



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

- A. PURPOSE AND CONTENTS OF THE TOOLKIT**
- B. THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

A. PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

Some years ago, the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) (now UCLG) published 'The LGA Toolkit'. It explores common issues facing Local Government Associations (LGA) with examples from around the world. It stimulates reflection and provides useful guidance to young LGAs.

This Toolkit from the Council of Europe (CoE) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) complements and builds on the IULA publication. It is particularly addressed to LGAs in transition countries in SE Europe, S Caucasus and Central Asia where decentralisation and the introduction of European standards are on-going challenges. However, LGAs facing transition in other regions may find it useful.

| <i>This Toolkit has been prepared in particular for use by LGAs in:</i> | | |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Albania Armenia Bosnia and Herzegovina Bulgaria Croatia</i> | <i>Georgia Kosovo Moldova Montenegro</i> | <i>Romania Serbia "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" Turkey</i> |

Some of these LGAs are new; others have been established for many years. But all of them need to grow into powerful national institutions that champion local government if local democracy is to flourish.

Decentralisation throws up a range of issues. The resources transferred to local authorities may be insufficient for the proper exercise of their delegated competences. Attitudes among some Ministers and central government officials may still be centralised, with a preference to retain power rather than let it go. Some Mayors may not see that one of their core responsibilities is to improve local public services. Local people may show no interest in engaging with their local authority after years of central rule.

LGAs have a particularly important role to play as advocates of decentralisation. Whatever the political will among central authorities to decentralise, local authorities need to demonstrate their effectiveness in order to give confidence to local people and to central authorities that they can manage the responsibilities that decentralisation brings.

To do this well, local government needs a strong LGA to provide a national platform for local government and represent local authorities. The LGA should provide services that strengthen local authorities and build their capacities on a sustainable basis; it should focus donor support on the priorities of local government; it should work with central authorities to deliver better local government.

This Toolkit provides guidance and tools that LGAs can use to assess their current capacity and performance and transform themselves into more effective organisations. They are encouraged to use external facilitators to help them make best use of the tools; they might seek support both from partners and from each other so that they are not alone in facing the challenge of decentralisation (see Annex E).

CONTENTS OF THE TOOLKIT

Section 1: Introduction

A. The purpose and contents of the Toolkit

Those involved in the preparation and publication of this Toolkit feel that it is the right publication at the right time. It sets out ideas on how the Toolkit might be used. Is the LGA ready to assess its own capacity and performance objectively? Can it learn from its own experience and from the best practice of others? This Toolkit encourages learning and change in an LGA in response to the challenge of decentralisation.

B. The role of the Local Government Association

The LGA plays a key role at the centre of the decentralisation process. What do local authorities want of their LGA? Do they want to strengthen their organisation and performance? Are they willing to pay for it? What does a good LGA look like? Does the LGA have the right ambition? All stakeholders in local government need to develop the vision of a strong LGA. Strength starts from vision and commitment.

Section 2: Analysis in the Local Government Association

A. The Performance Benchmark of a Local Government Association

The Toolkit offers a Benchmark that an LGA can use to examine its current capacity and performance and assess its strengths and weaknesses. This will help the Executive Board decide where focused action might best be taken to strengthen the LGA. If an LGA is unwilling or unable to look at itself and to assess its own strengths and weaknesses, then it will not succeed. A self-assessment or external assessment against the Benchmark provides an LGA with the starting point for its own capacity development.

Section 3: Transforming the Local Government Association

A. Organisation development

Piece-meal reform is easy but not very effective in transforming an LGA. Each part of an LGA is linked. Efforts to strengthen, for example, strategic planning may be undermined by a weak financial strategy or by inexperienced staff. Sustainable reform needs a total approach to the development of the organisation. Responsibility and drive for reform must come from the leadership. This is the thrust of organisation development.

Section 4: Planning in the Local Government Association

A. The Strategic Plan

Strategic planning is the first step in reform. An LGA needs a vision for where it wants to go and a strategy for getting there. It must be a vision that belongs to all local authorities because they will be asked to provide the core funding. A good Strategic Plan will result in a stronger organisation and will lead to better performance.

B. The Financial Strategy

LGA finances have to be well managed and its programmes funded in line with the Strategic Plan. Core business should be funded from the core budget; other funding can come from grants, paid services, projects and sponsorship. A wide resource base is necessary to maximise income and reduce dependency on donors. This should be set out in a Financial Strategy.

Section 5: The functions of the Local Government Association

A. The Communications Strategy

Local authorities and other stakeholders need to know what the LGA is doing, what its plans are, how well it has done. The LGA needs to listen to and understand the needs and expectations of local authorities and to remain in touch with key stakeholders. It needs to articulate agreed policies and market its services. It needs to be a strong advocate. It needs to work well with the media. There is a clear link between communications and organisational effectiveness. A good Communications Strategy sets out how the LGA will strengthen and manage its internal and external communications.

B. The Advocacy Strategy

A key role of the LGA is to articulate the needs and concerns of local government to central government. It has to communicate and persuade. It has to lobby on behalf of local authorities for new legislation; it has to advocate policies and positions that will best serve the interests of local government. Proposals must be based on robust research. The LGA needs to set out its principles and plans in an Advocacy Strategy.

C. Service Provision

Local authorities need hands-on support from the LGA to make themselves more effective in all aspects of their work. This is their public obligation to decentralisation. Local authorities need help in building up their leadership and strategic management and in delivering public services to higher standards; they need help in learning from best practice, in engaging local communities and in developing partnerships with local public, private and voluntary organisations. The LGA needs to build up a portfolio of capacity-building services that help local authorities deliver better local government.

Section 6: Organisation in the Local Government Association:

What is the best way to structure an LGA to minimise bureaucracy and maximise effectiveness? Broad participation in the LGA by member local authorities and Mayors is a key to its strength. A strong LGA will have a stream-lined committee structure and a Secretariat with experience and expertise. The capacity and style of the LGA leadership will be a key factor in delivering better local government.

Staff are the most important asset of an LGA. They should be the equal of staff in any other organisation. They will be motivated by modern leadership and management rather than by old-fashioned systems of command and control. The LGA leadership should create an environment where staff give of their best and aim for the highest standards.

The strength of an LGA lies in its legitimacy and the authority that comes with expertise. Its legitimacy comes from its ability to reflect the views of Mayors and local authorities across the country, whatever their party affiliation. Without such *legitimacy and authority*, the LGA will not have the credibility it needs with the Government on the one hand and with local authorities on the other.

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This Introduction also brings together some background material that can be used for general reference:

1. **Annex A** sets out the principles of good governance in a systematic way. This might be shared with every staff and elected representative involved with the LGA to familiarise them with how municipalities should be seeking to carry out their mandate.
2. **Annex B** provides a checklist of good practice in LGAs in Europe; it can be used to reflect on how well the LGA measures up to these practices.
3. **Annex C** introduces LOGON, an interactive network focused on EU accession. This may be a priority for LGAs in planning support to municipalities and it is sensible to make best use of European experience.
4. **Annex D** is a case-study of the LGA in Bulgaria. This is not to say that this is the best model for all LGAs; rather it encourages the sharing of ideas about LGA structures.
5. **Annex E** is the Template used for recent conferences for Ministers in SE Europe with responsibilities for local government; it sets out the main local government challenges to both Ministries and LGAs in the region and provides the basis for a comprehensive national work programme.
6. **Annex F** lists things the LGA can do to further EU integration.
7. **Annex G** introduces the Local Government Information Network (LOGIN).

B. THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

What is good local government?

Local government is first about where responsibility lies. In centralised states, there is no local government as we know it; rather there is central government at local level.

In decentralised systems, local government is to a large extent controlled by representatives who are elected locally and are accountable to local people. Local people have the key responsibility for their own local government.

To exercise that responsibility, local people need to *understand local government* – how it works, what it can do, how it can be influenced. A good local authority will work efficiently, effectively and openly in the interests of local people. It will engage local people and local organisations as *partners* in the delivery of local government.

A strong LGA starts with vision and commitment. It starts with people who believe in strong local government and effective local government institutions – people who are determined that their LGA should stand tall among the LGAs of Europe.

Secondly, local government is about building up the local community, making it a good and secure place to live, work and visit. Local authorities have responsibility for social, economic and environmental development:

- *Delivering services that reduce poverty and increase opportunity,*
- *Creating an environment for learning, recreation and employment,*
- *Improving standards,*
- *Protecting natural resources, building infrastructure and ensuring compliance.*

The way a local authority governs a community is known as 'governance'. Good governance must be the goal of every local authority.

How far decentralisation?

The decentralisation of public functions and resources brings government closer to local people. It allows them greater influence on how government is exercised locally.

As newer democracies move away from centralised systems, where should the balance be between centralisation and decentralisation? That partly depends on the circumstances. But it is generally recognised that the greater the degree of decentralisation, the better local government will be able to respond to local needs and expectations.

The European standard is set out in the European Charter of Local Self-Government: local government should manage a substantial part of public affairs under its own responsibility in the interests of local people. In many older democracies, local government may be responsible for 25% or more of total public expenditure.

To reach such levels of decentralisation does not happen all at once. It takes time, and often moves forward in small steps. Central government must be willing to decentralise; they must have the confidence that local authorities can do a good job. Local authorities must demonstrate that they are competent. Local people must want local government.

There is therefore always a tension between the readiness of central government and the demands of local government. Both sides have their own perceptions and priorities. Decentralisation has to be negotiated.

Role of a Local Government Association

An LGA is about developing '**good governance**' throughout the country (see Annex A on the principles of good governance). Its role is to:

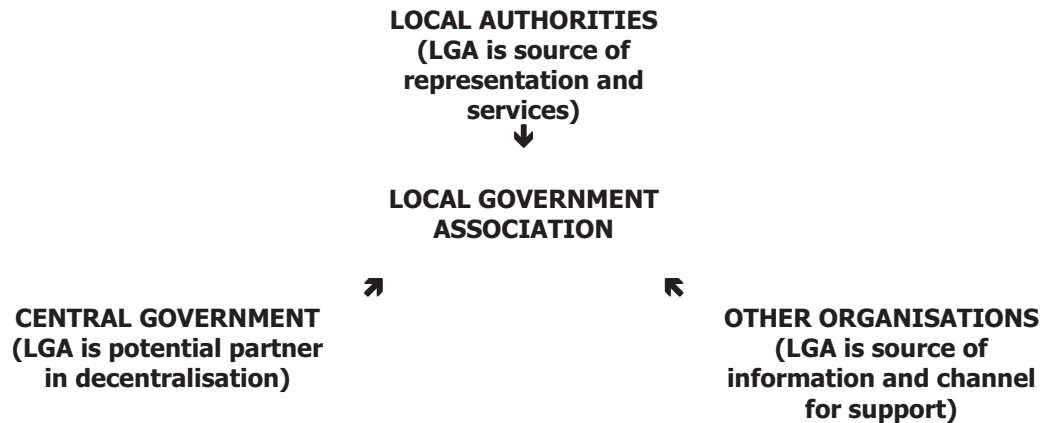
- 1. Articulate local government needs and expectations to the Government.***
- 2. Provide a national platform for local government.***
- 3. Provide services to strengthen local authorities.***
- 4. Negotiate the on-going decentralisation of functions and resources.***

A strong and independent LGA will make a difference. It can promote decentralisation – encouraging central authorities to transfer appropriate competences and resources while at the same time strengthening local authorities so they can take full responsibility for the exercise and control of those competences and resources.

The LGA can also strengthen local government institutions, such as training agencies and information centres, that can help local authorities develop their expertise, build capacity, and drive up performance towards European standards.

The LGA can actively promote better understanding of the rights, obligations and opportunities of local government among local people and organisations.

The Government should come to see a strong LGA as a **partner** in promoting decentralisation and building up local government. Local authorities will see it as a source of services and representation. National and international organisations will see it as a source of information and a partner in sponsoring programmes.



The capacity of a Local Government Association

An LGA will need the capacity to carry out these responsibilities to high standards (see Annex B for best practice in LGAs). This will require a modern approach to leadership; how well prepared are the Board, the Executive Director and senior managers for taking on the leadership challenge? How open are they to their own leadership development?

The basis for a strong LGA is its legitimacy and sustainability. This will come from way it represents and supports local government as a whole, from the fees that local authorities are willing to pay and its ability to generate resources. While donor funding may provide temporary or specific support, it is far from sufficient. Local authorities will pay fees if they see the LGA as **their** organisation and if it serves them well.

For that reason, membership of the LGA should not be obligatory; the LGA should have to work to attract and keep its member local authorities. This will make the LGA responsive to what good local government requires.

A strong LGA will have good 'listening' skills. It will understand the concerns of local authorities and their communities; it will know where to find good practice and how to share it more widely; it will have transparent systems that allow the participation of local authorities in developing its policies and priorities from the bottom up. It will be seen as the **champion of local democracy**.

A weak LGA is one which:

- ***has limited participation in national policy dialogue;***
- ***fails to push for effective administrative and fiscal decentralisation;***
- ***fails to give leadership to local authorities;***
- ***fails to provide strong advocacy;***
- ***shows little capacity to formulate and implement policies to address local needs;***
- ***has little communication with the public and stakeholders;***
- ***is excessive politicised;***
- ***does little to drive improvements in local public services.***

A weak LGA fails to live up to its mandate.

An LGA will not be alone; it is part of the wider international community. It might be a member of an LGA network (eg NALAS). LGAs can learn good practice from each other. They can work together to support decentralisation and European integration (see Annex C for LOGON).

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

| NORMS | OBJECTIVES | OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Sustainability | Balanced social, economic and environmental priorities Stakeholder involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consult stakeholders on vision and strategy; - introduce environmental planning and management; - apply the precautionary principle; - promote the participation of all citizens in the economic life of the community. |
| Decentralisation | Local autonomy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide clear frameworks for assigning and delegating responsibilities and commensurate resources to neighbourhood level; - establish participatory monitoring systems; - make financial transfers predictable and transparent; - ensure that administrative, technical and managerial staff are responsive, transparent and accountable. - ensure financial equalisation. |
| Equity | Resource allocation Empowerment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - set out equitable principles for prioritising development and pricing local services; - establish investment incentives for targeted sectors and geographical areas; - remove unnecessary barriers to secure tenure of land and property and access to finance; - ensure fair regulatory frameworks; - ensure men and women have equal access to decision-making, resources and services; - create rules for freedom of access to information; - provide civic education; - create legal frameworks for traditional economic and social institutions and for those working in the informal sectors. |
| Efficiency | Management and service delivery Efficient investment in infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use performance management approach with clear objectives, indicators and targets; - develop frameworks that encourage trade and minimise costs; - popularise service standards and complaints procedures; - use transparent contracting and procurement systems; - use strategic planning to address needs of all groups; - improve the efficiency of revenue collection; - develop partnerships with private and voluntary organisations to deliver public services. |

| NORMS | OBJECTIVES | OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES |
|---|--|---|
| Transparency and Accountability | <p>Decision-making processes</p> <p>Access to information</p> <p>Standards of ethics and professional conduct</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engage local people and organisations in planning and budgeting; - hold consultations on the budget; - establish transparent tendering and procurement procedures; - publish independent annual finance and performance audit reports; - encourage debate on local issues in the media; - promote an ethic of service among officials; - create Codes of Conduct for elected representatives and officials; - remove incentives for corruption; - create public feedback mechanisms (ombudsman, citizen report cards and procedures for petitioning). |
| Civic Engagement and Citizenship | <p>Leadership</p> <p>Building a democratic culture</p> <p>Empowerment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop a culture of respect and respect for diversity; - promote civic responsibility among local people; - make best use of use public hearings, citizens' forums, consultations and surveys; - use referendums on important issues requiring choices; - use conflict mediation mechanisms where necessary; - use law to protect the rights and entitlements of all groups; - ensure women's participation; - give special support to marginal groups. |
| Security | <p>Disaster preparedness</p> <p>Personal safety, crime control and prevention</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - raise awareness of risk and develop risk management plans for natural and man-made disasters; - consult widely on improving security; - use policing methods that do not alienate the community; - ensure a safe and healthy environment for children; - resist all forms of abuse against the person. |

*Does your LGA show evidence of best European practice?***BEST PRACTICE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS****Institutional**

- *Clear vision and demand-driven mandate*
- *Effective strategic planning and business planning*
- *Organisation in line with mandate; committees on priority themes*
- *Good communications policy*
- *Networking with other LGAs; good relations with stakeholders*
- *Capacity to reorganise in light of changing circumstances*
- *Good use of IT in communications with local authorities*
- *Modern Human Resources strategy*
- *Creation of professional associations*
- *Appropriate regional structures*
- *Focus on sustainability and income generation*

Advocacy

- *Strong dialogue with Government, Parliament, NGOs and businesses*
- *Recognition in law*
- *Cooperation agreements with Government*
- *Active participation in national commissions*
- *Proposals for new legislation*
- *Good media strategy*
- *International standing*

Services

- *Capacity-building programmes (eg leadership development)*
- *One-stop-shop Advisory Centre*
- *Training centre; database and network of training organisations and trainers*
- *Database on best practices; organisation of events to share best practices*
- *Access to funding opportunities*
- *Manuals, handbooks and guidelines*
- *Information bulletins, discussion forums*
- *Bulk public procurement*
- *Support for twinning arrangements*
- *Conflict resolution service*

Does your LGA wish to involve local government in the European Union?**LOCAL GOVERNMENT NETWORK (LOGON)**

LOGON is an inter-active network for local government about EU accession. It was set up in 1999 and has developed with the experience of those countries that have more recently joined the EU. Local authorities are particularly concerned as they are the focal point of community life where the impact of EC decisions and regulations most affect the citizen.

Objectives:

- ***To strengthen local government and provide independent information about the consequences of EU accession.***
- ***To provide know-how on reaching EU standards in selected areas.***
- ***To exchange experiences on local government issues related to EU accession.***
- ***To help local authorities contribute to national dialogue on matters of EU accession where local government will be affected.***
- ***To help local authorities transmit the EU way of thinking to citizens and raise their interest.***

Key issues:

- ***Environment***
- ***Structural policy***
- ***Financial and economic policy***
- ***Free movement of goods and services***
- ***Rights of EU citizenship***

Areas of activity:

1. ***Lobbying and communications policy***
2. ***Services of General Interest***
3. ***Modernisation of public administration***

Methods:

LOGON strengths are its capacity for lobbying, its proximity to Brussels, its capacity to consult with local government in Europe and its capacity for partnership. LOGON uses reports, conferences, working groups and an Internet Competence Centre (portal for local authorities) to achieve its objectives. It cooperates with networks like Eurocities and Login.

Recent topics:

- ***Organisation development, training needs and anti-corruption measures***
- ***Fiscal decentralisation and financing local government***
- ***Municipal services***
- ***Public procurement and state aid***
- ***Energy and energy-saving***
- ***Demographic development, spatial planning and transport***
- ***Health and social issues***
- ***Acquisition of land, free movement and election rights***

More information on www.ceec-logon.net

Case-study:**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES, REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

The NAMRB was founded on 11 December 1996 by representatives of 94 municipalities. The Constituent General Assembly elected the first Board of Directors and an Executive Director. The Board determines the structure and composition of staff.

Since 1999 all municipalities are members of NAMRB, which means accepting the Statute and designating representatives. Voluntary participation and equity are basic principles.

The governing body is the General Assembly. It is convened twice a year and each municipality has one vote. The General Assembly elects 19 members to the Board of Directors for 3 years. The Board elects a Chairperson and 2 Deputies. The General Assembly also elects 5 members to the Control Council.

Commissions are set up with elected members to improve legislation and facilitate the exchange of best practice. There are 11 Standing Committees working on:

- interaction between Municipal Councils and their administration
- international cooperation and European integration
- finance, economic activities and transport; small municipalities
- health care; social welfare and employment
- regional development and public works; municipal property
- culture and education; sports, recreation and tourism; women participation

NAMRB has an office, over 30 staff and a network of voluntary experts. Staff work in 3 teams covering presentation and policy, provision of services and administration / finance. Electronic networking is strong. Its powers derive from 10 laws that, for example, enable it to participate in national councils (eg tourism) and other bodies.

On 11 December 2001 NAMRB signed a cooperation agreement with the Government covering decentralisation, EU accession, investment and economic development, and interaction between central and local authorities.

The annual budget is made up of 60% grants, 30% fees and 10% other income. Its activities consist of:

- representing and defending the common interests of municipalities before the central authorities, including proposing amendments to regulations, advising on the local government budget and as a member of international bodies;
- proposing improvements to legislation with statements on draft acts, proposals for new acts, conferences and expert meetings;
- assisting municipalities in exercising their powers through consultancy, expert and technical assistance, training and qualification programmes, conferences, maintaining databases, securing investment and finance, newsletters and other communications tools, disseminating manuals and other publications, best practice exchange;
- interacting with international organisations, including joint projects, international databases, other Local Government Associations, twinning.

TEMPLATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM IN TRANSITION COUNTRIES

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
|--|---|
| <p>Understanding local government</p> <p><i>The vision of what local government might be is often unclear to officials and elected representatives at national, regional and local levels, and to local people themselves. A shared vision is hard to find.</i></p> <p><i>Reforms are not integrated in an agreed overall strategy.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong local government shall be seen as a key element in the stability and sustainable development of the region and be recognised as such by all state bodies. A national debate on the benefit of decentralised government shall be stimulated. • A comprehensive decentralisation strategy shall be developed, based on a clear definition of the role of local and regional government shared by all stakeholders (government, parliament, local authorities...). |

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
|--|---|
| <p>Assignment of competences and resources</p> <p><i>Experience shows that most frequent drawbacks in basic legislation are related to the following situations:</i></p> <p><u>Responsibilities</u></p> <p><i>Unclear distribution of responsibilities between central, regional and local government.</i></p> <p><i>Inadequate decentralisation of functions related to policy implementation at local level.</i></p> <p><i>Undetermined and / or unrealistic scope of local government mandatory functions.</i></p> <p>Resources</p> <p><i>Inadequate assignment of resources by central government to local government (including property, finance, staff) leading to unachievable mandates and poor service delivery.</i></p> <p><i>Little room for manoeuvre both in raising own revenues at local level and in allocating available resources.</i></p> <p><i>Imbalances between local authorities in different areas and insufficient equalisation (which create great disparities in development potential and accentuate migration trends).</i></p> | <p><u>Responsibilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce overlapping responsibilities and vest, whenever possible, the local authorities with exclusive tasks; • Increase decentralisation of responsibilities in the provision of utilities and basic social services at local level; • Fix clear boundaries to mandatory tasks, avoiding long lists of “broad” responsibilities which are assumed to be mandatory as a whole; • Set clear standards in service provision, which shall be consistent with the resources available. <p><u>Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all properties needed for the delivery of local services are transferred to local government. • Increase the local government share in public expenditure, consistent with their responsibilities. • Improve the local taxation system, especially land / property taxation which shall become a pillar of this system, and ensure the conditions for its effective enforcement. • Consolidate, whenever possible, earmarked grants, to increase both the room for manoeuvre and the effectiveness in the allocation of resources • Increase the level of equalisation to achieve within a given timeframe a target level [at least 80%]. |

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
|---|--|
| <p>Implementing legislation</p> <p><i>In some countries, important changes in basic laws on local government fall short of implementation or remain ineffective because there is insufficient will at national level and because there are inconsistencies in the legal framework.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an in-depth analysis of the local government legal framework to identify possible internal inconsistencies and point to changes required in basic and sectoral legislation. • Plan legislative reforms in a rational and comprehensive manner and introduce them with timely implementation measures. |

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
|--|---|
| <p>Professional structure for elected and appointed officials</p> <p><i>The legal status of local elected representatives does not encourage the emergence of a local political elite.</i></p> <p><i>The legal status of local government staff does not encourage a professional career.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the status of local elected representatives and set out clearly what is expected of them. • Enhance the professional status of local government staff and set out standards for their recruitment, training and promotion. |

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
|---|---|
| <p>Relationship between state authorities and local government</p> <p><i>Deconcentrated state administration may not support in practice the development of local self-government.</i></p> <p><i>Excessive administrative supervision by central government may leave insufficient scope for local initiative or for the development of local responsibility / accountability.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassess and redesign the role and operation of de-concentrated state administration to foster decentralisation. • Ensure that supervisory mechanisms and procedures have a clear rationale and are established by law. • Reduce automatic control of local decisions which do not have a national interest and do not entail sizeable costs. |

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
|--|--|
| <p>Institutional dialogue</p> <p><i>There is a lack of institutional dialogue between local and central authorities and insufficient recognition by the Government of local government as a partner.</i></p> <p><i>The National Association of Local Authorities may not have sufficient capacity for effective dialogue with the Government.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the strengthening of independent national associations of local authorities. • Develop mechanisms of on-going dialogue to ensure full involvement of local government representatives in the reform process. |

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
|--|--|
| <p>Transparency and accountability</p> <p><i>Standards on transparency, accountability and public ethics are not developed.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set minimum standards for transparency in local authorities and communications with local communities by law. • Establish standards of public ethics at local level and processes for their enforcement. • Establish mechanisms for the participation of local people at critical points in the affairs of local authorities. • Develop national and local audit processes. |

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
|--|--|
| <p>Local economic, social and environmental development</p> <p><i>Local development affects the quality of life of local people. But local authorities may lack the necessary powers to take the action needed or they may fail to use existing powers. They may not have the vision or the initiative to see what is possible. They may lack specific expertise.</i></p> <p><i>The challenge of local development requires a joint approach by the local authority and other stakeholders. But there may not be the culture of partnership working.</i></p> <p><i>Understanding local development begins with dialogue with local people and organisations about their needs. But communications with the local community may be weak.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage local authorities to to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create Local Forums of senior representatives of the public, private and voluntary sectors to consider local development challenges and find shared solutions; - Prepare local development policies and strategies, based on local needs analysis, to harness the energies of local stakeholders towards development programmes; - Work with neighbouring local authorities and with district / regional authorities to prepare regional development strategies and programmes. • Introduce provisions and funding mechanisms to enable local authorities to play a stronger role in local development. • Commission guidance in local economic, social and environmental development for local authorities. • Encourage best practice programmes and relevant training (eg project design and management) to help local authorities improve their approach to local development and learn from each other. • Encourage better use of information and communications technology by local authorities to support local development. |

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
|---|---|
| <p>Leadership and strategic management</p> <p><i>The longer-term vision of the community and of the role of the local authority is usually unclear.</i></p> <p><i>Local officials and elected representatives are not fully engaged in the core work of their local authority.</i></p> <p><i>The local authority fails to engage civil society in partnership in the development of the community.</i></p> <p><i>The local authority fails to communicate effectively internally and externally.</i></p> <p><i>The local authority fails to use training effectively to improve performance.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer concrete political support, financial incentives and technical/logistical assistance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess leadership and strategic management in each local authority against an agreed Benchmark as a platform for an Improvement Programme; - Introduce a requirement that each local authority should draw up a 3-5 year Strategic Plan, and monitor its implementation through annual performance reports against annual plans; - Introduce models and standards for the effective management of the human resources and finance functions in every local authority; - Develop training and communications strategies in each local authority; - Facilitate the development of partnerships between local authorities and with civil society; - Support the development of information and communications technology in each local authority. |

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
|---|---|
| <p>Service provision</p> <p><i>The quality, quantity and accessibility of service provision vary considerably within and between countries.</i></p> <p><i>Insufficient use is made of examples of good practice to promote widespread improvements.</i></p> <p><i>There are few systematic programmes to deliver better performance.</i></p> <p><i>National associations may not have the capacity themselves to introduce capacity-building programmes for local authorities.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer concrete political support, financial incentives and technical/logistical assistance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce Best Practice Programmes in priority internal and external service areas; - Explore the introduction of innovative approaches to service provision learnt from other countries; - Introduce Fundamental Performance Reviews to identify strengths and weaknesses in particular services as a platform for service improvement; - Introduce Performance Management Programmes for all main services with clear objectives, performance indicators and targets to guide service improvement. |

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
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| <p>Training</p> <p><i>Training is not sufficiently available to all staff and elected representatives.</i></p> <p><i>Training is frequently of low quality, not focusing on priorities and failing to use interesting and interactive methodologies.</i></p> <p><i>Much training investment is wasted by not making best use of existing capacity, by not building on examples of good training practice, by frequent turnover of staff, by lack of co-ordination and cooperation between training providers.</i></p> <p><i>There are insufficient qualified trainers.</i></p> <p><i>Training budgets are often insufficient to achieve impact.</i></p> <p><i>Training is excessively supply-driven rather than demand-led.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer political, financial and technical/logistical assistance for the development of a National Training Strategy based on a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis in collaboration with all major stakeholders. • Contribute to the identification or establishment of the appropriate institutional arrangements for delivering the National Training Strategy. • Play an active role in ensuring that the National Training Strategy is used to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop training priorities; - Develop standardised curricula in core topics; - Make arrangements for course accreditation where appropriate; - Assist training providers in raising their standards and co-ordinating their approach; - Ensure provision of sufficient qualified trainers; - Increase the range of training methodologies in use (eg use of media, best practice etc); - Develop training capacity within each local authority; - Increase national and local resources devoted to training; - Ensure longer-term sustainability in the provision of training. |

| CHALLENGES | SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES |
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| <p>Understanding of democracy and community participation</p> <p><i>A deeper understanding of local democracy and community participation is needed among both local authorities and local people.</i></p> <p><i>There are insufficient mechanisms for citizen participation and the role of civic society is undervalued.</i></p> <p><i>A lack of clarity in the legislative framework and the over-regulation of certain procedures do not encourage local authorities to use existing mechanisms of community participation and hinder innovation and experimentation.</i></p> <p><i>Local democracy and community participation at local level have not sufficient profile within the education programmes.</i></p> <p><i>Social networks need to be developed.</i></p> <p><i>The role of women and youth needs to be better recognised and enhanced.</i></p> <p><i>Communication within multi-ethnic communities is often inadequate.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and disseminate a Guide to Local Democracy, setting out the rights, obligations and opportunities of local and central government and the opportunities for community participation. • Support local and regional forums to develop understanding of democratic participation among local authorities, political parties, NGOs and the media. • Encourage local authorities to establish an active communications policy, tailored to the community's needs and expectations. • Launch, in co-operation with the national association, targeted programmes for local authorities to promote "best practice" on citizen participation. • Support the creation of "learning networks" of local authorities engaged in innovation. • Encourage local authorities to work with civic society to deliver more effective services for local people, and support those that launch initiatives to develop a common longer-term vision of the community. • Promote civic education in schools and universities and through local cultural events to foster participation. • Support training programmes for citizens' groups. • Support the more dynamic NGOs, especially those promoting the participation of women and youth in local politics and decision-making and in developing mutual understanding within multi-ethnic communities. |

THE LGA'S ROLE IN FURTHERING EU INTEGRATION

The EU will only survive in the longer term if the citizens of Europe accept it. In this way, local government has a key role to play, as they are the closest level of government to the people.

The LGA can do several things:

- Participate in relevant forums, conferences and working parties.
- Make statements, hold conferences, and publish articles on the benefits, obligations and risks of EU integration.
- Appoint one of its staff members to act as the liaison officer, to develop expertise, to ensure a proper debate and information flow, seek out EU funding opportunities.
- Develop links with its country's embassy in Brussels.
- Ensure its programme managers understand EU methodology to project development and can prepare good proposals.
- Ensure training curricula is relevant to EU integration.
- Promote the learning of English and other EU languages.
- Begin to introduce EU standards into local government in such areas as public procurement and environmental standards.
- Build a link to European umbrella organisations, eg Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), and make best use of their services.
- Develop partnership links with an LGA within the EU.

In particular, cities are seen as important actors as they can influence local development and have the capacity to absorb EU support. The LGA might create a Forum of the larger cities to take forward the agenda for closer European integration.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION NETWORK (LOGIN)

LOGIN is a local government information clearinghouse designed to:

- promote the professional development of local government staff;
- strengthen the capabilities of organisations that support the reform of public administration at the local level;
- facilitate the exchange of information through the Internet as well as by more traditional methods (workshops, publications, conferences and training).

The Internet component of LOGIN is more than a Web site. It is a Web-based, database- driven tool for storing and exchanging information worldwide. Its features allow individuals from different countries and who speak different languages to collect, store, manipulate and exchange information.

The mission of LOGIN is to provide information to decision-makers at the local level through the exchange of knowledge and experience in Central and Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Local governments in emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are seeking assistance. With limited budgets, they are working to provide services, promote economic development, communicate effectively with citizens, and operate more efficiently. The autonomy of these local governments largely depends on their ability to find solutions to local problems without seeing increased central government funding as the only option.

To assist these local governments, numerous municipal associations, foundations, and corporations have emerged throughout the region. LOGIN offers them a new way to share information, develop networks and improve their services to municipalities.

LOGIN will provide local government officials with practical solutions to challenges in their daily work. The system is designed with the local government practitioner in mind. However, anyone involved in local government issues will find a wealth of useful information on LOGIN.

LOGIN fosters the exchange of experience and expertise on a wide range of local government issues. Information sources, in the form of case studies, best practices, reports, data, and training materials, come from throughout the region and beyond.

LOGIN also offers a calendar of events (conferences, seminars, training opportunities), updates on national legislation and its impact on local government, a library of research, articles, papers, reports, national and regional news of interest to local authorities, a message board and links to many other relevant sites.