



BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN THE STATE & THE PEOPLE

An Overview of UNDP's Recent and Current Interventions in
Public Administration and Local Governance
in ASIA PACIFIC

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DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE



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INTRODUCTION

This paper is part of a series of regional monographs prepared by the *Responsive Institutions Cluster* within the Democratic Governance Group (DGG), Bureau for Development Policy (BDP). The regional papers aim to capture the volume and nature of UNDP's recent and current work on public administration and local governance.

The five regional stock-takings were prepared on the basis of desk reviews of existing project documents, project briefs, UNDP websites, project databases of individual Country Offices, Regional Centres, the Democratic Governance Trust Fund (DGTTF) database and Atlas; complemented with additional inputs from the field. The monographs focus on UNDP's current and most recent interventions, and provide an overview of what UNDP is currently doing in these service lines. The purpose of these papers is not to evaluate the quality of the outputs or the outcome of UNDP's work in public administration and local governance in specific countries or regions. Such evaluations are undertaken by the UNDP Evaluation Office.

In addition to compiling information on all ongoing civil service reform, local governance and decentralization projects, the regional papers also include information on initiatives in other service lines that touch directly on the public administration at the national and sub-national levels, such as:

- Projects that support strategic policy-making at the centre of government;
- Institutional strengthening projects focused on specific agencies or ministries;
- Anti-corruption projects that include initiatives to address the accountability, transparency and integrity of the public administration and local governments;
- Institutional and capacity development projects, focusing on the public sector;
- Aid coordination and aid effectiveness initiatives that deal directly with budget policy and co-ordination;
- Projects that support E-government development and ICTs;
- Access to information projects essentially dealing with the supply of government information;
- Projects that support the streamlining of regulations and administrative procedures; and
- Initiatives that address gender policies in public administration and local governments.

The five regional monographs on public administration and local governance constitute one component of a broader corporate initiative aimed at providing direction and support to meet the increasing demand from the field in these two service lines. The relevance and impact of our work in public administration and local governance will not only be of critical importance for the achievement of the MDGs, it is also central to building and sustaining peaceful, inclusive and tolerant societies, and communities.

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OVERVIEW OF MAIN CHALLENGES

The Asia Pacific region is characterized by great diversity in terms of social, economic and cultural conditions, natural resources, institutional capacity, geography, and levels of human development. Of the 49 LDCs worldwide, 15 are in the Asia Pacific region, as are the majority of the world's poor (61%). Per capita GDP shows enormous variation. The region also displays a wide variety of political systems, ranging from fully established democracies, to political systems in transition, and more authoritarian states that show little prospects of democratic reform. Several countries are emerging from, or are still facing, domestic security issues. Systems of public administration and local governance (PA&LG) also differ across the region.

The region remains the fastest growing in the world, sustaining, overall, high annual growth rates and declining poverty figures. The more established public administrations in some of the high-performing countries have played a vital role in these developments. Historically, the Asian “tiger” economies steered development from the top down, through their national public administration systems¹. Today also, centralized bureaucracies are delivering many economic rights and achieving notable reductions in poverty. The achievement of the MDGs continues to depend, for most countries, on the quality of service delivery, the development of human resources and the professionalism of their public service, still considered the main instrument of effective governance. Thus, enthusiasm for a Weberian styled bureaucracy remains strong in the region, explaining why, apart from some Pacific countries where New Public Management (NPM) has been tested, Asian policy-makers have not been eager to experiment with NPM, which is perceived as a threat to the established patterns of bureaucratic authority and state authority in general.

Asia and the Pacific are at a crossroads. There are now elected governments in all of South Asia, in most parts of the Pacific² and many South East Asian countries. Quite a number of countries organised presidential and/or legislative elections over the past years. This political change has been gradually affecting the functioning of the public administration and systems of local government in the region. Timor Leste recovered from the conflict-related reversal it suffered in 2006, and now seems to be moving towards a more stable, secure and democratic post-conflict stage. But, while many countries have some form of democratically elected government, the paths to competitive representation often remain obstructed by authoritarian forms of control, and constraints on political and civil rights, freedom of press and access to information.

In some countries, the organizational culture and professional values of the public administration have been partially responsible for slowing down democratic progress. Government officials and public servants are not yet sufficiently sensitised and equipped to meet the increasing demands for transparency and responsiveness that come with democratic development. Politicians still see the public administration as a political instrument to pilot and control governance change processes. Hence, while some public services are considered amongst the better performing administrations in the world, others are plagued by the same deficiencies found in most developing countries: low wages and unfavourable incentive systems, difficulty in keeping pace with technological advances, incursion of partisan political influence, slow change processes, and the prevailance of seniority over performance and innovation. The high performing administrations also seem to suffer from a predominance of the executive

¹ For example, in Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea.

² However, Fiji's Constitution was abrogated in April 2009 and a government installed by the President. A number of other governments have faced repeated no confidence motions.

branch of government, lack of accountability and transparency, weak compliance with international human rights standards, lack of access to judicial remedies and other dispute resolution mechanisms, limited state-society dialogue, insufficient inclusion of non-state actors in the policy debate, high levels of corruption, misallocation of scarce resources and disproportionately high transaction costs for the poor. For a good understanding of UNDP's role in this area, it is important to provide some detail on these challenges.

For some time now, corruption has not been considered a major impediment to growth and investment in Asia (the East Asia Paradox). Similarly, there is no compelling empirical evidence to support the view that corruption is an impediment for growth and investment in the Pacific either. The major impediments to investment in these countries result from the high transaction costs and limited markets resulting from the countries' small size, limited resources, and relative isolation – in other words, geography. On the other hand, corruption is now recognised as one of the key causes behind persisting inequalities, poor basic service delivery and high levels of poverty. Conflicts of interest and blurring lines between public office and private business are quite common. The OECD-ADB Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia Pacific³ launched in 2000 represents an important effort to tackle corruption in the region. The UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), signed in December 2003⁴, is increasingly receiving attention in the region, also with regard to strengthening integrity in public administration and local governments. There is a growing demand within the development spectrum to increase public confidence in the integrity of public (and private) officials and public decision-making. This explains UNDP's increasing focus on accountability and transparency issues, and on PAR at central and subnational levels. Seen from UNDP's mandate to reduce poverty and protect the most marginalised, it is essential to free the basic security and social services

of the State, such as policing, education, and health services, from the cost of corruption and its crippling effect on the poorest segments of society.

A large number of country offices in the region are engaging with some form of decentralization process, and the accompanying increase in the number of local elections. More countries than ever before have elected governments at one or more levels below national parliaments: Maldives is establishing elected Atoll and Island Councils; the Kingdom of Bhutan established formal district and village governments through the 2008 reforms, building on Dzongkhag and Geog committees; earlier this year, Cambodia moved ahead with elected councils at district and provincial level; Bangladesh already has democratic institutions at subnational levels, and has made a recent decision to re-establish Upazila parishads (councils) with – so far – elected chairs; Lao PDR is also exploring options for the reestablishment of elected councils. These are just some examples in addition to China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste and Viet Nam, which already have a tradition of different types of sub-national democracy.

Indonesia spearheaded one of the most ambitious decentralization processes in the world, moving from a highly centralised towards a devolved system, with a reduced role for provincial governments. Local democracy is taking root in the region, but overall, results remain mixed. While the stronger focus on local governance is gradually increasing the empowerment of local communities, there are fears that the pathologies that characterised the central bureaucracies are spreading to the periphery. It is also unclear whether greater democratization and participation at local levels has resulted in greater pro-poor policies and improved service delivery. Marginalised groups such as the indigenous peoples continue to face restricted access; while limited control over local finances and lack of clarity on the distribution of functions continues to hamper the performance of local governments. While political decentralization is clearly accelerating, fiscal decentralization moves at a slower pace. For many years, the focus has been on improving bureaucratic efficiency, hence the attention to administrative decentralization, while decisions over sectoral policy-making

³ UNDP is a member of the initiative's advisory board.

⁴ To date, 22 countries in the Asia-Pacific region have ratified/acceded to UNCAC, including 19 where UNDP has a field presence: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Iran, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. The other States Parties are: Australia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore. In addition, Bhutan, India, Japan, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, and Thailand are signatories.

often remain centralised. Intergovernmental transfers remain a challenge, and local level accountability still tends to be weakened by a top-down appointment system of civil servants, and the lack of local capacity to enforce such accountability.

While establishing democratic institutions is a first step, strengthening inclusiveness and accountability of sub-national governments is at the core of the effort to deepen democracy⁵. All these concerns are behind a joint UN initiative originated in the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok and now involving UNCDF, UNICEF and UNESCO. The initiative focused on improving decentralization for local service delivery, exploring options and strategies to ensure that resources and services to the poor are delivered in accordance with local poverty-reduction and MDG-oriented goals.

Urban governance also looms large in the development concerns of Asian and Pacific countries. The region includes most of the world's fastest growing large cities, involving massive rural-urban migration, with 33 cities expected to surpass the 5 million mark in the near future. Informal settlements have grown rapidly, with nearly half the urban population in Asia now living in slums. Thus, urban governance remains a key priority for policy-makers, city administrators and mayors. Although it is easier to prevent the problems deriving from megacities than to remedy them after they have surfaced in their most severe form (as in Jakarta and Manila), improvements in urban governance and resolute action by all levels of government are essential to prevent those problems from becoming even worse.

The Pacific Islands face a particular set of challenges, with their small populations scattered over many small islands over a vast ocean, featuring urbanization and migration from rural areas and outer small island to the main islands, perceived inadequacy of governance standards, poor access to services and opportunities due to long distances and remoteness, and poor qual-

ity of service delivery. Limited private investment and employment add additional strains on an already stretched public service, many of which went through severe downsizing in the 1990s and early 2000⁶. Even though these countries have established various accountability institutions, they are considered to be generally ineffective. Local governments and civil society organizations in the Pacific face major capacity constraints and challenges. Diseconomies of scale limit how far decentralisation can go; poor transportation and communication, as well as disincentives for government employees to work in remote areas add to the challenge. Particular to the Pacific is the co-existence – but also competition – between traditional leadership systems and imported forms of governance⁷.

One of the main tokens of a changing public sector is the increased focus of UNDP country offices (and regional centres) on access to information, communication for empowerment and E-governance initiatives. These developments hold the promise of more efficient government, facilitating the delivery of services and information, addressing transaction delays and costs, fostering greater accountability and transparency, enabling greater citizen participation in decision-making processes, and streamlining administration. Access to information and freedom of expression are basic human rights that are considered prerequisites for ensuring voice and participation and thus a key weapon in the fight against poverty and corruption. But, while many constitutions in the region guarantee the right to free speech, assembly and information, the denial of these rights remains widespread.

Conflicts persist in the region and have regional impact, due to the displacement of people across borders. Support to the centre of government is one of the

⁵ Bangladesh has just withdrawn a bill giving members of the national parliament more power vis-à-vis local governments but in most countries, members of the national parliament remain closely involved in local development. In some cases this is an advantage, in others it can undermine local democracy. When Thailand shifted to direct election of mayors and chairs of councils in 2004 and 2005 – essentially a more 'presidentialist' system of local governance – stronger lines of accountability to the electorate were established but the checks-and-balance were often weakened.

⁶ In the Cook Islands, public sector employment was reduced by 57% over 1996-1998, in Solomon Islands the payroll was reduced by 9% between 1998-2000, in Vanuatu 10% of the Government workforce was dismissed in 1996, and even in tiny Niue the public service was slashed by 50% in 1995.

⁷ For e.g., in the Solomon Islands, after the decline in government services between 2000 and 2003, many communities turned to traditional leaders and indigenous modes of organization to carry on with a wide range of activities from local courts to support for teachers and health workers. In the context of the crisis of the state, the fragility and uncertainty of government at the local level created a situation where once-marginalized traditional leaders emerged as increasingly important political actors. For further information, see: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN022609.pdf>.

key areas of support in post-conflict societies, as well as in the new and restored democracies that need to adapt to the changing relationships between the public service and the other democratic institutions. Among the post-conflict countries, public administration has been high on UNDP's agenda in Timor Leste and Aceh and initially also in Afghanistan. In addition to these peacebuilding and post-war contexts, local governance and basic service delivery is also important in conflict affected areas in a number of countries, such as Thailand, Pakistan and the Philippines. In many cases, including Aceh (Indonesia), the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh) and Bougainville (Papua New Guinea), devolution has become an important part of peace agreements. The proper functioning of local governments in delivering services can, in turn, contribute to the process of peacebuilding and reconciliation. However, strengthening local governments to become part of the solution for recovery requires understanding the uniqueness and complexity of each crisis, and how it manifests itself at the national and local levels⁸.

The situation of women in Asia is improving, yet various kinds of gender discrimination and traditional stereotyping still prevent women from exercising their basic rights, particularly in South Asia. 70% of the poor living on less than US\$ 1 a day are women. Only 7% of the arable land in Asia is owned by women. In the labour sector, attitudes are gradually changing, and the proportion of women in paid employment and appointed to the public administration and other governing institutions is increasing. But, despite positive trends in several countries, the governance systems, and the public administration that is part of it, are still largely male dominated⁹. Tokenism and some strong women leadership in the region blur the reality of gender discrimination and insufficient attention to the attainment of Goal 3 of the MDGs.

In several countries, there is a high level of involvement of non-governmental actors in the management of state affairs and the delivery of services. Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines are examples of countries that rely heavily on civil society interventions, either in policy debates or in the delivery of services. But, in other countries non-state actors are still eyed with suspicion by a bureaucracy that has difficulty interacting with civil society.

Within this challenging environment, UNDP has remained involved in PA&LG, in response to national demand. There is no lack of demand or need for public administration interventions in the Pacific – in fact, when counting all donor contributions, there has been more PA funding per capita in the Pacific region than in South Asia or East and Southeast Asia. But, due to heavy involvement of other actors such as the ADB, the WB, the EU, Australia and New Zealand, UNDP is not a key player in this sector in the Pacific. Increasing involvement of the IFIs in the PAR arena is also witnessed in the other Asian sub-regions, where both the ADB and the World Bank are providing major loans for PAR activities¹⁰. As a result, UNDP's activities are sometimes overshadowed by the increasing levels of funding made available by the IFIs and some bilateral agencies¹¹. Nevertheless, in several countries where UNDP had previously pulled out of PAR, governments have made requests for renewed UNDP support in this area¹². Local governance remains an important area of support, with UNDP increasingly supporting a UN-wide approach aimed at improving sub-national governance and delivery of basic services necessary to achieve the MDGs. In addition, increased support is being provided to improve the inclusiveness and accountability of democratic institutions and the portfolio has, overall, a very strong focus on peacebuilding¹³ and post-crisis recovery – both from natural and man-made disasters.

⁸ In June 2009, UNDP and UNESCAP jointly hosted a two day technical seminar in Bangkok, Thailand, on local governance and peacebuilding, with the participation of representatives of ten countries in the region. The report is available at: <http://regionalcentrebangkok.undp.or.th/practices/governance/decentralization/conflict.html>.

⁹ Representation of women in local government is as low as 2-4% in some countries, but encouraging developments have taken place in others (for example Cambodia and Mongolia). In some countries – like Thailand – women compete quite successfully at provincial level but are largely excluded from formal political life in villages and small towns; in Mongolia, the pattern is exactly the opposite.

¹⁰ For example, the ADB has loaned US\$ 45 million to Viet Nam and US\$ 35 million to Nepal for their PAR reform programmes, and in Thailand, the government authorized the use of US\$ 100 million of a US\$ 400 million Programmatic Structural Adjustment Loan from the World Bank to support the public sector reform programme.

¹¹ Such as DFID in Bangladesh and Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific and in Timor Leste.

¹² For e.g. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Mongolia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, with Bangladesh now implementing one of the largest public administration reform projects in the region.

¹³ Some of the largest programmes are in the region (e.g. Nepal and Afghanistan).

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Regional initiatives are designed to complement ongoing national programmes, address regional challenges, and advance corporate priorities at the regional level. Both the “Asia Regional Governance Programme (ARGP)” and the “Pacific Governance Programme” are part of the regional cooperation framework, and build on previous initiatives such as the “PARAGON Regional Governance Programme”, the “Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI)”, and the “Governance in the Pacific Programme”. The current ARGP does not explicitly address public administration and local governance as key regional challenges, but it does undertake regional advocacy on integrity, accountability and transparency, and supports the implementation of the United Nations’ Convention Against Corruption. This includes an important element of public administration reform, involving the development of capacities of public institutions and oversight bodies. E-governance and access to information also figure high on the regional agenda.

The ARGP is essentially an umbrella programme, within which interesting initiatives have been developed that are having an incremental impact in the way country offices and governments in the region address

democratic governance challenges. The “Capacity Development for Aid Effectiveness”, “Improving Local Service Delivery for the MDGs”, and “Integrity in Action” initiatives all emanated from the ARGP, which provided staff time and seed funds.

A separate governance programme is currently being implemented in the Pacific Islands. Taking the Pacific Plan as its platform for action, UNDP’s “Governance in the Pacific (GovPac) Project” (2008-2011) aims to help build resilient communities in the Pacific by developing their capacity for good governance and the promotion of human rights. The project focuses on strengthening parliaments and representative institutions, accountability and anti-corruption, local governance, civil society, and human rights. Some of the key objectives include: (i) improving public sector and community capacity and commitment to reduce corruption; (ii) promoting ratification and implementation of the UNCAC; and (iii) developing the capacity of key public institutions such as audit and ombudsman offices, anti-corruption institutions and human rights commissions. Access to information is also an important component of the regional programme strategy.

MAIN AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Public Administration & Civil Service Reform

Filling the capacity gaps in fragile environments remains a challenge. The hiring of international consultants has long been seen as the most obvious solution for the delivery of capacity. Asia-Pacific has been an important testing ground for capacity development initiatives in post-conflict environments, starting with the very comprehensive “Capacity-Building for Public Sector Management” programme that was developed by UNDP in **Timor Leste** in 2001. Support in this area has continued and today UNDP still has a “Support to Civil Service Reform ” project in Timor (US\$ 7 million) supported by UNDP, Ireland, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, NORAD and USAID. The project is implemented through the newly-established Civil Service Commission¹⁴. The project design addressed both immediate capacity needs and longer-term sustainable capacity development for civil service management. But with the establishment of an AUD\$ 76 million AusAID funded Public Sector Capacity Development Programme (PSCDP) it has been necessary for UNDP to refocus the project to provide strategic support to the civil service commission and ensures complementarity to the PSCDP. This support has concentrated on the implementation of a personnel management information system and its integration with the Ministry of Finance’s payroll processing system. Ministries have been supported in the development of their medium-term (strategic) plans which have included the development of capacity development plans and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These developments allow the Ministries to better identify and link capacity-building programmes with their budgetary planning and to report on this progress.

In 2005, UNDP **Afghanistan** launched the “Civil Service Leadership Development Programme” (2005-2009, US\$ 9.4 million) a project implemented by the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission in collaboration with the Afghan Civil Service Institute (ACSI). Project outputs included support to strategic policy-making (and strategic development of the ACSI), design and delivery of training programme including the development of a leadership training database and support to the design and delivery of the new external development programme. The project also aimed to build the capacity of the ACSI. A more recent initiative is the DGTTF-funded “Public Administration Capacity Development Project through Coaching and Advisory Services in Afghanistan” (US\$ 100,000). The initial project aimed to support the deployment of an initial contingent of 5 coaches and advisors to provide on-the-job coaching to senior and middle level civil servants in selected line ministries based on a needs assessment, as well as assist in the development of the coaching methodology for the orientation of the coaches and advisors. The project adopted a fresh approach to providing coaching services based on a careful analysis of capacity development efforts undertaken in Afghanistan and building on lessons learned elsewhere. Building on the initial DGGTF project, the “Capacity for Afghan Civil Service” project (2007, US\$ 7.6 million) aimed to source additional coaching expertise from the region (mainly India) in the 5 areas already tackled under the previous DGTTF project: policy and strategy development, project management, financial management, procurement and human resource management. To this end, the project supported the establishment of a Capacity Development Secretariat¹⁵.

¹⁴ At an earlier stage, UNDP played a key role in helping the new government develop the first ever Civil Service Statute of the newly independent state.

¹⁵ The 2009 progress report points to some difficulties such as the ministries’ struggle to fully understand the coaching process, the project’s inability to respond rapidly to ad hoc requests for institutional development support (compared to other large donor projects

The largest civil service reform programme is the “Civil Service Change Management Programme” in **Bangladesh** (2008-2012, US\$ 5.5 million), implemented by the Ministry of Establishment in collaboration with the Bangladesh Public Service Commission, the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre and the Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Academy. The programme aims to support the gradual transformation of the Bangladesh civil service. It comprises three main components: (i) managing change in the civil service, (ii) capacity development of training institutions (iii) ethics and integrity in the civil service.

One of the most comprehensive public sector reform programmes is the GPAR programme in **Laos**, which started in 1997 and has now become a government-owned national programme with several provincial pilot GPAR projects, linked to the central GPAR. Over the years, UNDP has supported organizational development, civil service reform, and decentralization / re-centralization. The latest phase of the GPAR programme: “Support for Better Service Delivery” (2006-2010, US\$ 10.3 million) is implemented by the Public Administration and Civil Service Authority (PACSA) in the Prime Minister’s Office. Main donors are UNDP, UNCDF, SDC and Luxemburg. The project aims to strengthen capacities for strategic planning, management and monitoring of governance and public administration reforms for more effective, accountable and transparent delivery of services, with a particular focus on the provision of expanded and improved health, education, agriculture, and rural development services, identified as key priorities within the Lao Government’s 5-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2006-2010. The programme is implemented through a network of provincial GPAR projects (see local governance).

The “Building and Effective, Service-oriented and Transparent Administration – BEST” project (2008-2010, US\$ 155,000) in the **Maldives**, was developed as part of the former President’s “Roadmap for Democracy, Human Rights and Reform” that was issued in 2006, to prepare the country for democratic change. A new Civil Service Act has been approved by the Peo-

ple’s Majlis and an independent Civil Service Commission (CSC) has been created. To support these democratic developments, the project will support the establishment of a merit-based civil service that is representative of the Maldivian society and capable to operate, in a professional, responsive and accountable manner, within the new democratic environment¹⁶. These capacity-building support efforts will entail the development of systems and processes needed for the implementation of the new Civil Service Act; change management processes to gradually change the attitudes and behaviour of civil servants; awareness raising initiatives to improve understanding amongst civil servants and non-state actors on the role of the public administration and the civil service in a democratic environment and by supporting the development of a roadmap for the modernization of the public administration, to ensure its contribution towards more open, responsive and cost-effective government. The project is implemented by the newly established Public Service Commission. The project also supports the Governance Reform Unit in the President’s Office.

UNDP **China** focused on advanced leadership development to help senior leaders understanding the new concepts and goals of the new development paradigm and progress rapidly in achieving the MDGs. Training plans were prepared on leadership and management, curriculum developed, workshops on specific topics¹⁷ organised and knowledge networks and peer learning processes established. The “Innovations in the Public Sector for Good Governance” project (2007-2011, US\$ 1.7 million) highlights the link between public administration and governance. This project implemented by the State Commission for Public Sector Reform seeks for greater efficiency, transparency and innovation in the public sector. The project is a continuation of a very long partnership (since early 90’s) between UNDP and the Chinese Government in the area of public administration. The project focuses on people-centred

that were able to provide such assistance). In addition, towards the end of 2008, CIDA withdrew an important part of its funding.

¹⁶ The project will support the delivery of the following three key outputs: (i) systems and processes are in place to support implementation of the new Civil Service Act; (ii) civil servants, politicians and the general public understand the new role of the civil service in a democratic society; (iii) a strategy and institutional arrangements are in place for the modernization of the public administration.

¹⁷ Management of social affairs and state owned enterprises, balanced rural / urban development, regional development, public sector innovations, rule of law, NGOs, human resource development. The workshops involved over 1600 senior leaders.

government (including participation of civil society organizations), efficient and accountable government structures, capacity-building for good governance of the staff of the State Commission for Public Sector Reform (SCOPSR), responsive local governance (including a system of performance management and accountability at the local levels) and operationalizing the PSU (public service units) reform. The “Human Resource Capacity Development in the Northeast and Western Areas of China” project (2006-2009, US\$ 2.5 million) provided senior and middle-level government officials in the Northeast and Western Regions a clearer understanding of the role of modern government in providing beneficiary oriented public services and in promoting macro social and economic planning in a market oriented society.

UNDP **Viet Nam**’s “Assistance to the Implementation of the 2nd Phase of the PAR Master Programme” (2009-2012, US\$ 4.2 million) focuses on deepening the reform process of the public administration, and is linked to the Government Decision 53 to accelerate PAR and improve government efficiency and effectiveness. The resolution’s objectives are to identify major tasks of state administrative agencies at central and local levels in implementing the Resolution of the Party Central Committee to further build and improve a socialist state ruled by law; build a democratic, clean, strong and modernized administration; develop a contingent of qualified and capable cadres and civil servants; establish a system of state agencies operating effectively and efficiently and meeting the requirement of fast and sustainable development. UNDP’s contributions aim to: (i) strengthen PAR process management and policy development; (ii) assist in piloting and assessing public service delivery reforms; (iii) support local government reforms; and (iv) facilitate and enhance PAR communications/information systems.

Support to the Centre of Government & Strategic Policy-Making

Support to the centre of government includes all initiatives that deal with central policy-making, support to

the Council of Ministers or the President’s Office, the Secretary General of the Government or central planning agencies. In particular in the post-conflict countries, this has been a common request for support. In **Afghanistan**, UNDP has been supporting the Office of the President since 2006 with a project that provided support to the Chief of Staff (CoS) and the Office of Administrative Affairs of the President¹⁸ (US\$ 17 million). The project is a continuation of a previous DFID intervention. Despite past support from the international community the Office of the President remained in need of assistance in the area of physical infrastructure, information technology, administrative processes, staff capacity, organizational design and policy facilitation and decision-making procedures. A parallel project with the Office of the President Spokesman was launched in 2008 which aimed to strengthen state building through “Strategic Government Communication” (US\$ 3.2 million). The project, supported by UNDP and DFID helps to improve: (i) the communication system in the President’s Office through support to press conferences, visits at national and international levels; (ii) the quality of monitoring and screening the national and international media and the production of a daily press bulletin for the President; (iii) coordination between the Office of the President Spokesman with the media; and (iv) enhance the capacity of the office for better communication with the Afghan people (the latter also including training of staff of line ministries and the provincial administrations).

In **Timor Leste**, UNDP planned to continue support to the institutional strengthening of the Office of the President (2008-2010)¹⁹. The project aims to support political dialogue and to change the organizational culture of the Office. Three main outputs were agreed with the OoP: (i) creating and enabling institutional and organizational environment to support the operations and programmes of the President’s Office; (ii) systems and processes in place and staff trained to improve agenda management, coordination and commu-

¹⁸ The CO supports the President in his role as head of State whereas the OAA supports him in his role as head of the government. Policy formulation often takes place in an uncoordinated manner and with insufficient consultation with affected communities. An assessment of the policy and related decision-making processes was conducted by the National School of Government (UK).

¹⁹ Similar support had also been provided to the Office of the previous President.

nication; and (iii) enhanced policy analysis and advisory services to support the President's constitutional mandate. The plan was to collaborate closely with UNDP's SIGOB²⁰ project a regional project based in Paraguay which has over 15 years of experience in providing managerial assistance to executive offices in Latin America. Even though US\$ 4.1 million was budgeted, so far no funding has been forthcoming.

UNDP **Viet Nam** conducted in-depth analysis in 2008 and 2009 on the current state of public administration reform, with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders. The policy research aims to analyze trends in Viet Nam regarding the implementation of and options for specific public administration reform areas, thereby providing solid discussion input to the current policy debate. As the Ministry of Home Affairs prepares to review the implementation of the ten-year PAR Master Programme, the research provides up-to-date ideas and options for this review process. More importantly, through the identification of best practices, implementation issues and bottlenecks, it presents a series of policy options for the next stage of reform (from 2011 to 2020). The research will also be used to review the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy and for the drafting of the Socio-Economic Development Strategy for 2010-2020. As a direct outcome of this research process, UNDP has developed a Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) which aims to measure the standards of public administration and public services from the end-users' point of view. In 2009, the Public Administration Performance Index was piloted in three provinces in Viet Nam, with highly promising results. The next step will be to roll out the PAPI to cover a larger number of provinces in 2010, thus providing a good basis for comparing public administration in different provinces. It is expected that, from 2011, the survey will take place nationwide.

Local Governance & Decentralization

At the regional level, the UN Regional initiative on Local Infrastructure and Service Delivery for the MDGs

supports national partners in undertaking sector studies to analyze divisions of responsibilities, roles and functions between central and sub-national levels of government for selected basic social services (health, education and water and sanitation) and their delivery in both public and regulated private provision contexts. The studies identify key sectoral issues, compare best practices and propose recommendations on appropriate distribution of responsibilities between national and sub-national levels and sub-national financing arrangements for the sectors. It is a joint initiative of UNDP, UNCDF, UNICEF and UNESCO that started in 2007, and currently provides support in Cambodia, Mongolia, Philippines and India.

In **Afghanistan**, the "Sub-National Governance Programme (ASGP)" that works at national, provincial, district and municipal level adopted a three-pronged strategy for addressing the challenges identified in the area of sub-national governance: (i) strengthening policy design through support to the parliamentary sub-committee on sub-national governance and to central agencies; (ii) facilitation of change processes and support for capacity development in line with the government strategy; and (iii) giving citizens voice by supporting the development of representation and participation in sub-national governance. The project worked in close collaboration with the Afghan Capacity Development Facility. The ASGP had the flexibility to shift attention and resources where and when they were needed, and to gather feedback from all of its components to continuously modify the overall strategy so it remained relevant to the evolving direction and capacity of the government. Key implementing agencies included: the Directorate of Local Government and the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission. The programme established Pilot Regional Support and Facilitation teams (RSFT), and is active in 22 of the 34 provinces and 19 of the 177 municipalities. As a direct result of the collaboration between UNDP and the government, the Subnational Governance Policy Framework was approved by the Cabinet in 2010.

In **Bhutan**, the Local Governance Support Programme (2008-2013, US\$ 7.2 million) is a joint initiative that also involves UNCDF, Danida and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), and supports the transi-

²⁰ *Administrative Capacity for Democratic Governance Project.*

tion to constitutional democracy. Both the Constitution and the newly approved Local Government Act of Bhutan 2007 provide for further power and authority to be given to decentralized bodies and elected representatives at local level. The LGSP will contribute towards improved service delivery for poverty reduction and realization of the MDGs. Support will be provided to reach the following five strategic outputs: (i) effective and transparent financing mechanism for local government service delivery in place and well functioning; (ii) inclusive, efficient and accountable public expenditure management procedures for local government established and being used; (iii) effective national support/training mechanism for local government personnel and elected people in place; (iv) central governments policy, regulatory, support and supervision functions strengthened; and (v) effective models for integrated public service and information delivery at local levels piloted. The responsibility for implementation of the programme rests with the Local Development Division of the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC).

UNDP **Cambodia** has a long history of supporting decentralization and local development, starting with the CARERE project in 1991, providing support to the formation of Commune and Sangkat development committees and delivery for recovery through these institutions²¹. This was followed by CARERE 2 which supported the government's SEILA programme. Succeeding SEILA, the "Partnership for Local Governance (PLG)" (2001-2006), and the "Programme Support for Devolution and Deconcentration (PSDD)" (2007-2009, US\$ 34.8 million) are joint initiatives with other development partners through which UNDP provides support to the government's Devolution and Deconcentration (D&D) process. Both are examples of a very established structure for harmonized support with the UNDP managed multi-donor programme providing policy support and the capacity development assistance needed at provincial and local level to deliver basic services with block grants financed by government and – to a very large degree – WB/donor funding. Within the framework of the National Programme for Devolution & Deconcentration currently

being formulated by the Royal Government of Cambodia²², the development partners have committed themselves to a joint response as will be laid out in the partnership framework which is being developed. At present, UNDP manages the PSDD, which is implemented with DFID and SIDA as the main partners. The programme provides central level technical support to the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance and other ministries / departments pooled from within a capacity development facility, and provides support to the provincial, district governments as well as the elected Commune and Sangkat Councils (C/SCs). Through the programme, UNDP and partners provide financing for block grants to the C/SCs and is responsible for all sub-national technical assistance supporting also the delivery of local government services with grants from the Government, World Bank and other partners. In partnership with the EU, UNDP also implements a programme for "Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes in Cambodia" (2006-2011, US\$ 14.2 million), which supports the regional and national organization of the elected councils, including the League of Commune Councils and their engagement in policy development. This programme has also been engaged in the development of inter-commune models for service delivery. In partnership with UNICEF & GtZ and drawing on the joint agency regional initiative (see above), UNDP also provides support for development of sectoral decentralization policy options for health, education, water and social services. A parallel small UNCDF programme, "Innovations for Decentralization and Local Development" (2008-2010, US\$ 2 million), provides support for local public expenditure management (but unlike in other LDCs, UNCDF is not engaged in financing the fiscal transfer mechanisms).

Economic transformation in the region has led to a rapid explosion of urban areas and an increasing gap between urban and rural areas, problems with land ownership rights, lack of proper compensation in case of evictions, limited and uneven provision of public services (health, education, and social security). UNDP **China** has an ongoing project on rural governance (2006-2010, US\$ 5 million) to revitalise rural China

²¹ These development committees are the pillars for future democratically elected local governments.

²² The D&D reform is implemented by the National Committee to Manage D&D Reform (NCDD), formally the Seila task force secretariat.

through land policy reform and public service delivery. The project is implemented by CICETE, the Ministry of Land and Resources and the China Institute for Reform and Development. The project's focus is on: (i) policy research and pilots to clarify rural land property rights and establish clear, equitable and efficient mechanisms for registration, usage and transfer of those rights; (ii) research and pilots to improve rural governance and the provision of public goods; and (iii) knowledge sharing and policy debates. The project includes a computer-based Land Management Development Platform which uses ICT to disseminate information about the rural land registration system to raise farmers' awareness and understanding.

One of the most far-reaching decentralization processes was undertaken in **Indonesia**, at the end of the 90's. In that process, the role of the province was seriously diminished and districts and municipalities now report directly to the line ministries, by-passing the provincial government. UNDP has been supporting that process over the years through several projects, at central and local levels. UNDP's BRIDGE project (2005-2008, US\$ 4.5 million) sought to improve the delivery and quality of public services at schools and community health centres, as well as strengthen relations between citizens and the local government. This project supports both civil society (the demand side) and government (the supply side) in their roles and responsibilities for achieving the MDGs in targeted provinces and sectors (health and education). BRIDGE aims to enhance the capacity of local government officials through implementing good governance principles; improving public service through interactive governance, and strengthen public monitoring of the government through improved access to information. BRIDGE focused on clarifying and strengthening the position, roles and responsibilities of provincial governments through policy research and advocacy at national level, and establishing role models of effective, transparent and accountable provincial governance through capacity-building in selected pilot provinces. Access to information was an important part of the BRIDGE strategy to empower civil society and citizens through improved information services. In 2008, the "Provincial Governance Support Project" was launched (US\$ 5 million) to further support the countries efforts

to achieve clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the provincial government as facilitator and coordinator of regional development to achieve the MDGs. The project has two main components: the first supports policy development at the central level, and the second supports capacity development in pioneer provinces focusing on planning and budgeting (including participatory planning processes), monitoring of development outcomes and civil service reform (based on an in-depth assessment of the provincial administration). The project also aims to strengthen capacities to undertake capacity self-assessments and designing capacity development strategies and plans.

Local governance is an important element of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In **Indonesia**, the "Aceh Government Transformation Programme (AGTP)" was created to support the transfer of responsibilities and assets from the Agency for Rehabilitation and reconstruction in Aceh and Nias (BRR) to the Aceh local government, including the coordination of the transition and of the on-going programmes funded by the international community. Under the new autonomy framework, the provincial government will have the funds to invest in the on-going reconstruction and rehabilitation (including an unprecedented US\$ 1 billion in annual gas and oil revenues and central government funds). The AGTP (US\$ 14.5 million) addresses the urgent need to strengthen the provincial government's technical and administrative capacity, and supports capacity development of the provincial Training and Human Resource Agency. The principal contextual factors that helped the programme were the progress that had already been made in Indonesia on decentralization and the autonomous status of districts in Indonesia, effectively since 2001. This framework enabled policy decision-making as well as public administration to be executed at the district level across 26 functional areas including health and education. These changes to the regulatory framework enabled participatory decision-making in running public schools and community health centres, which would not have been possible without devolution of power to the districts.

Within the framework of the "Governance and Public Administration Reform (GPAR)" programme, attached to the prime Minister's Office, UNDP **Laos** has provided support to the decentralization process through a

series of provincial projects which aim to strengthen provincial ownership and management of the public administration reform agenda and to inform both national policy-making and other provincial public administration reform initiatives. GPAR Luang Prabang was the first provincial pilot to start. The second phase (2005-2009, US\$ 3 million) is currently ongoing (UNDP and SIDA). The project focuses on decentralised planning and expenditure management, improved delivery of key social services, creating an enabling environment for provincial business development, strengthened oversight over and coordination of public services by the Office of the Governor, and the creation of a GPAR resource centre for policy-relevant information²³. GPAR Xieng Khuang (2005-2009, US\$ 2 million) aims to contribute to poverty reduction and equitable growth in the province. The project focuses on information management, participatory planning at district and village levels, promotion of economic development, organizational development, human resource management and financial management. A capacity development strategy is applied on a pilot basis in the agricultural sector. GPAR Saravane is a provincial project that is implemented in collaboration with UNCDF, with co-funding from the EU (total budget is US\$ 3.1 million). The project focuses on improved service delivery through the piloting of district development funds and improved financing and financial management of local public service provision. The project also aims to rationalise the provincial and district administration on the basis of clearly defined mandates. The financial procedures developed and piloted in Saravane have been scaled up in other provinces. A one-door service centre was established in the Office of the Governor and a report card system was also introduced. GPAR Sekong targets improved service delivery and information management and participatory monitoring in a province inhabited by a majority of ethnic populations. All experiences of the provincial GPAR projects are fed back to the central GPAR project to inform policy-

making on public administration, local governance and poverty reduction. UNDP (with support from the RCB and activities funded from the DGTTF) has also advised the government on options for re-establishing elected local governments.

In **Maldives**, UNDP has provided advice to the government on the establishment of elected local governments, supporting the 2009 election of Island Councils and Atoll Councils.

The "Local Governance Support Programme" in **Mongolia** (2007-2011, US\$ 1.8 million) is designed to demonstrate local capacity to initiate and manage development project for the benefit of people, at the same to influence the central policy for fiscal decentralization. The project, implemented by the Cabinet Secretariat provides block grants to pilot aimags (provinces) to implement projects aimed at improving the capacity to deliver local services and contributing to local development. The projects are selected through transparent and inclusive processes, allowing citizens the voice over priorities. Thus the thrust of the grant is to promote good governance processes through providing incentives to local governments. Despite the insignificant size of grants compared with local budgets, the pilot has generated a very positive attitudinal change in local administrators, that they are increasingly appreciative of the benefits of consultations with citizens and willing to provide local cost-sharing to fund these initiatives. The central government is considering options for replicating these lessons in the mainstream budgeting cycle and allocation of budgets for capital investments in local areas and requested UNDP to provide soft-assistance in this area. Major amendments in the Public Sector Management and Finance Law, introduced in 2002 to tighten financial management at all levels are expected to take place with provisions returning administrative and fiscal autonomy to local governments.

In **Nepal**, UNDP, UNCDF, UNICEF and UNVs have established a Joint Programme, entitled "Support for the Local Governance and Community Development Programme – LGCDP" (2008-2011, US\$ 53.8 million). The programme aims to support local governance and community-led development in Nepal, and contributes towards poverty reduction through improved and more

²³ A Citizen One Door service was opened in 2008 in Luang Prabang central district. A Business facilitation centre was opened and registration period was reduced from 217 days. Job descriptions in the health and education sector were introduced in all 11 districts, mobile health clinics were operational in 5 districts, Service delivery Information Boards in the 11 districts have helped increase citizen's knowledge to access key services and facilitate more participation in public life, and a Service Delivery Fund helped to provide clean water supply in 16 needy communities.

inclusive local governance and service delivery. LGCDP consists of three main components: (i) enhancement of citizen and community "voice" and engagement with local governments through increased community participation in service delivery; (ii) strengthening the capacity of local governments and line departments to respond effectively to local needs and priorities; including increased fiscal transfers, supply- and demand-driven capacity development, fine-tuning local service delivery processes and public expenditure/financial management; and (iii) support, at the national-level, to strengthening policy processes (such as sector devolution) and developing the capacity of national-level institutions to enhance local governance and strengthen local governments. The programme is being implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Local Development and the Ministry of Finance, and is administered by UNDP's Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office (MDTF Office) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In the Pacific, UNDP is supporting the capacity development of local governments in a number of countries, namely: **Kiribati**, **Solomon Islands**, **Tuvalu**, and **Vanuatu**. In the **Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)**, UNDP supports capacity-building at the sub-national level by conducting legislative needs assessments (LNAs) for each of the four constituent states. The LNAs help state legislatures to identify critical gaps at their sub-national level, and therefore help the state congressmen to define their legislative priorities. In the **Solomon Islands**, under the initial phase of the "Provincial Government Strengthening Project (PGSP: 2008-2011), UNDP in partnership with UNCDF and other development partners (EU, RAMSI, AUSAID) are helping to develop the capacity of the provincial government and public administration to improve service delivery and promote local development. The first phase of the project focuses on developing basic capacity for public expenditure management (PEM) in the 9 provinces to enable provincial authorities to programme, produce and execute credible budgets through appropriate participatory and transparent processes. To provide incentives for the adoption of improved governance and administrative practices, the PGSP will set up a provincial capacity development fund as a provincial budget support for discretionary

development spending. Capacity development activities will also be implemented to develop the capacity of the Ministries of Provincial Government and Rural Development, Finance and Treasury, to effectively support and supervise the performance of provincial governments.

In **Tuvalu**, under Phase 2 of the current "Supporting Local Governance for Outer Island Development" project (SLG II: 2009-2012), UNDP is assisting the government with (i) strengthening the enabling environment for local governance in Tuvalu, by enhancing participatory planning-budgeting and advocating for amendments to the *Falekaupule Act*; (ii) building institutional and human capacity by addressing unfavourable incentives and strengthening sustainable institutional and human capacity at the local and national level; (iii) increasing community participation and gender equality, with a focus on increasing the participation of women and youth in planning and budgeting at the island level; and (iv) strengthening partnerships with traditional authorities (*Falekaupules*), local government (*Kaupules*), government ministries, civil society and development partners.

In **Vanuatu** UNDP's "Building Resilient Communities Towards Effective Governance" project is: (i) supporting local participation in decision making, involving traditional leaders/chiefs, church, women, youth, and indigenous communities, amongst others; (ii) Increasing access to ICT by communities in the provinces of Shefa and Penama to enable civil society, particularly the poor, women, youth and disadvantaged to participate fully in discussions and actions that affect their lives, promote better understanding, peace and stability; (iii) supporting the government improve coordination and central-provincial-community linkages for better service delivery to populations including marginalised rural women and those in greatest hardship particularly isolated rural/island communities; (iv) establishing inclusive governance systems, creating accountability to communities for performance by government, with particular focus on the provision of essential services, active engagement and participation of women and representative women's groups with particular focus on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the two provinces. These initiatives are complemented by an on-going initiative at the regional level

aimed at examining the interaction of local governments with customary governance system in Pacific island countries. In almost all cases the emphasis towards enhancing the participation of traditional authorities in local government processes underscore the continuing important role and influence of customary governance arrangement at the local level.

UNDP **Pakistan** provided “Assistance to Governance Reforms and Practices in Balochistan”. The project (2007-2009, US\$1 million) aimed to strengthen provincial and local government institutions for effective implementation of devolution and related reforms including an improvement in access to information for effective planning and implementation. Future interventions aim to replicate successful pilots such as Participatory Information Systems (PIS), District Management Information Centres (DMICs) and Balochistan Land Records Management Information System (BLRMIS), institutional development of Provincial IT and Social Welfare Departments at district level, and operational research.

UNDP has been part of the government decentralization process in **Papua New Guinea** since 1995. Several projects have been in place to support provincial treasury offices and other parts of government. The current “Provincial Capacity-building Project (PCaB)” (2008-2010, US\$ 3.8 million) is the result of these consultations. PCaB is the UNDP-supported component of the PNG Government’s overall Financial Management Improvement Programme (FMIP) and focuses on capacity-building in sub-national treasury functions. The three key outputs of PCaB II²⁴ are: (i) effective decentralization of financial management; (ii) enhanced accountability and transparency; (iii) improved financial management capacity. The project spans two years, with a possible extension of two more (subject to the

outcome of the mid-term review), and is supported by UNDP, AUSAID and the PNG Government.

The “Local Governance Programme” in **Sri Lanka** was started in 2008 in response to a request from the government to support the elected local governments in Sri Lanka as well as to continue support for the deconcentrated arms. It has national coverage but a major focus on the Eastern Province where Provincial and Local Councils were re-elected after many years of conflict. It integrated support previously provided in individual projects on local governance, localization of MDGs, recovery and capacity development.

The “Local Governance Support Programme” in **Timor Leste** is a joint UNDP-UNCDF project (2007-2011, US\$ 7.7 million). The project aims to strengthen existing pilot local government assemblies and, depending on the government’s directives, expand the pilot project to additional districts. The programme will pilot Public Expenditure Management system (PEM) procedures in order to learn lessons from local planning, decision-making, service delivery and financial management of local budgets.

Despite the importance of urban areas (both as engines of development and pockets of increased poverty and crime) urban governance is not a common area for UNDP support; and is essentially the mandate of UN-HABITAT. There are some exceptions, such as the **Sri Lanka** project to “Support Implementation of the Sri Lankan Urbanisation Framework” (US\$ 286,000). This is a modest project that assists the government with the implementation of the Urbanisation framework (inception programme implementation plans, annual work plan and medium term implementation plan, support facility established, guidance and policy instruments developed, modules on participatory decision-making, municipal finance). In collaboration with the provincial councils, the project will also audit the current status of documents used in the urban governments, and undertake regular support and monitoring missions to assist in the consolidation of strategic MDG frameworks. The project is implemented in collaboration with UN-HABITAT. The second project is the “Support to Public Administration in Ho Chi Minh City” (2007-2010, US\$ 3.3 million), which builds the capacity of **Viet Nam’s** City People’s Committee in

²⁴ Main activities include: (i) supporting efforts to roll-out the IFMS at the national level and prepare sub-national financial managers for the planned introduction of IFMS; (ii) supporting the district treasury roll-out through training and capacity building initiatives; (iii) improving the quality and timeliness of financial reporting at the sub-national level; (iv) supporting effective treasury management systems incorporating more effective use of ICTs; (v) building sub-national capacity to implement the Public Finances (Management) Act and the Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Governments; (vi) improving strategic planning and coordination of treasury functions at sub-national levels; (vii) ensuring better delivery and dissemination of training and research on sub-national financial management.

planning and management and to help develop a new urban governance model. The project includes a capacity development programme for city civil servants, managers and planners, a socialisation model and related capacity-building, as well as the establishment of a city-wide management and geographical information system. In the area of civil service management, the project focuses on the establishment of a performance management system, guidelines for the conduct of civil servants and improving the selection, recruitment and promotion system.

UNDP **Viet Nam** also supports local governments' capacity development for socio-economic development planning and service delivery for MDG achievement through several initiatives. In Kon Tum province, one of the poorest provinces in Viet Nam with large ethnic minority populations, a joint UN programme (2007-2010, US\$ 5 million) is being implemented with UNFPA and UNICEF. The programme aims to redress the current top-down approach with little local consultation by building local capacities (province, district and commune level as well as for the members of the people's councils) for pro-poor planning and budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation, data collection and management; and decentralised investment; improved quality of health services, primary education, child protection, communication and behavioural change. Similar initiatives were implemented in Thua Thien Hue province²⁵, Quang Nam, Vinh Phuc and Tra Vinh provinces²⁶. These projects aim at capacity building on participatory mechanisms for gender-sensitive formulating and monitoring MDG-based development plans at provincial and sub-provincial levels. All these projects are part of an important strategy for the localisation and achievement of the MDGs. They constitute an important change from the previous practices by introducing and institutionalizing the participatory, transparent and evidence-based mechanisms for pro-poor planning and budgeting with more substantive roles of local people's councils in holding accountability of executive branches for the development results at local levels. Through the implementation of these projects, UNDP also played a key role in coordinating documenting

and communicating the lessons learned from UN- and donor-supported initiatives on local socio-economic development planning and service delivery for MDG achievement aiming at advocating for institutionalizing the best practices by the central government.

ART²⁷ has two major interventions in the region. In **Indonesia** ART aims at supporting the government's efforts towards an effective decentralization process, as well as those national policies and local practice in the field of regional and provincial development, as a means to contribute to achieving the MDGs and facilitating the coordination and effectiveness of international cooperation at the Provincial level. It enables all stakeholders to join their efforts and work towards achieving the MDGs through an area-based, or territorial, approach to governance and development. AGI has initiated its activities in two provinces: Gorontalo, in Sulawesi, and Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), in Flores. The project is closely coordinating its actions with the Provincial Governance Support Programme (PGSP), which aims at supporting policy improvement and development particularly Civil Service Reform and Law 32, and provides practical tools to strengthen the provincial governments' role. AGI also seeks to promote South-South cooperation, such as the current partnership established between the Gorontalo Provincial Government and the Southern Province of Galle in Sri Lanka. AGI will also facilitate Decentralized Cooperation partnerships between provincial governments in Indonesia and regional governments from Europe and other parts of the world. The National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) and the Ministry for Home Affairs (MoHA) are the main partners. Spain is the main donor.

Art Gold **Sri Lanka** (AGSL: 2006-2009, US\$ 2.3 million) was initiated in the aftermath of the Tsunami, not only to support the immediate recovery phase, but also to facilitate sustainable long-term development by reinforcing the ability of local actors to plan and manage territorial development open to international opportunities. AGSL supports the deconcentrated and devolved

²⁵ The "Sub-National Capacity Strengthening for Monitoring Socio-Economic Development Plan Implementation" project.

²⁶ The "Strengthening Local Government Capacities for Planning, Budgeting and Managing Public Resources" project.

²⁷ ART Gold (*Appui aux Reseaux Territoriaux et Thematiques*) is a joint initiative of UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, UNIFEM, UNOPS, ILO and UNHCR that seeks to support local governance and local development through a more concerted action of development partners at the decentralized level.

local government structures and intends to enhance the coordination between both systems. It works towards strengthening the capacity of local governments in strategic, participatory and needs-based development planning and the strengthening of existing coordination bodies. Through strategic interventions and partnerships, AGSL also helps to improve service delivery to the population. Main partners are the Ministry for Local Government and Provincial Councils and the National Planning Department (NPD). Main donor is Spain.

Accountability, Transparency & Integrity in Public Administration

Anti-corruption initiatives in the region have benefited from the ADB-OECD initiative, launched in 2000 and currently comprising membership of 28 countries in Asia Pacific. Member countries have jointly developed the Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific and work together towards its implementation. The Action Plan sets out the goals and standards for sustainable safeguards against corruption in the economic, political and social spheres of the countries in the region. UNDP/RCB is a member of the advisory board and participates in the 6-monthly meetings of the Steering Group. The initiative recently underwent an independent review to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the initiative, globally, regionally and at the country level to determine whether or not the initiative and its associated Action Plan have proven effective in assisting members in the fight against corruption in the Asia-Pacific region. The review also identified options for sustaining regional anti-corruption activities in the future, taking into consideration the lessons learned, the changing anti-corruption landscape and needs of the member countries. A small group of members of the Steering Group and the advisory board has been established to follow-up on the recommendations of this independent review in 2010.

The UNDP Pacific Centre in Suva has prioritised support to the ratification and implementation of UNCAC in

2009. The Pacific Centre, in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), held a Consultation for Melanesian Countries on UNCAC in March 2009, which brought together delegations from PNG, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The Centre also facilitated a national workshop on “Accountability, UNCAC and FOI” in Palau, at which the government pledged its commitment to undertaking a comprehensive UNCAC gap analysis. Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have indicated their commitment to accede to UNCAC. The Pacific Centre also provided technical assistance to facilitate the development of the PNG National Anti-Corruption Strategy Framework which was launched by the government on 9 December 2009. The Pacific Centre in Suva has also been working with the Ombudsman institutions in the sub-region to advance public sector accountability and transparency. In May 2008, the Centre co-sponsored with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Commonwealth Ombudsman of Australia a regional workshop to discuss the findings of in-country assessments conducted by the Commonwealth Ombudsman in 2007-2008 and identify and formulate options for a regional ombudsman support mechanisms (in line with the Pacific Plan which promotes exploration of regional support initiative for national accountability institutions). The Centre also commissioned a study on Accountability Frameworks and Institutions in the region, soon to be finalized. The Centre has also done important advocacy work on Freedom of Information Laws (see below for more), linked to both the Centre’s media and UNCAC implementation work. Much of these efforts will have a direct impact on public administration and local governance.

UNDP’s largest anti-corruption project is the “Accountability and Transparency (ACT)” project in **Afghanistan** (US\$ 22.3 million) of which about half the funds have been allocated (with support from UNDP, Italy, DFID and Norway). The project is located at the newly created High Office of oversight (HOO) and partnerships established with the Control and Audit Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior and the civil society. The ACT project takes the Afghan national development Strategy, the national anti-corruption strategy and the UNCAC as the starting

points²⁸. Unclear political will and lack of clarity on institutional functions of various agencies have hampered the project. The project gradually started to engage more with partners at central and sub-national level.

In January 2006, UNDP **Bangladesh** initiated a two-year “Anti Corruption Advocacy Campaign”, funded by DANIDA, which aimed at fostering actions for integrity by promoting open discussion on corruption and integrity, and disseminating information on what individuals, groups and organizations can do to curb corruption. The project used structured group discussions and logical framework approaches, supplemented by questionnaires, informal discussions, and semi-structured interviews with civil servants, members of parliament, youth, businesses, media, religious leaders, and donors. An interesting finding was that there were only minor differences in the perception of integrity and corruption between the seven groups.

Since 2006, UNDP **Bhutan** has been supporting the National Anti-Corruption Commission with institutional and human capacity-building. During the initial phase of the project (2006-2007) UNDP supported the drafting of the Anti-Corruption Bill, the development of an Anti-Corruption Master Plan, Strategy paper and Action Plan, identification of specific problems, development of rules and procedures for operationalizing the Bill and the Commission, and enhancement of its human and institutional capacity and awareness raising amongst the population.

UNDP **Mongolia** has combined institutional support to the central Anti-Corruption Agency with sectoral support in target areas. The current projects build on a long-standing collaboration between UNDP and the government in the area of anti-corruption. Since 2008, UNDP supports the newly established Independent Authority Against Corruption, through the “Support to Integrity and Transparency Efforts in Mongolia” project (US\$ 750,000). The central project addresses: (i) sup-

port to UNCAC implementation and MDG9²⁹ reporting and monitoring; (ii) strengthening of functional capacities of the IAAC with a special focus on the investigative function and respect for human rights and due process; (iii) sectoral initiatives; and (iv) strengthening accountability and transparency in local governance. The project is implemented in close collaboration with the Civil Service Council. A flagship initiative at sector level is the “Strengthening Ethics and Integrity for Good governance in the Health Sector” project. Initially a DGTTF supported initiative, the success of the project led to an extension and replication of a similar initiative in the State Specialised Inspection Agency. The project aims to achieve two main outputs: (i) to increase transparency and accountability of the MOH and selected health organizations by identifying current constraints and bottleneck, and develop mechanisms to address them; and (ii) to promote ethics and integrity of staff through open discussions, training, code of conduct and complaints handling³⁰. The (DGTTF) project at the State Inspection Agency (US\$ 300,000) supports a unique inspection body that combines under one single agency the inspection arms of the line ministries. Low public perception of the SSIA integrity caused the government to initiate a project similar to the one in the health sector (including complaints procedures, procurement, public communication, introduction of ICTs in inspection work), but targeting a large inspection body.

UNDP **Sri Lanka** also continues to provide support to the central anti-corruption agency³¹. The latest project,

²⁸ The project has four main components: (i) improved institutional and policy environment to support the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy; (ii) enhanced accountability, transparency and integrity in key government institutions; (iii) enhanced capacity of civil society and media; and (iv) increased awareness and understanding amongst civil servants and the public. Output 2 would be achieved through the Accountability and Transparency Grants facility.

²⁹ In 2005, the parliament adopted an MDG 9 on Fostering Democratic Governance and Strengthening Human Rights, which included a target on zero tolerance for corruption.

³⁰ Starting with a survey and focus group discussions on how corruption was perceived in the ministry, both by staff and clients, the project was able to develop and adopt a set of benchmarks of transparency and accountability requirements. Bureaucratic procedures and practices were reviewed, training manuals and guidebooks on ethics, conflict of interest and code of conduct were designed and ethics issues were introduced in the performance reviews, and the operations of the Ethics Committee of the ministry were rendered more effective through intensive training of its members. Five out of seven health training centres have adopted the new curriculum on medical ethics. Access to information was improved, and procedures for complaints handling were streamlined, including provisions on whistleblower protection. 20 pilot hospitals and health centres volunteered to implement project components at the service delivery level, and apply the new benchmarks for human resource and financial management, with reported improvements as to how citizens were received and treated.

³¹ Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption – CIABOC.

“Support Efforts and Actions against Corruption (SEAC)” also supports UNCAC implementation. The project will conduct a legal and institutional gap analysis, review of legislation, strengthening operational capacity of the CIABOC, collaboration with the Civil service Clean Hands Initiative³², monitoring of UNCAC implementation and the piloting of integrity initiatives in selected organizations.

The “Integrity and Transparency in Action (INTACT)” project in the **Maldives** supports UNCAC implementation, a revision of the anti-corruption law, awareness-raising and institutional strengthening of the Anti-Corruption Board. The project will also provide support to the future Ombudsman office that is to replace the Public Complaints Bureau. The project supports the development of a conducive environment for citizens to exercise their right to information, based on the new Access to Information Law. Support to the Ombudsman is also the main objective of the “Strengthening Public Grievances Redress Mechanisms” initiative in **Pakistan** (2008-2010, US\$ 1.6 million – including US\$ 150,000 from DGTTF). The project supports the Federal Ombudsman’s Office as part of the larger SIGNS³³ framework which identified several entry points for the national ATI process³⁴, and aims to improve the outreach and quality of redress mechanisms, better interaction between the Ombudsman and other institutions, and improved coordination on transparency initiatives in service delivery.

In line with the new 2007 Constitution that calls for the State to establish mechanisms for public scrutiny and for making the process of governance transparent, UNDP **Thailand** supports accountability and transparency initiatives at the local level. The “Enhancing Democratic Governance and Accountability through Gender Sensitive Engagement of Local Communities (ENGAGE)” project (US\$ 300,000) supported by the

DGTTF assisted in the development of tools to support transparency and accountability in local governance, and the establishment of voluntary networks to pilot these tools at the local level.

Public Financial Management

UNDP has reduced its support to this sector, which has mainly been taken over by the WB and ADB. There are however some small initiatives in support of sound financial management. In the **Philippines**, UNDP supports the “Procurement Transparency and Efficiency to Achieve the MDGs” project (2009-2010, US\$ 150,000) implemented by the League of Cities of the Philippines, which aims to: (i) establish a participatory procurement system, particularly at the urban level; (ii) assess and enhance procurement capacity of 10 selected city governments, specifically in MDG sensitive areas; and (iii) involve civil society organizations in the review and procurement monitoring process.

See also the **PNG** project on sub-national financial management capacity building in the [Local Governance & Decentralization](#) sub-section.

Aid Effectiveness

In 2008, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), UK Department for International Development (DFID), European Commission (EC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, UNDP and the World Bank collaborated to support partner countries in improving the effectiveness of their aid. Together with the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Development Cooperation and Development (OECD DAC), they supported four sub-regional Asia-Pacific consultations for the “Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness”. These consultations brought together country delegations from thirty-eight countries including senior officials from central policy ministries (finance, planning and foreign affairs), as well as line ministries (education, health, agriculture and forestry), representatives from civil society organizations, and

³² The “Clean Hands Initiative” is an alliance of Sri Lankan Public Sector Officers against Corruption, launched in 2007. Its members commit to eliminate corruption in the Public Service, prevent waste and raise the standards of service.

³³ “Strengthening Integrity and Governance through Support to National Systems”.

³⁴ In addition to carrying out the traditional ombudsman function of looking into complaints, the PNG Ombudsman also has the task of enforcing the Leadership Code. This is one unique feature of the PNG Ombudsman Commission that separates it from other like organizations in other countries.

country-level donor officials. As a result of these joint efforts and strong demand from the country level, ADB, Government of Japan, the OECD DAC, UNDP and the World Bank have launched the Capacity Development for Development Effectiveness (CDDE) initiative. The initiative focuses on three key results: (i) strengthen national aid policies and related action plans; (ii) establishment of south-south networks to deliver improvements in national capacities for aid effectiveness; and (iii) countries in the region contribute to the institutional strengthening of the global aid architecture. The initiative includes CoP meetings, peer-to-peer support mechanisms, a help desk to easily access research, guidance and expertise and the provision of capacity assessment tools and methodologies applied to the aid effectiveness agenda, and an aid effectiveness portal³⁵.

In **Afghanistan**, “Making Budgets and Aid Work” (2007-2012, US\$ 7.5 million) supports the unified national budget process and the nationally-led aid coordination process linked to priorities identified in the Afghan National development Strategy. The project assists in strengthening budget formulation and execution processes, reforms in budget monitoring and reporting, improving alignment and effectiveness of aid, and building sustainable institutional capacity within the Ministry of Finance and line ministries.

Cambodia’s “Enhancement of Aid Effectiveness to Reduce Poverty and Achieve the MDGs” (2006-2010, US\$ 4.2 million) is a 5-year multi-donor programme to support the implementation of RGC’s Strategic Framework for Development Cooperation Management. The programme is aimed at strengthening the government’s overall management capacity and enhancing the effectiveness of development resources targeted at reducing poverty and meeting the MDGs. The expected outcome of the multi-donor support programme is a nationally owned and government-led development cooperation management process. Key elements include: alignment of development cooperation activities with national priorities outlined in the National Strategic Development Plan, harmonization of donor practices and increased use of government systems and procedures. The programme aims at capac-

ity development of CDC/CRDB – as the focal point within the RGC on ODA mobilization and aid coordination functions – as well as the capacity development of line ministries and agencies to effectively manage external assistance.

UNDP **India** supports the Ministry of Finance through the “Development of Coordination and Decision-Support Systems on External Assistance” aid effectiveness project (US\$ 1.7 million). Annual external assistance to India is still US\$ 4.4 billion. UNDP **Pakistan** had a “Capacity Development for Aid Coordination” project (2005-2008) to support the Economic Affairs Division in its capacity as the national authority for coordination of development assistance. The project provided communication, database management and analysis support to the Earthquake reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority and to the two provinces most affected by the disaster. The team provided donor and sector profiles and analysis for government at central, provincial and district level, as well as providing project tracking information for the government and donor community. The project had two main components: (i) capacity enhancement measures (aid management training); and (ii) establishment of an information system/database (development assistance database³⁶).

The “Making Aid Work” project in **Nepal** (2009-2011, US\$ 1.2 million) attached to the Ministry of Finance, seeks to promote the more effective utilisation of aid by improving cross-ministry collaboration in implementing a National Action Plan on aid effectiveness, strengthening mechanisms for coordinating donors at macro and sector levels, and implementing a national aid information management system. The project³⁷ will help establish an Aid Effectiveness Secretariat to promote the successful operation of the Nepal Development Forum, the National Action Plan Secretariat and the Local Donors Meeting. It will finance capacity as-

³⁶ The lessons learned from the project indicate that adequate policies are needed to support the process in order to ensure that the system becomes an integral part of the broader aid coordination mechanism and related government business processes. Intensive communication with line ministries and development partners – before and during the deployment of the database is also needed

³⁷ The project has 4 main outputs: (i) a national foreign aid policy; (ii) national action plan for aid effectiveness; (iii) capacity of line ministries to engage in aid effectiveness is enhanced; and (iv) aid management platform designed including aid management database.

³⁵ www.aideffectiveness.org.

assessments and capacity development strategies for Ministry of Finance and the National Planning Commission as well as for several line ministries. High quality training will be provided for senior and mid-level staff as one component of a broader capacity development strategy. The Aid Information Management System will be linked to national planning and budgeting processes.

In **Papua New Guinea**, UNDP is implementing an aid effectiveness intervention as part of the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) in collaboration with the national Department of National Planning & Monitoring (US\$ 1.7 million, with US\$ 1 million representing contributions from NZAID). The aim of the intervention is to support the Government of Papua New Guinea in localising the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for action and strengthen aid effectiveness capacity in PNG. The latter includes aid management training, improved oversight through the implementation of an aid information management system and exposure to global knowledge on aid effectiveness.

Building on the existing political momentum across the Pacific sub-region and also responding to specific national demands in **Solomon Islands**, **Nauru** and **Tuvalu**, UNDP has commenced aid effectiveness-related interventions in those countries, focusing on policy tools to facilitate aid coordination and interface with national sustainable development strategies, as well as on aid monitoring and data management systems. It is expected that these interventions will support, at the country-level, the implementation of the Cairns Compact on development effectiveness agreed to by the Pacific Island leaders in 2009. Furthermore, in Nauru and Tuvalu, the newly established Joint UN offices provide a platform for UNDP to leverage the implementation of assistance in the area of aid effectiveness.

The UNDP Pacific Centre in Suva worked with country offices to review aid coordination projects and support the development of a strategic framework for UNDP's support to improved aid effectiveness in the Pacific. The Centre delivered a presentation on behalf of UN Agencies on "MDGs and Aid Effectiveness" at the annual Pacific Island Countries/Partners meeting convened by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and supported PIFS' participation in a regional meeting

in Cambodia to foster their exposure to global and regional aid architecture and best practices. During the year, the Centre nominated Samoa as a Pacific representative on the Steering Committee of the Capacity Development for Development Effectiveness (CDDE) Facility, a global forum on aid effectiveness. As an emerging priority from the 2009 Pacific Islands Leaders' Meeting, the Centre has supported the Cairns Compact on two main fronts: (i) distilling lessons learnt from the Africa Peer Review Mechanism to better shape the concept in the Pacific; and (ii) providing policy advice on the focus, alignment and preparation process of the 2010 MDG Tracking Report, particularly in the context of the 2010 MDG Review.

E-government, Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Afghanistan's "Information Management Systems Programme (AIMS)" (2004-2008, US\$ 10 million) was created to build information management (IM) capacity in government and establish different information management systems and services within appropriate government agencies.

E-governance initiatives supported by UNDP **Bangladesh** and implemented by the Prime Minister's Office, intend to involve marginalized people in getting services at the local level. These include E-agriculture, E-education, E-health, 'Quick Win' initiatives, implementation of Right to Information Act, ICT Policy, ICT Act, cyber security, PPP, industry development, which cover almost all Ministries of the Government of Bangladesh. UNDP Bangladesh's "Access to Information Programme" (2007-2009, US\$ 1.2 million) aims to identify, prioritize and mainstream ICT into the national development policies and to assist in the development of a national E-governance Vision and strategy that can harness digital opportunities for development in consultation with the stakeholders. The project provides advisory services for the identification and formulation of strategic partnership and resource mobilization and establishment of results and performance-based monitoring and evaluation framework for

projects that help to ensure sustainability and lasting acceptance of ICT solutions in public administration.

Also in **Bangladesh**, the “Assistance to SICT for Strengthening Planning Division, ERD & IMED” project (2005-2009, US\$ 2.3 million) aims to: (i) establish ICT systems in 3 key divisions of the government dealing with development projects (e.g. the Planning Division); (ii) enhance effectiveness and efficiency of work processes and procedures and integrate decision making and development efforts in these 3 divisions; and (iii) support the development of ICT infrastructure of the 3 divisions, development of E-government applications for information and knowledge sharing, development of ICT utilization capacity of officials of the three divisions through capacity-building/training initiatives.

Increasingly, ICTs are being used at the local level, as a means to support the local governance agenda and provide citizens with the necessary information to play their role as informed and responsible citizens. In 2008, UNDP **Bhutan** implemented a “Localisation of E-governance” project (US\$ 160,000) with the Ministry of Information and Planning. Within the critical changes that the country was undergoing, E-governance was seen as a potential help in furthering democratic participation. The project provided a standardised E-platform model for a Geog Administrative Office that was implemented in a selected Dzongkhag and two rural Geogs and one urban area, with staff trained to handle the ICT facilities. These E-services were piloted as an integral part of the One-Stop-Shop approach in a selected Dzongkhag. The project also helped develop a national replication plan on the local E-governance platform. The “Community Information Centres” project (2008-2010, US\$ 2.1 million) aims to ensure access to information by setting up 6 community information centres (CICs) in remote rural communities. CICs provide villagers with knowledge, relevant market information, public documents / forms and learning materials on a cost-recovery basis.

In the **Cook Islands**, the “E-government Initiative” (2006-2008, US\$ 255,000) supported the implementation of the Cook Islands Government National ICT Policy which included the gradual incorporation of ICT measures into the government’s basic infrastructure.

In **Iran**, UNDP has supported the Customs Administration (IRICA) in its efforts to streamline and simplify the customs clearance procedures (2005-2007). IRICA has been using UNCTAD’s ASYCUDA system for the computerisation of customs revenue collection and compilation of trade statistics since 1996. The need was felt to upgrade the old system to the new web-based application ASYCUDA WORLD. That implied training of staff in the use of the new system, structural, operational and procedural changes. The process implied pilot testing and national roll out. The project not only contributed to the creation of a paperless environment, the new system would also provide the government with easy access to statistical information (trade and revenue data) to support macro-economic and fiscal policy.

In **Mongolia**, the General Authority for State Registration (GASR) was recently set-up after merging three sets of registry functions – civic, business entity and real estate registration. The Civil Registration and Information Centre is a unit under the GASR, which initiated the effort to establish a national integrated database for civil registration. It received support from UNDP through the Republic of Korea funded “Poverty and MDGs Monitoring Project” (2007-2009) to connect 21 provinces and 9 districts through an electronic database system. Data such as registration of births, marriages and mobility were previously exchanged between units in paper format and flash discs resulting in delayed referral services to citizens. Expansion of this national integrated database was supported with DGTTF funds in 2009 (US\$ 300,000). Within the overall effort to create an E-government system connecting provinces, this project supports linking ‘central soums’ (mostly soums located in aimag centres). This involves a range of areas focusing on the internal government system, including the physical infrastructure. A small component also intends to support E-governance piloting web-based services such as tracking of clients’ application status and referral call centre.

In **Nepal**, the “Decentralized Local Governance Support Programme” (2006-2009, US\$ 6.1 million) includes an ICT component. A computerized Accounting Package has been installed in 55 districts and Planning Software in 25 districts, which has helped in tracking the District Development Committees’ income and

expenditure, as well as in preparing financial reports on time and maintaining transparency. District Information and Documentation Centres has been established in all 66 districts which has enabled the DDCs to produce their own resource maps helpful in planning and monitoring of development programmes. DDC has been the one-step information hub for the district.

The “Community E-centres Project” in the **Philippines** (2007-2010) intends to set up 1,500 Centres all over the country by 2010 through which citizens will be able to participate in E-commerce, distance learning and E-governance, amongst others.

The geographic isolation of Pacific Island nations poses an excellent opportunity to employ the latest technologies for overcoming vast distances. Through E-governance and E-government initiatives, UNDP is continuing its work on strengthening democratic governance in the **Cook Islands** outer-islands, **Tokelau**, **Niue** and **Samoa**. E-government projects implemented in the Cook Islands (2006-2009, US\$ 300,000) and **Niue** aim to enhance efficiencies in government public services, E-tourism to boost marketing strategies, and E-learning to increase the accessibility of rural villages and outer islands to information through ICT4D.

Institutional Development of Specific Government Ministries & Agencies

Public administration and governance cover a wide area of additional interventions, mainly dealing with various types of institutional support to specific agencies. UNDP **Mongolia** is supporting the State Centre for Civil Registration and Information (2009-2010) in order to convert the paper-based archive into an electronic database, upgrade registration of the population (Citizen Smart ID) and strengthen the capacity of civil registration personnel at the local level. A large amount of data transfer is performed manually and vital records are not accessible by public agencies (e.g. social security). The General Election Committee will have oversight over the voter registration. The online connection to the state civil registration will be ex-

tended to the soum level for timely registration of primary population data; quality control will be enhanced and the capacity of State Agency staff improved.

UNDP **Viet Nam** is providing support to the Committee of Ethnic Minority Affairs aiming at strengthening the capacity of the Committee for formulating, monitoring and guiding the implementation of the Ethnic Minority development policies. The “Capacity Strengthening for Ethnic Minority Development Policy Formulation, Implementation and Monitoring” project (2007-2012, US\$ 1.7 million) aims to ensure the process of policy formulation, implementation and monitoring is evidence-based, participatory, promotes the empowerment of ethnic minorities, and meets their needs. For several years, UNDP supported the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) through a sectoral public administration reform project. The project, which has come to a close, aimed at strengthening the ministry's capacity for policy formulation, implementation and managing service delivery.

The multi-country office in **Fiji** implemented the “Strengthening Capacities for Peace Building in Post-Conflict Solomon Islands” project (2007-2009, US\$ 940,000), in partnership with the Solomon Islands Government, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and UNICEF, includes capacity-building for the Ministry of Women Youth and Children and Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace.

Access to Information

The region has seen important developments in the area of access to information, with India as a clear frontrunner in this field. Building on previous interventions in this sector, UNDP **India** implemented the “Capacity-Building for Access to Information” project (2004-2007, US\$ 1.5 million) which sought to build the capacity of citizens as information seekers and government officials as information providers. The overall objective was to ease the operationalization of the Right to Information Act³⁸, through the promotion of a

³⁸ Government officials were not sufficiently equipped to meet the

culture of proactive public information disclosure. In 2007, UNDP **Bangladesh** launched a project to “Enhance Access to Information and Government through Community-Based E-centres” (US\$ 146,000), in support of Bangladesh’s ICT policy. The E-centres are expected to provide citizens with access to locally relevant information³⁹ and knowledge, create non-traditional mechanisms to access services and empower citizens to participate in the wider democratic dialogue.

In **Mongolia**, the “Strengthening Environmental Governance” is an example of a project in the environmental sector that not only addresses key environmental and fiscal legislations and policies to facilitate sound environmental governance but also supports government information disclosure at all levels. The project assists in setting up regular mechanisms to display information related to environmental conservation, status and natural resource utilization by concerned ministries (websites, scheduled press conferences, and publishing in the daily newspapers); and supports the agencies in strengthening their own public information/media relation focal points for timely delivery of information.

The earthquake in **Pakistan** triggered a need for more transparency, and UNDP responded through the “Improving Transparency and Governance for Earthquake Response” project (2006-2007). The project focused on both the demand and supply side for information in the disaster-affected regions of Pakistan at all three tiers of local government (district, tehsil and unions). The demand side focused mainly on health, education and sanitation and also included CSOs and the media.

demands of transparency and responsiveness, while training did not keep up with new job requirements. Project outputs included: (i) capacity-building of government staff; (ii) establishment of institutional mechanisms for improved government-citizen interface; (iii) increased awareness / capacities of citizens regarding their right to seek information; and (iv) research, documentation, communication and advocacy.

³⁹ There is a huge shortage of locally relevant knowledge, in particular in the area of health and agriculture. A participatory needs assessment was conducted to make local content available and relevant, with a special focus on women. Many people at the local level are apathetic to adopt ICTs in their daily life, aggravated by low levels of literacy. Mobile phones have seen a rapid expansion that could be easily tapped into but raising awareness was deemed indispensable. To make such a centre sustainable it has to be owned by the community. Capacity building of local actors is therefore a prerequisite to mobilise the community, market the services available and run the centre.

The project also worked with government officials to build their capacity to effectively respond to the demand for relevant information. But most importantly, the project also paid attention to assisting populations in effectively using that information⁴⁰. Also in Pakistan, the “Assistance to Governance Reforms and Practices in Balochistan” project includes access to information initiatives such as the “Participatory Information Systems (PIS)”, “District Management Information Centres (DMICs)” and the Balochistan Land Records Management Information System (BLRMIS)⁴¹.

The “Support to Public Administration in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)” project in **Viet Nam**, which has now come to a close, had amongst its outputs the establishment of a community telecenter to improve access to information for farmers and increase the efficiency of local government.

The UNDP Pacific Centre has made considerable progress on promoting access to information in the region. In support of the Pacific Plan mandate to promote freedom of information, in July 2008, the Centre collaborated with PIFS to hold a workshop on FOI for senior Pacific Island officials from 10 Pacific Island countries. Since the Regional FOI Workshop, follow-up national FOI workshops have been organized in five countries. Several countries (**Solomon Islands, Nauru, Palau, Tonga**) are exploring ways to address FOI either in the Constitution or in specific legislation. The Pacific Centre has already initiated an informal regional FOI network and will continue to work with PIFS and other partners to implement a long-term technical assistance programme.

Streamlining Regulations & Procedures

No project information available at this time.

⁴⁰ It appeared that prior to the training conducted by the project, the majority of the participants were unaware of the Freedom of information Ordinance and specific transparency clauses in the Local Governance Ordinance.

⁴¹ See the [Local Governance and Decentralization](#) sub-section.

Gender & Public Administration

The UNDP Pacific Centre, in partnership with UNIFEM, has been supporting a project that develops Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) compliance indicators for 10 Pacific Island Countries. The initiative on CEDAW legislative indicators in the Pacific, which was completed in 2007, has received global attention and the approach has since been adopted in South East Asia by UNIFEM. There has been increasing interest and queries by other regions on the approach and how it can be adapted. These indicators have been used in the **Cook Islands** to examine the Constitution and all national laws relevant to the advancement of women and gender equality in the Cook Islands. The publication has been used as a resource to train Justices of the Peace from the Southern Cook Islands, as a resource for preparing NGO submissions to the Government CEDAW Legislative Review Committee, and to underpin the law reform process so that the Cook Islands can become compliant with CEDAW (2006-2007).

UNDP **Viet Nam** is currently implementing a project on “Empowering Women in the Public Sector” (2008-2012, US\$ 5 million), in collaboration with the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs (Department of Multilateral and Economic Cooperation). Key objectives include: (i) development of a group of highly qualified women from the public sector with postgraduate qualifications from the University of Cambridge in their area of expertise; (ii) equip women in the public sector with the knowledge and skills required to assume leadership roles in various fields; and (iii) facilitate access of women in Viet Nam's public sector to global knowledge and research networks. The aim of the project is to help identify ways and means to empower women working in the public sector to deal with new challenges in relation to Viet Nam's deeper and broader economic integration, and prepare exceptionally talented women from Viet Nam's public sector to take on leadership roles in all fields. Post-graduate level scholarships will be open to women in all fields, including the natural sciences, social sciences, public administration, management and humanities, international economics and trade, and international politics. In addition, the project will finance joint research projects involving Cambridge scholars and Vietnamese research teams led by women researchers, and sponsor annual conferences of research results, special and short training programmes for women in the public sector, and an Alumni Association for the promotion of women leaders in the public sector affiliated with the Viet Nam Women's Union⁴².

⁴² The association will create support networks, advocate for policies conducive to women's career advancement in government and provide information to female professionals in the public sector on relevant issues.

CONCLUSION

Despite a general perception that UNDP has reduced its work on public administration in the Asia Pacific Region, the current overview of projects in the area of governance, public administration and local governance show a wide variety of projects and initiatives in support of an effective, more transparent and accountable administration. Budgets attached to these projects tend to be lower than, for example, in the Arab States⁴³, but government ownership of UNDP projects in the region appears to be strong, testifying to the high political importance attached to public sector management and local governance projects.

Projects in Timor Leste, Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Aceh (Indonesia) highlight the centrality of public administration and decentralized governance in the process of state building in post-conflict societies. Projects in Maldives, Bhutan and Mongolia have pointed to the importance of changing the civil service culture, values and professional standards in a democratizing environment. UNDP also remains a key player in public administration reform in transition countries such as Laos and Viet Nam.

UNDP has developed an important regional portfolio in the area of accountability and transparency – vital features of democratic governance and key for improving public sector performance. Country Office initiatives have been boosted by regional support as part of RCB's "Integrity in Action" initiative, attention to UNCAC implementation and UNDP's partnership in the ADB-OECD Initiative. At present, there is a shift towards sectoral integrity approaches such as the "Integrity Initiative" in the Ministry of Health in Mongolia, and accountability initiatives at the local level. Local governance also remains an important component of the democratic governance portfolio in the region, with close links to the MDG agenda.

The MDG agenda is implicitly supported by most public administration and local governance projects in the region. Local governance projects in particular seek to address the increasing demand for better service delivery and the development of accountability mechanisms at the community level; the need for local level sectoral studies for examining the appropriate roles and responsibilities of different actors in MDG achievement; indicators and data for community monitoring; capacity development for localizing the MDGs, including MDG-based planning frameworks; local pro-poor policy analyses; identification of threats to MDG achievement at the local level and the need for engaging local politicians and candidates to political office to include MDGs in political platforms⁴⁴.

UNDP's involvement in the middle income countries has been reduced, but there are interesting opportunities for using the expertise and knowledge available in these countries to provide south-south solutions to the challenges encountered by low income countries and LDCs in the region. Malaysia, Singapore and Korea could become hubs of knowledge from where regional support initiatives could be steered in a cost-effective manner.

⁴³ Except for the crisis countries, the GPAR project in Laos and the Civil Service reform project in Bangladesh.

⁴⁴ For example, a series of DGTF projects in the Philippines promoted collaboration amongst departments in planning and delivery of basic services to meet MDG targets in thirteen cities in the Philippines, an emerging recognition of the importance of urban governance. In Laos, the GPAR programme is helping parts of the civil service to become more efficient and better able to deliver services to the poor.

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