based on innovative territorial processes in order to contribute to Ecuador's national priority of adding value to production.

In Lebanon, cooperation was based on the territorial approach to river basin management bringing together the know-how of different partners.

The first support phase is terminating at the end of 2016. Phase 2 will start in 2017, so this is the moment to build together phase two within the broader sense of SDG localisation. The process as of the last ISTEPS meeting in February 2016 is to evaluate, enhance and prepare the next phase. Taking into account lessons learned, best practices and impact on the population on the ground, the initiative is now ready to open up to a broader alliance for localising the SDGs and implementing concrete initiatives up to 2030.

In reply to a question on whether the process would be open to all countries and regions, the answer was yes and this could be done through a simple contact with UNDP. However, the decision does not lie solely with the UNDP which is acting as a facilitator. The opening up to new countries needs to match the priorities of the territories that are part of ISTEPS.

With regard to timescale, by the end of the year ISTEPS plans to finalise a “localisation toolkit” based on best practices and tools and have an evaluation of the work carried out in the field and its impact. This should help to shape Phase 2 and there is already a good idea of the framework.

The duration of Phase 2 could be 3 years like Phase I, but always looking forward to 2030.

One inspiring point for phase 2 should be the ‘Universality of SDGs’. It is important to move away from the traditional vision of international aid from EU countries to partner countries and begin to look at how EU Regions can learn from international cooperation in order to improve the quality of service delivery in their own territories.

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3 UPDATE ON WORKING GROUP ACTION PLAN

3.1 Members’ Best Practices

Members are urged to continue sending concrete information on their projects through the template on best practices, which are important to help to shape the priorities of the CPMR External Cooperation Group. Please send contributions to the CPMR Secretariat Claire.street@crpm.org

LINK to [Template](#)

3.2 CPMR Policy Position

The CPMR adopted a policy position at its last General Assembly (4-6 November 2015, Florence) based on the main messages from the External Cooperation Group. The European Commission has acknowledged and is aware of the proposals.

LINK to CPMR Policy Position [EN](#), [FR](#), [ES](#), [IT](#)

3.3 Event on Regional and Local Authorities and the SDGs – 14 June 2016

The Basque Country as leader of the CPMR External Cooperation group was contacted directly by the European Commission to organise a half-day seminar on RLAs and the SDGs as a side event to the European Development Days (15-16 June). This event to be held on 14 June 2016 is organised in collaboration with Platforma, and UNDP. CPMR Regions are to be invited as speakers at the event. The event wants to be operational and is therefore targeted more to directors or officials rather than politicians, i.e. those who organise the work on a daily basis. The aim of the seminar is to come up with concrete proposals and messages to send to the EU institutions.

It is hoped that this event will provide further opportunities for projects and initiatives for CPMR members.

More information - <http://www.crpm.org/en/index.php?act=6,1,2,486>

3.4 CUF : 7e forum de l'action internationale des collectivités, Paris, 4-5 July 2016

This event organised by Cités Unies France (CUF) – part of UCLG - is targeted at French local authorities and other stakeholders involved in international cooperation. CUF wishes to involve CPMR in the organisation of a session during the Forum. Since the topic is rather technical and complex, it would be useful to have a background paper or take the section of the CPMR position paper on financing and develop some points attaching concrete examples, etc.

More information: <http://www.cites-unies-france.org/-Forum-de-l-action-internationale->

3.5 5th Assises of Development Cooperation, March 2017

The first preparatory meeting was held on 25 April. The deadline for submitting proposals is 20 June. On 1st July, a second preparatory meeting will be organised to discuss in further details the proposals and inputs received (selection process).

It could be envisaged to organise a joint contribution through a cluster of Platforma partners. For the moment no projection has been made by the Platforma Secretariat.

It is proposed that the members of the External Cooperation Group that are planning to submit proposals should share information with the group. The CPMR Secretariat will send a reminder to members after the deadline of 20 June and any information received will be shared in the Dropbox.

More information: <http://ira4dev.cor.europa.eu/portal/Pages/5th-Assises-of-Decentralised-Cooperation.aspx>

4 UPDATE ON PLATFORMA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

4.1 Brief background

LINK to [Internal Memo](#) in the Dropbox for full details on CPMR Activities.

The European Commission, towards the end of its last mandate, changed the way it worked on development cooperation from a project-based approach to a more long-term multiannual programme of work. In this spirit, the European Commission encouraged groupings of local and regional authorities to sign a series of Strategic Partnerships. Platforma signed one of these Strategic Partnerships based on decentralised cooperation. The majority of Platforma's 34 members is local authorities. The regional dimension is represented by CPMR and several individual Regions (Catalonia, PACA, Tuscany).

In January 2015, the CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions) as host of the Platforma secretariat signed a political agreement with the European Commission. The grant agreement was signed in July 2015. After a long period of negotiation, notably regarding financial responsibility, all Platforma partners signed a grant agreement with CEMR by 29 April 2016.

A second signature is still required on Memoranda of Understanding for each deliverable, detailing timelines and specific actions.

The CPMR is committed to 2 groups of activities:

1. **Research studies** led by Platforma secretariat with a number of partners involved including CPMR. Two themes are addressed:
 - i. **Shaping a new generation of decentralised cooperation** (activity for the whole of Platforma to build on knowhow)
 - ii. **Towards a new generation of public-private partnerships for decentralised cooperation**

The approach to these studies is more like think tank papers rather than academic research. There will be Terms of Reference produced for these studies, including an outline of the research work, job description for the experts, timeline, methodology, etc. The CPMR Secretariat and Basque Government will send the draft ToRs to members of the External Cooperation Group for consultation and feedback before they are validated. CPMR aims to be strategic in the process.

Both studies should be finished within 2017.

2. Partner-led activity: Southern Neighbourhood (CPMR is the lead partner)

This activity will be led through the CPMR's Inter-Mediterranean Commission, which already has a work programme on this topic approved by its Bureau and is cultivating alliances with other relevant stakeholders within the Euro-Mediterranean area.

CPMR is committed to working on an integrated territorial development approach within decentralised cooperation. The first deliverable in this regard is the production of a manual on the delivery of public services.

The second deliverable is the organisation of a training seminar based on this manual to officers from administrations in the Southern Neighbourhood, particularly targeting Tunisia and Morocco.

On 22 and 23 September 2016, there will take place the Forum of Local and Regional Authorities of the Mediterranean in Sousse (Tunisia) organised by the Mediterranean Commission of the UCLG. The CPMR IMC will take charge of one of the main sessions.

The Executive Secretary of the IMC, Davide Strangis, is already taking part in preparatory meetings and trying to secure funding support to allow regional representatives to attend the Forum.

By the time of the Forum we should have already appointed the expert in charge of producing the manual and have finalised the Terms of Reference. The idea is to take advantage of the Forum to get feedback from the participants in order to define the content of the manual.

Timeline:

Towards the end of 2016 – release 1st draft of manual.

1st half 2017 – finalise the publication and deliver a training session.

The timing and location of the training session needs to be discussed within the group and with Platforma. Possible options are to do it during the AGM of the Inter-Mediterranean Commission (though this will not be hosted in the Southern neighbourhood). Or during any of the annual events of ARLEM in Brussels. Or during the EU Development Days 2017.

The budget for the event is only 60 000 euros, so the aim is to take advantage of a venue that can help to give a wider impact.

4.2 Delivery Mechanism

Platforma Proposals for the Delivery Mechanism can be found in the Dropbox together with the points raised by CPMR (note "CPMR Contributions"):

LINK <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ho1fmn8ogtmtxn/AACxhzCjFgKj1gpKTKGw7W16a?dl=0>

Platforma partners were asked to give feedback on a draft proposal for a Delivery Mechanism to be put in place for the Strategic Partnership and Camila De Epalza represented the CPMR External Cooperation Group during a meeting on this subject organised by PLATFORMA and VNG (association of Dutch local authorities, member of Platforma) on 8 February 2016 in the Hague. The European Commission was also present and proactive during this meeting.

The initial idea of Platforma and VNG is to simply put in place a website with a big list of experts involved in development cooperation. However, the CPMR view is that the Delivery mechanism should not be limited to a simple broker function (e.g. website to match experts and projects) which

brings no added value. This opinion is also shared by the European Commission and a number of other Platforma members.

Camila raised some other main points on behalf of the CPMR:

1. To provide options for more involvement of CPMR regions so that they can share their innovative proposals and best practices
2. To put in place a Steering Committee for the Delivery Mechanism made up of local and regional actors
3. To finance concrete projects in concrete geographical areas
4. Not to forget the regional dimension, which should be represented on the same level as the local dimension.

4.3 Conclusion:

- CPMR has finally signed the grant agreement with Platforma-CEMR and can now go ahead with the activities
- We will begin quickly to work on the studies and prepare the Terms of Reference
- The Southern Neighbourhood component is being developed through the Inter-Mediterranean Commission
- The Delivery Mechanism is still open to discussion since there is still a mismatch between the thinking of the Platforma Secretariat and what the Platforma members and European Commission want to see
- A mid-term review of Platforma will be held in 2017. CPMR should decide at this point if it wishes to stay within Platforma.

5 Project Example– Basque Youth

Members were shown a film of a Project involving Basque youth. The Basque Government was involved in the first steps of the proposal and felt it was interesting to present the project.