

DeLoG Strategy 2024-2027

Introduction

The Development Partners Network on Decentralisation and Local Governance (DeLoG) is a network of bi- and multilateral development partners and specialised institutions working in the field of Decentralisation and Local Governance (DLG). DeLoG strives to transform towards a diverse multistakeholder engagement and partnership. It brings together development partners to strengthen local governments globally, facilitates policy dialogue and knowledge exchange, and coordinates and creates partnerships for improved, inclusive, and well-functioning subnational and local governance systems.

Established in 2006, DeLoG operates as a hub and network for knowledge exchange among different organisations, as well as a platform for joint learning. Previously funded by BMZ, GAC and SDC, the network's activities are facilitated by the DeLoG Secretariat, which was hosted by GIZ in Bonn until 2023, and currently by UNCDF. Through the organisation of joint learning events, the Secretariat develops and shares the capacities and knowledge of its member organisations. Moreover, it provides analytical competency for policy formulation and dialogue concerning issues of local development.

In recent years, there has been an increased recognition of the role of local governments in the international fora due to the continuous advocacy efforts of DeLoG members, partners and other organizations dedicated to local development. But in the context of a rapidly changing world with numerous emerging challenges, such as the global pandemic, natural disasters and geopolitical conflicts, democracy and trust are weakening, and the tendency to focus on national security and domestic development is growing. Meanwhile, there are newly created organizations and networks with similar activities in this space. Therefore, it is paramount to assert DeLoG's unique role in DLG and lay out its strategic path for the next four years to sustain the progress that DeLoG members and partners have collectively made.

Unique Identity

First and foremost, DeLoG is a Development Partners' network. Its uniqueness lies in the role of Development Partners in decentralisation and local governance. DeLoG members are at an essential level of influencing upward of their host governments, who in many cases can impact the global agendas and development priorities through policy and advocacy; and influencing downward of local governments, whether domestically and internationally, through local initiatives.

DeLoG strongly believes that effective decentralisation and local governance (DLG) is the approach to eventually achieving sustainable and inclusive development. Local governments are not only the beneficiaries of development results, but also the active changing agents of local transformation with unique knowledge and resources closest to the citizens.

DeLoG actively promotes development effectiveness and decentralized cooperation in DLG through policy dialogue, knowledge exchange and partnerships. DeLoG members may work in slightly different areas of DLG, but the common objective is to shape local development policy with a holistic and systematic approach in a coordinated and harmonized manner.

Strategic Priorities

There are three areas of strategic priorities for DeLoG to accelerate the progress towards sustainable development through local level efforts:

1. **Policy and Advocacy**: The goal is to influence international development agendas and include DLG in policymaking with increased means for action.

DeLoG members are expected to proactively advocate for local governance to their national governments and other international arenas where possible. The advocacy can be done through an overarching topic of DLG or specific interventions in the four thematic areas of the DeLoG working groups (Local Finance, Gender, Local Democracy, and Local Resilience). Members shall closely coordinate, align and harmonise with each other. Specifically, DeLoG members can engage in policy and knowledge documents and/or convene events at the margins of these international conferences.

The next three big milestones in this roadmap are:

- (1) The UN Summit of the Future in September 2024 where a Pact for the Future will be endorsed by member states;
- (2) The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in 2025 where an outcome document will impact the landscape of development finance in the next decade;
- (3) The EU multiannual financial framework (MFF) after 2027, which will be crucial to the long-term financing of programmes and actions by DeLoG members.

2. **Thought Leadership and Partnership**: The goal is to form thought leadership and partnerships around the four working groups in **Local Finance, Gender, Local Democracy, and Local Resilience**.

DeLoG members are already thought leaders and forging fruitful partnerships in their own areas of focus. Over the past years, DeLoG has become a member-driven network through the enabling structure of the Working Groups. Hence DeLoG should strive for thought leadership around the four Working Groups (Local Finance, Gender, Local Democracy, and Local Resilience) through production and promotion of policy documents and knowledge products. This will further strengthen the recognition and visibility of the DeLoG brand. Working Groups will be led by volunteer DeLoG members as Chairs to meet the group objectives through active engagement according to the attached Terms of Reference.

DeLoG will also facilitate partnerships and collaboration with like-minded actors in the four areas. Discussion has been ongoing regarding the collaboration between the Local Finance Working Group and the Malaga Global Coalition for Municipal Finance. It was agreed to activate the joint CIB-DeLoG vision on decentralized cooperation and come up with a concrete action plan.

3. **Institutional and Financial Sustainability**: The goal is to ensure DeLoG's sustainability through member engagement and resource mobilization.

The DeLoG Secretariat has been a crucial enabler for the network, facilitating conversations, coordinating and harmonising activities, and keeping members and partners informed. From the institutional perspective, membership needs to be taken stock and reinvigorated, especially

considering the declining engagement from donor organizations. The DeLoG Secretariat will take the lead to re-confirm commitment and focal points from member organizations and reiterate their duties and responsibilities. DeLoG members will support to identify the appropriate focal points of their host governments and donors, and actively reach out to the already identified focal persons for resource mobilization.

Moreover, to sustain DeLoG in the long run, it is critical for all members to keep DeLoG's funding as their common goal. The DeLoG Secretariat cannot achieve the DeLoG Strategy without sufficient financial resources for its strategic, policy and communications support.

Annex 1. DeLoG Working Group Terms of Reference

DeLoG fosters thought leadership and partnerships around four Working Groups: Local Finance, Gender, Local Democracy, and Local Resilience. The Working Groups were created as a member-driven platform for knowledge exchange and policy dialogue among DeLoG members and partners on issues related to each of the four thematic areas.

Objectives

The Working Groups aim to:

- Foster collaboration and knowledge sharing on strategies in Local Finance, Gender, Local Democracy, and Local Resilience within the DeLoG network;
- Identify best practices and share innovative approaches to strengthening decentralisation and local governance in relation to Local Finance, Gender, Local Democracy, and Local Resilience;
- Enhance thought leadership and advocacy in the Working Group areas and influence relevant international development agendas;
- Explore the intersectionality of Local Finance, Gender, Local Democracy, and Local Resilience;
- Contribute to DeLoG's broader mission and strategy of promoting decentralisation and effective local governance.

Scope of Work

The Working Groups have the autonomy to select and discuss issues and topics related to their respective thematic area (Local Finance, Gender, Local Democracy, and Local Resilience). They can be sub-themes of each area or intersections with another thematic within DLG that contributes to sustainable and inclusive development.

The Working Group activities include, inter alia:

- Organize quarterly meetings to discuss current issues, spotlight initiatives and share updates;
- Plan and execute webinars or workshops on specific topics in respective Working Groups;
- Contribute to DeLoG's all-member meetings and Annual Meetings;
- Partner on joint initiatives as opportunities arise;
- Develop and disseminate knowledge products (e.g. policy briefs, case studies);
- Collaborate on events in international fora and promote policy advocacy;
- Reach out to donors for resource mobilization.

Membership

The Working Groups are open to all DeLoG members. Members join a Working Group by sending an email request to the DeLoG Secretariat and the Working Group Chair/Co-Chairs.

DeLoG members should be in at least one Working Group, and can be in more than one, and if so, each member organization can appoint different focal persons in different Working Groups.

Working Group members are expected to actively participate in quarterly meetings and contribute their time and expertise to group activities on a voluntary basis.

Any financial resources needed for joint activities will be discussed, agreed upon and contributed by the Working Group members.

Leadership

Each Working Group is led by a volunteer DeLoG member as Chair, or Co-Chairs if more than one volunteer organization. The term of the Chair/Co-Chairs is two years, and can be renewed based on the Working Group member consensus.

The role of the Chair/Co-Chair is to:

- Manage the Working Group and its strategy including annual workplan, communications, knowledge products and events;
- Lead Working Group quarterly meetings including agendas and logistics;
- Facilitate discussions/workshops/webinars and follow-up actions;
- Liaise with the DeLoG Secretariat, provide updates to the DeLoG's all-member meetings and Annual Meetings, and inputs to the DeLoG annual report;
- Maintain and update the Working Group member list and contacts;
- Ensure the group's activities are aligned with DeLoG's overall strategy.