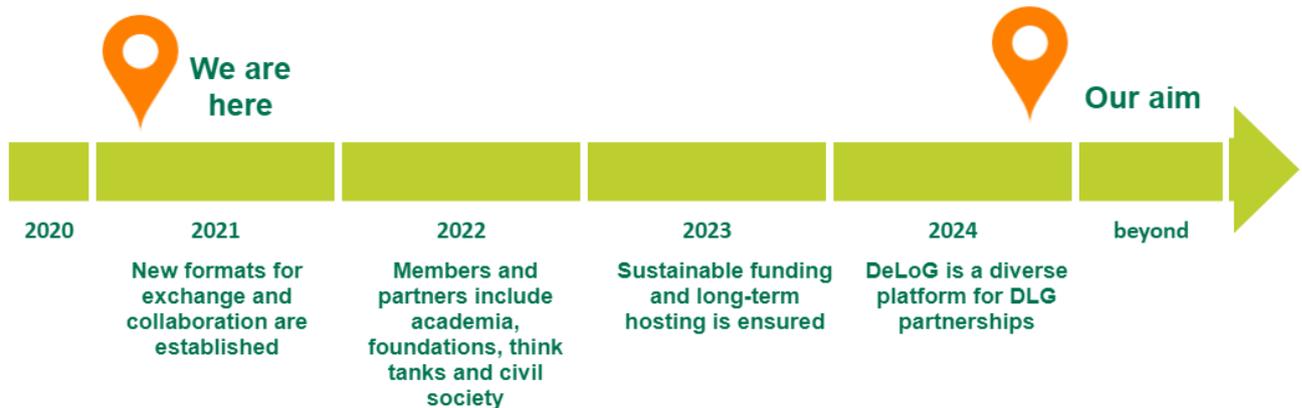




Strategy of the DeLoG Network - until 2024 and beyond



Building on a Well-Established Network

When founded in 2006, the Development Partners Network on Decentralisation and Local Governance (DeLoG) could rely on broad-based support and an implicit, shared understanding of the need for such a network. Following the Paris Declaration, the role of the network to enhance decentralisation and local governance (DLG) effectiveness, was clear and univocal. This shared understanding for the added value of the network needs to be explicitly renewed and further developed to meet the changing environment and shifting landscape that DeLoG is facing.

The 2030 Agenda calls for effective, transparent, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (SDG 16) and encourages the creation of meaningful multi-stakeholder partnerships (SDG17). Its core principle of “leaving no one behind” guides actors and stakeholders involved in decentralisation and local governance reform processes and in the localisation of the SDGs. DeLoG provides space for knowledge exchange and mutual learning on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, counting on 43 member and partner organisations. The coordination, collaboration and engagement of multiple stakeholders invested in the localisation of the 2030 Agenda and the strengthening of DLG reform processes require constant adaptation to the needs and demands of DeLoGs members and partners.

A Changing Environment for DeLoG

Local governments react to crises and shocks and are at the forefront of protecting citizens and providing multi-faceted responses and services. Local functions and responsibilities enable local sustainability, local resilience and local regeneration. The local level is crucial for addressing challenges of peace and the prevention of violent extremism while increasing social cohesion and ensuring long-term stability and prosperity.

The environment and the global agenda on DLG have changed and adapted over the last years. So have DeLoG and its members and partners. DLG approaches are constantly evolving under the pressure of social, economic, ecological and political challenges. The provision of equal and secure access to public services is a core responsibility of Local and Regional Governments (LRGs). Clear functions and mandates as well as access to finance are necessary to fulfil that responsibility and are at the centre of functioning DLG reform processes, that ultimately make sustainable solutions and reaching the SDGs possible. A globalised world relies on the wellbeing of each human being in its local surroundings. That’s why communities and LRGs are advocating for an increase in ownership, larger investments in local capacity-building and the provision of adequate funding or access to national and international financing mechanisms.

Besides the internal capacities and resources questions, LRGs also need to address challenges deriving from the context. Fast growing urban areas, driven by internal displacement, migration, inequality,



poverty or climate change put tremendous pressure on local governments and the promise of improved local service delivery. Citizens demand their right to be included in democratic processes and to get access to justice and rule of law in their local environment. That often calls for new legal frameworks and regulations, distribution of functions across levels and sectors of government, the involvement of multiple stakeholders, new mechanisms of dialogue and accountability as well as the strengthening of multilevel governance systems. This is further accompanied by digital transformation, which creates opportunities for LRGs to address these challenges, but also implies equal access to opportunities and capacity development, especially of skills and infrastructure to ensure the protection of data.

These already existing challenges and pressing issues are being reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rising poverty rates, the barriers to access to health and education are increasing inequalities globally. Local economies are hit harshly by lockdowns and the loss of purchasing power and investments. In many countries, restrictive measures imply lack of democratic control, political participation and reduced civic space. This changing environment calls for new ways of coordination, collaboration and partnership amongst organisations invested in the support of DLG reforms.

DeLoG's Challenges

The extremely heterogeneous impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have once again demonstrated the importance of investing in decentralisation reforms and LRGs by donors and development partners. If sufficiently equipped, LRGs will be in a better position to help analyse and address their communities' problems faster and deliver more suitable solutions. Strengthening cooperation and exchange between actors involved in DLG support is therefore key.

However, the global pandemic and the ongoing trend of digitalisation make working together more challenging than ever. On the one hand, they allow more participation, as geographical distance does not pose an obstacle anymore. On the other hand, digital tools are not accessible to everyone, posing a challenge to inclusion, and might also make it harder to work together in person, feel connected and be able to exchange with a person not a computer. Trust remains a critical resource for international cooperation and is based on relationships between people and organisations.

DeLoG needs to (re-)build and develop new ways of exchange to identify and discuss best practices of DLG support together, in the digital space as well as face-to-face. While some topics require long-term development, identification and processing of emerging trends need to be faster and demand driven. The network must ensure thematic agility in order to feed information and priorities into long-term development strategies. For this purpose, the diversity of actors in international cooperation is not sufficiently mirrored in the composition of membership. Relevant perspectives from the global south in the field of DLG must be included.

It is also critical to place the funding of the network as a common goal for all members and partners. Without it, the DeLoG Secretariat cannot generate the tangible benefit for the network.

Purpose of this Strategy

Throughout 2020 DeLoG conducted a consultation process to get a common understanding of the networks added value for members and partners and a clear vision of its future objectives. The aim of the process was to establish a stable funding and create a shared understanding of each member's and partner's responsibility.

During this process scenarios for the sustainable future of the network were identified, including five strategic areas for potential development. The DeLoG Strategy 2021-2024 provides a path to integrate these areas and orient the common work and cooperation of the network until 2024 and beyond.

It paves the way for developing the network towards a global partnership for "Effective Decentralisation and Local Governance Support".

In the chart below, you will find these areas of action for each coming year until 2024. The activities to be conducted during this period are developed in line with members and partners priorities and documented in annual operational plans.



Strategic Objectives	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Strategic Areas of Action	New formats for exchange and collaboration are established	M&P include academia, foundations, think tanks and civil society	Sustainable funding and long-term hosting are ensured	DeLoG is a diverse platform for DLG partnerships	beyond
Membership	→	✓	→	✓	...
Policy Dialogue	✓	→	→	✓	...
Knowledge Exchange and Mutual Learning	✓	✓	→	✓	...
Financial Sustainability	→	→	✓	✓	...
Topics and Diversity	→	→	→	✓	...

→ = Start/ Continuation of Process ✓ = Milestone reached and objective further developed



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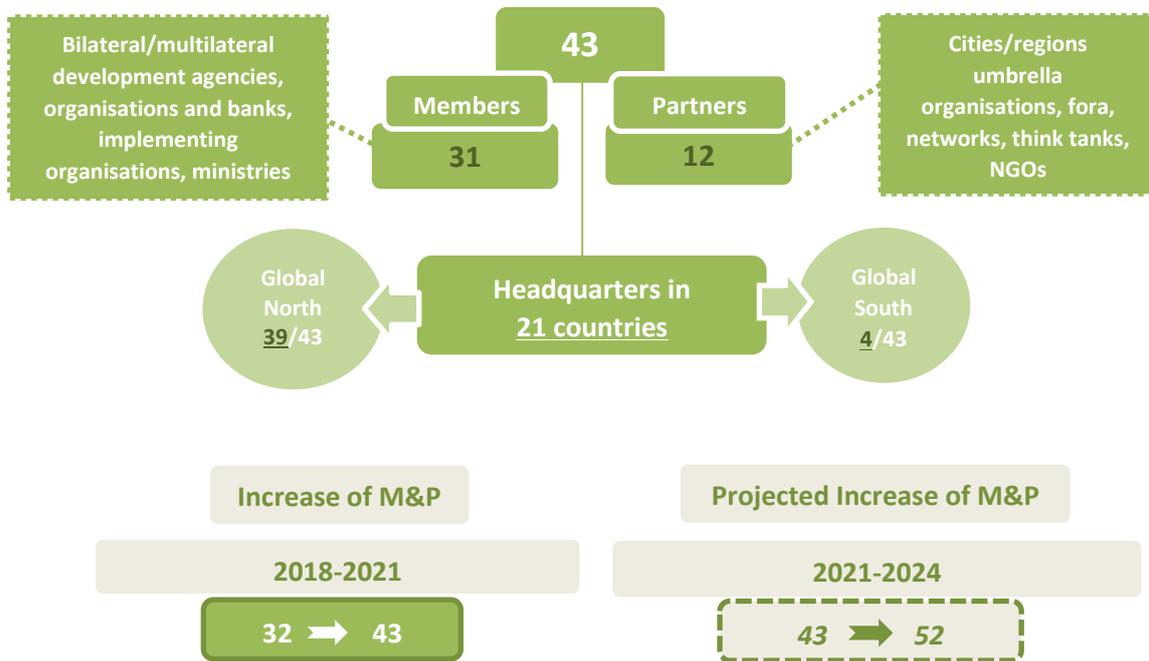
Strategic Area of Action 1: Membership

DeLoG brings relevant actors invested in DLG support together. The network is currently composed of members and strategic partners who are mainly bi- and multilateral development partners.

DeLoG membership is open for development partners who are defined as bi- and multilateral donors and implementing agencies active in the field of DLG (e.g. respective ministries, state development agencies, UN agencies, Development Banks, etc.).

DeLoG holds and explores strategic partnerships with key stakeholders and recognised actors aiming at advancing DLG related issues. This includes for example other networks and international platforms of local authorities and their associations.

DeLoG Membership in Numbers as of 2021



All members and strategic partners promote multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance strategies, provide new and innovative approaches to DLG and therefore contribute to the outreach and added value of the network.

Developing from a network to a partnership requires involvement and networking with organisations that pursue the same objective of strengthening DLG reforms and can bring in new perspectives and knowledge. An increased involvement of civil society, foundations, academic institutions and think tanks, especially from the global south, will diversify the dialogue within DeLoG and thus contribute to enriching the debate around DLG.

Strategic Objective 1: Over the year 2022 and beyond, DeLoG diversifies its members and partners landscape aiming to include perspectives from the global south.



2	Strategic Area of Action 2: Policy Dialogue
<p>DeLoG is an evolving network of a variety of development organisations. Together they create synergies, develop resilience, deal with common challenges, and multiply and amplify the efforts to foster sustainable change. DeLoG enables partnerships to actively influence the localising of the Global Development Agendas.</p> <p>Localising Global Development Agendas (2030 Agenda, New Urban Agenda and beyond) requires effective policy dialogue between multiple and diverse stakeholders. By facilitating dialogue between technical and political actors and stakeholders working in DLG at different levels of the policy-making process, DeLoG bridges the gap between the local and the global level. The network ensures that practitioners and stakeholders can not only share best practices and lessons learnt among themselves but also with actors closer to influencing policy processes. Thus, the needs of local actors are integrated in regional and global strategies leading to the development and implementation of inclusive, needs-based processes.</p> <p>Through promoting and implementing new exchange initiatives, DeLoG aims to provide its members and partners with the opportunity to call on the expertise and help of actors involved at DLG from local to global level. It offers space to pitch innovative ideas, discuss emerging topics, identify synergies and pave the way for new long-term collaboration and partnerships.</p>	
<p>Strategic Objective 2: DeLoG facilitates space for diverse and effective policy dialogue and new collaborations to localise current and future development agendas.</p>	

<u>DeLoG Communication in Numbers as of 2021</u>	
A central element of the DeLoG Secretariat is a frequent communication with members and partners and provision of relevant information:	
15	years of collaborations and counting!
16	annual meetings in person (2020 online)
8	updates in average per year from the Secretariat
1170	experts and officials receive the DeLoG newsletter every 6-8 weeks
1218 310	followers on Twitter new followers in 2020 (+ 25% increase)



"The immense added value I get from being active in the DeLoG network is that, due to its warm, cooperative atmosphere, members trust each other, speak from the heart and share their knowledge, practical experiences as well as very hands-on methods and tools"

Björn Möller
ICLD



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Strategic Area of Action 3: Knowledge Exchange and Mutual Learning

Learning and the exchange of knowledge are facilitated within the network and create the added value of DeLoG. As a community of practice, DeLoG members and partners meet at eye-level, connect informally and exchange information, tools and lessons learned on existing and emerging themes and challenges. DeLoG provides the fertile ground to challenge existing beliefs, widen the scope for discussion, inspire each other as well as develop innovate new approaches and instruments. It aims at building a common understanding of DLG and strengthening communication and connections among development partners to strengthen collaboration in the field of DLG.

DLG reforms rely on the identification and discussion of best practices and failures. Through new formats, including virtual and hybrid tools, DeLoG helps to facilitate learning and reflection beyond institutional boundaries. This will further add value to the knowledge exchange and joint learning among development partners and strengthen the role of DeLoG as a knowledge hub.

Strategic Objective 3: The Secretariat encourages learning and exchange of knowledge by taking advantage of digital tools.

DeLoG Knowledge Exchange and Mutual Learning in Numbers between 2018 and 2021



“DeLoG makes the effort of bringing development organisations together, of convening them and ultimately replacing the bilateral with a connected community”

Edgardo Bilsky
UCLG



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Strategic Area of Action 4: Financial Sustainability

"DeLoG is a common good. It moves beyond institutional interests and enables M&P's to create synergies"

Serge Allou
UCLG

DeLoG was founded in 2006 and has grown into a relevant and prospering network. Today, it is more relevant than ever to create partnerships for effective DLG support to improve people's life. A reliable hosting and funding of the secretariat and network are a core element for the continuation and further development of DeLoG.

DeLoG is a common good. Therefore, the support for DeLoG is a shared responsibility of members and partners, who all benefit from the access to the DLG community and added value of DeLoG. However, to date, less than a handful members contribute financially. To create sustainability, more members and partners have to devote time and resources to the network's objectives by initiating coordination efforts, joint activities or providing earmarked and core funding. By broadening up its financial support, the huge value of this global, multi-stakeholder network is secured.

Only reliable financial support from members assures the network's role and contribution to the debate and learning around effective DLG reforms for the coming years and beyond 2030.

Strategic Objective 5: By 2023 DeLoG's sustainability is secured through the identification of a long-term host and predictable funding from more than two members.



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Strategic Area of Action 5: Topics and Diversity

DeLoG provides room to discuss emerging trends, challenges and opportunities in the field of DLG support. Its members and partners acknowledge that local and multi-level governance affect and are affected by different sectors and occurs on different external and political terms. The thematic exchange created through the network's space and instruments, serves the development of multi-sectoral and context-sensitive decentralisation strategies and priorities for all actors involved.

Rapidly advancing urbanisation, democratic governance under pressure, inequality or global challenges such as climate change or migration, need to be addressed coherently, in particular at the local level. Key to addressing them inclusively and efficiently are crosscutting issues like gender equality and the inclusion of marginalised groups. The Secretariat facilitates room to exchange on thematic priorities and adapts flexibly according to the needs of the diverse network's members and partners.

By combining the wide range of DLG topics and integrating a diverse landscape of members and partners, including think tanks, academia, foundations and civil society, DeLoG facilitates the creation of new partnerships to support and strengthen DLG reform processes globally.

Strategic Objective 5: By 2024 DeLoG is a diverse network that facilitates partnerships for DLG support.

Current workstreams	Thematic trends and topics to be addressed
Urban and Territorial Governance	Linkage between urbanisation and governance: For example, inclusive urban governance with a focus on marginalised groups, specifically girls and women.
Localising the 2030 Agenda	2030 Agenda and beyond: How do we advance on the local level and shape the future agenda? (data, reporting, etc.)
Local Finance and Fiscal Decentralisation	Crisis of local government finance: The role of local taxes for development, data and statistics on subnational government finance.
Decentralisation and Local Governance in Fragile Contexts	Authoritarian backsliding and the support on DLG, Ways to strengthen local democracy, Resilience building post-COVID-19, DLG and access to justice/rule of law.