Joint Integrated Local Development Programme

Final Report

1 January 2013 – 31 December 2015
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<tr>
<th><strong>Programme Title:</strong></th>
<th>JOINT INTEGRATED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Projects Number:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Programme Duration:</strong></td>
<td>3 years (January 2013 – December 2015)</td>
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<td>6,241,602 USD</td>
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<td><strong>Country:</strong></td>
<td>Republic of Moldova</td>
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<td><strong>Donor:</strong></td>
<td>The Government of Denmark, the Government of Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Executing Agency:</strong></td>
<td>UNDP, UN Women</td>
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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>Academy of Public Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>CALM</td>
<td>Congress of Local Authorities of Republic of Moldova</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-Based Organization</td>
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<td>CPA</td>
<td>Central Public Administration</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>DANIDA</td>
<td>Denmark development cooperation under Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>GE</td>
<td>Gender Equality</td>
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<td>GIZ</td>
<td>German International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
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<td>HRBA</td>
<td>Human Rights Based Approach</td>
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<td>IMC</td>
<td>Inter-Municipal Cooperation</td>
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<td>JILDP</td>
<td>Joint Integrated Local Development Programme</td>
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<td>LPA</td>
<td>Local Public Administration</td>
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<td>LSED</td>
<td>Local Socio-Economic Development</td>
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<td>ME</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>NDS</td>
<td>National Decentralization Strategy</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>PC</td>
<td>Parity Commission</td>
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<td>SC</td>
<td>State Chancellery</td>
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<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN Women</td>
<td>United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>WG</td>
<td>Working Groups</td>
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Joint Integrated Local Development Programme (JILDP) is implemented by the Government of the Republic of Moldova with the assistance of UNDP and UN Women and the financial support of the Governments of Sweden and Denmark. JILDP was designed to improve the policy framework and to support the administrative systems and procedures focused on transfer of competencies to Local Public Administrations (LPA), decentralization and promotion of LPAs’ role in decision-making. JILDP applies two complementary approaches, namely gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment in order to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination and violation of women’s rights, to engender laws, policies and budget decisions, to enhance democratic citizenship and to make service delivery more gender-responsive.

The main results of the programme implementation could be summarized as following.

Despite the considerable drawback of funding for the policy work, during 2013-2015, the Programme continued to support the Government of Moldova in the implementation of decentralization reform. Within the reported period, the programme offered permanent legal expertise, informational, clerical and technical assistance for the activity of Parity Commission and its sectoral working groups.

Based on JILDP support, since 2015 Moldova introduced the new system of local finances, which changed radically the way local governments are founded, as well as the accountability and motivation of local authorities for a more efficient and transparent financial management. The preliminary Impact Assessment (applied on pilot LPAs) proved that the new fiscal system is more transparent, predictable, give more autonomy in managing local budgets, and provided strong incentives for increasing local revenues.

Moldova has been assisted to introduce a new modern methodology on performance based budgeting. In partnership with the Ministry of Finances, JILDP carried out a nationwide training programme, which targeted all local governments.

JILDP assisted the Government of Moldova to design an all-inclusive policy paper related to the implementation of the Administrative-Territorial Reform. The offered support quantified in several possible scenarios, detailing the strong and weak points of each.

In line with the provisions of National Decentralization Strategy, JILDP undertaken a complex of activities aiming to strengthen the capacities of local authorities, as well as to create model municipalities – ”champions of change” – for further replication and scaling up.

A comprehensive nationwide training program was implemented after 2015 general local elections, as result over 80% of newly elected mayors being professionally trained for a better performance.

The National Congress of Local Public Authorities (CALM) has been continually supported in its activities, as well as in its organization. Particularly, it has been supported the creation of the Network of Women Mayors, which has been strategized and strengthened to fulfil its mission. Additionally, CALM has been supported to organize various regional and national events, aiming to increase the capacity and cooperation of local authorities.
30 targeted ‘model municipalities’ have been deeply assisted to improve the institutional performance, human capacities and financial strengths. In this regard, the targeted municipalities were supported to design and implement ambitious community development strategies, and institutional development plans. Over 552 public servants (including 386 women and 176 men) have received advanced professional trainings, as well as a significant on-job coaching assistance. The targeted municipalities have been supported with financial grants to improve their institutional capacities, as well as to implement one prioritized community project.

Six in-country and 5 abroad study visits were organized for relevant knowledge transfer to Moldovan mayors, local public servants and managers of local utility operators.

A package of innovative e-tools in local governments have been implemented in target communities: (i) E-Documents Management System has been developed and piloted in 10 LPAs, (ii) SMS-ing for local public information, (iii) GPS monitoring of public equipment, (iii) Web pages of LPAs, (iv) electronic billboards, etc.

With the support of JILDP, Moldova developed and piloted a functional model of Inter-Municipal Cooperation for joint organization of utility sector in rural area. In this regard, 10 pilot IMC projects were implemented throughout Moldova, as well as a more supportive legal framework being upgraded. To date, the created pilot IMC utility companies are serving over 40 localities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. So far, over 40,000 citizens from rural area obtained access to regular waste management services, and other 10,000 to public street lighting. Over 50,000 rural inhabitants got access to basic roads maintenance services, inclusively effective and timely snow removal during the winter. More than 10 illegal landfills were liquidated and others are in the process. All established IMCs are functional and effective, and do not require subsidy from the local government.

Being supported by JILDP consultants, the target municipalities, in partnership with the community groups, succeeded to mobilize additional founding of over 1 mln USD from other different donors.

A special intervention of the JILDP has been directed to the empowerment of community groups. As result, 18 community-based organizations were created, and 57 projects on HR&GM were supported to be implemented.

During the implementation period, the Programme succeeded to organize a massive nationwide campaign in supporting decentralization and local public administration reform: a total of 300 appearances in national media were registered. 7000 visibility products were printed, 20 street banners installed, 7 video toolkits were elaborated, 30 visibility national and local events organized.

The main conclusions and lessons learned from the project implementation are:

Decentralization is one of the complex and difficult reform which require strong political will and government commitment. Five years is a too short period for the implementation; it provides no respite for overcoming some political risks related to elections and change of government.

The new system of local public finance positively influenced the advancement of the decentralization reform. This system made the fiscal decentralization reform irreversible facilitated the establishment of new inter-relationships procedures and prepared the ground for implementing fiscal decentralization in the entire country.

Territorial-administrative structure remains a key aspect of the decentralization process. The high fragmentation leads to inefficient use of human and financial resources, hindering development and access to local public services. Also territorial fragmentation makes it difficult and costly to fully
implement a functional decentralization. The government needs to find a rational and politically acceptable solution and the new efficient territorial administrative structure would be created by 2019.

**Strengthening capacities and changing institutional culture needs champions of change**, characterized by motivation, commitment and trust that the change will bring benefits to the institution and wider community.

**Modeling new approaches to service delivery and basing advocacy for new policy or legislative solutions for improvement of public services is a good approach.** JILDP modelled IMCs and based its advocacy with the government on positive experiences and lessons learned gathered. Showcasing new practices and models assists government to grasp the extent to which new approaches can facilitate development, which in turn facilitates adopting decisions and legislative/policy solutions for replication of such practices.

**Capacity building of local governments is particularly necessary when vast and complex national reforms are envisaged.** Interventions targeting professional development and coaching in using the new analytical and practical tools were particularly timely for the pilot local governments to ensure their smooth transition and acceptance of the new local public finance system.

**Enhanced communication, cooperation and partnership between LPAs and communities** should continue to be fostered for an integrated development.

**Synergies amongst communities should be encouraged** through study visits and exchange of best practices. People as well as LPAs learn better if they have a clear example of what was done and how was done.

After 20 years of international assistance, **Moldovan LPAs built up an ample magnitude of first-rate in-house know-how.** The peer reviews (municipality-to-municipality) could be explored as an excellent opportunity to exchange information on successful and promising practices.

**Innovation and thinking out of the box should be encouraged.** Each LPA is a living body with its own profile, processes and specificities. Replicating an approach, system or product, the communities should take into account own specificities and adopt an individualized approach.
II. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

The Joint Integrated Local Development Programme (JILDP) is implemented by the Government of the Republic of Moldova with the assistance of UNDP and UN Women and the financial support of the Governments of Sweden and Denmark. The JILDP was designed to improve the policy framework, as well as to support the administrative systems and procedures focused on efficient transfer of competencies to Local Public Administrations (LPA), decentralization and promotion of LPAs’ role in decision-making. Additionally, the Programme helps build the capacity of LPAs to plan, implement and monitor their strategic plans and improve local public service delivery with the involvement of the civil society.

In order to meet the development objective of the Programme and to ensure that the vulnerable women and men benefit equally from decentralization and local development, JILDP pilots the human rights based approach (HRBA) in local development and decentralization. Applying HRBA principles – Participation, Non-discrimination, Transparency and Accountability – in all of its components, the Programme works to empower excluded and vulnerable women and men and communities, to increase capacity of the local public authorities and their responsiveness.

JILDP applies two complementary approaches, namely gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment in order to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination and violation of women’s rights, to engender laws, policies and budget decisions, to enhance democratic citizenship and to make service delivery more gender-responsive.

Programme objectives and components

The JILDP development objective is to support better and equitable service provision and sustainable local development, facilitated by the improved legal and institutional framework resulting from the implementation of the National Decentralization Strategy (NDS).

Immediate Objectives of the Programme are:

Objective 1: To support the Government in improving the policy and legal framework as mandated by the National Decentralization Strategy to ensure local autonomy, availability of resources, and more effective local management for better and equitable service provision.

Objective 2: To improve the capacity of LPAs to deliver efficient, equitable and accessible local public services, to facilitate sustainable development and foster social inclusion.

While the JILDP applies a holistic approach to tackling challenges at all levels of governance, it puts the human rights and gender equality issues at the center of all its activities. Thus, at the policy level the Programme focuses on ensuring transparent, non-discriminatory, inclusive and evidence-based policy making, based on the principles of human rights and gender equality. At the local level the Programme’s key focus is on developing capacities of local authorities on rights based and gender responsive policy-making, budget planning and implementation. At the community level the Programme works to enhance capacities of the local community members in articulating and voicing their needs to equally participate and benefit from development initiatives.
The Programme framework encompasses two inter-related components, corresponding to the above objectives:

**Component 1:** Policy Framework Support for the Implementation of the National Decentralization Strategy

**Component 2:** Local Governance and Development.

This Report is written for the JILDP Board Meeting and includes the main results obtained during programme implementation period: 1 January 2013 – 31 December, 2015.

**Moldova – country situation and local development**

The JILDP period of implementation operated under an unstable political climate. Since 2013 Moldova had four governments. Several changes have occurred in the ministries as well, which was headed by different ministers. As result of political instability and unclear vision regarding decentralization reform, the Embassy of Sweden withdrew its financial support for developing policies to implement the decentralization strategy Therefore, the project management had to adapt to a constantly changing environment.

In 2014 Moldova signed the Association Agreement with the EU (which includes DCTFA - provisions for the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area), as well as obtained the visa-free regime to Schengen Area. The national action plan on implementing the Association Agreement with the EU covers a period of three years and includes the key reform priorities, in order to ensure the political association and economic integration with the EU.

The parliamentary elections in November 2014 were hardly won by the pro-European coalition. Initially a minority government coalition was created and in early last summer the alliance of the three traditionally pro-European parties formed a slim majority in the parliament.

In 2015, Moldova faced one of the most difficult period since its independence. The unceasing political crisis and governance challenges (dismissal of 2 PM by motion of censure and doubtful further government coalition) have been synchronized with an unprecedented banking crisis, caused by a large-scale $1 billion fraud (15% of country GDP). Moreover, the governmental discontinuity twisted a reduction of the external financial assistance, as well as an uncertain relationship with the Internal Monetary Found.

Consequently, the national currency depreciated against the US dollar by 20 per cent, the official reserve assets decreased from US$ 2.65 billion to US$ 1.8 billion, annual inflation accelerated to over 15%, and export proceeds dropped by approximately 16%. Public debt is expected to increase from approximately 30 per cent of GDP in 2014 to up to 50 per cent in 2015, mainly due to the emergency support to the three failed banks. Additionally, the remittances are expected to decrease by approximately 30%. According to IMF and WB, a minimum 2% downgrade of Moldovan economy is expected in 2015.

The local elections from June 2015 generally recorded a significant support for the representatives of the governing pro-European parties, though the political left-wing continued its reshuffling (decreased the influence of the Communist Party and amplified the score of other emerging political parties).

The volatile domestic politics and substantial governance challenges are perpetuating the negative tendencies, with the risk of amplification: significant vulnerabilities in the financial sector, lower remittances, tight monetary policy, higher inflation, weak performance of agriculture, regional economic downturn, challenges in budget execution due to lower external financial assistance.
III. PROGRAMME RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES

Due to the fact that at the end of 2013 the Embassy of Sweden withdrew its financial support for developing policies to implement the decentralization strategy, the JILDP support was limited to technical assistance and advice to the Ministry of Finance and LPAs on fiscal decentralization and the State Chancellery on capacity development to lead implementation of the decentralization reform, as well as for the completion of the drafting of sectoral strategies in the fields of social, education, environment, health, culture, youth and sports. Nevertheless, during period 2014-2015, some interventions on specific topics were initiated and financed from UNDP’s and UN Women’s TRAC funds, as well as by other donors and with the active involvement of the JILDP team. At the same time, some activities like the assistance provided to the districts piloting the new local public finance system and the elaboration of the sectoral decentralization strategies for communal services were financed from the Local Governance and Development Component of JILDP. In this context, the main achievements are presented as part of the Policy Framework Support component.

**COMPONENT 1: Policy Framework Support for the Implementation of the Decentralization Strategy**

**Output 1:** Policy and legal frameworks to support autonomous, efficient and financially sustainable LPAs developed and implemented

During 2013-2015 JILDP provided support to the Parity Commission to function efficiently and lead the decentralization process. The programme offered permanent legal expertise, informational, clerical and technical assistance for the 3 regular meetings of the Parity Commission and its sectoral working groups, where important documents like fiscal decentralization, sectoral decentralization strategies, the methodology for local governments’ capacity assessment, etc. were discussed and endorsed.

Based on JILDP supported analysis and simulations, a new system of local government finances was introduced from 2015, with three districts and Chisinau Municipality piloted the system during 2014. An amended Law on local public finances was approved by the Parliament in November 2013, and local officials (mayors, finance directors, etc.) were informed and trained on calculating revenues and planning budgets under the provisions of the revised law. The new local government finance system is a long awaited legal act, aiming to eliminate a very important remnant of the Soviet governance system; it changes radically the way local governments are funded, thus improving strongly the quality and sustainability of Moldovan democracy. By setting fixed tax shares and formula-based equalization transfers, allocated directly through the treasury, the new system improves the equity and transparency of the state-local transfer system, while practically eliminating the political influence in the way local authorities receive funds for regular operations. The amount of the transfer is independent of local revenue collection and provides full autonomy on allocating and spending funds according to local priorities. The new system provides strong incentives for rational and efficient fiscal management, incentivizes the establishment of local taxes and increases accountability of local authorities to their constituencies.
JILDP provided technical assistance to all pilot communities through a package of interventions that includes trainings, consultations, and support in disseminating the new financing system for pilot LPAs at the request of the State Chancellery.

Also with the assistance of JILDP, the Impact Assessment report of the new fiscal system implemented in pilot LPAs was developed. The main conclusions of the report indicate that the new system is more transparent, predictable and provides more autonomy in the management of local budgets and offers opportunities for increasing local revenues. The pilot LPAs were able to direct budget funds to solving the pressing problems of communities. It is recommended that the new fiscal system is strengthened with the implementation of the other two important components of fiscal decentralization - increasing local revenue tax base and improving local financial management.

A new modern performance based budgeting methodology was introduced by the Ministry of Finance, which will become mandatory for first tier local governments starting in 2016, after being implemented at the second tier local governments in the previous budgetary year. Due to the complexity of this reform and its direct link to the overall fiscal decentralization reform, a nationwide training programme on performance based budgeting for all local governments from Moldova was carried out for all 898 local governments in Moldova. The JILDP Programme was the main partner of the Ministry of Finance in this crucial initiative for advancing the reform in modernizing the public finance system.

A report on international practices on fiscal incentives for inter-municipal cooperation was developed and presented to the Ministry of Finance in support to developing future policy options in this field.

At the request of the Parity Commission, all Ministries have initiated the elaboration of gender-mainstreamed Sectoral Decentralization strategies using technical assistance provided by JILDP. To support this process a guide of sectoral decentralization strategies was elaborated and presented at a workshop for the representatives of sectoral working groups. In addition, CPA representatives increased capacities in mainstreaming gender in public policies, with focus on sector decentralization strategies.

The Ministries of Education and Social Protection completed the drafts of these policy documents. The Ministry of Education organized 2 public consultations and included provisions of the Education decentralization strategy in the Education Code, which was approved by the Parliament in April 2014. Initial recommendations for gender mainstreaming of the developed drafts were provided to both Ministries.

The other four working groups of Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Environment developed the draft of sectoral strategies and organized public debates with the main stakeholders.

Following a Decision of the Parity Commission, the Methodology for assessment of LPA capacity was tested on 50 selected 1st and 2nd levels LPAs. According to the results of the assessment it is estimated that 84% of the rural LPAs, 22% of the small towns and 25% of the districts do not have enough administrative capacities to deliver local public services.

The study of local revenues and proposals on increasing the local revenue base, developed by Slovak experts with JILDP logistic support, has been discussed within the fiscal decentralization working group. The task force group created by order of the Minister of Finance has synthesized the conclusions of the study and presented proposals for legal framework amendments. Additionally, the task force group representatives shared experience on consolidation of the local taxes base during a study visit to Slovakia.
Following the State Chancellery request a public policy document (PPD) for territorial-administrative reform was developed and later discussed during several meetings with State Chancellery representatives, Special Parliamentary Commission on Decentralization, and development partners. The PPD identifies and examines the problems related to territorial administrative fragmentation and presents three options for improving the territorial-administrative structure of the country, and provides a brief analysis, scenarios and roadmap for each of the options.

Advisory notes on mainstreaming HRBA and gender into the development of the administrative-territorial reform options and related processes, and the monitoring and evaluation process of the new local public finance system in the pilot localities were also developed and considered at the elaboration of the administrative-territorial reform options.

For the implementation of the National Decentralization Strategy the draft Monitoring and Evaluation (ME) Methodology was developed and discussed with the working groups. The ME Methodology includes the conceptual framework, methods and tools for monitoring and evaluation as well as the system of indicators of implementation for CPAs and LPAs. As result, the Decentralization Reform Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Report was developed, and decisions on advancing the decentralization reform have been made by the Parity Commission.

Following the provisions of a communication strategy/plan in support of Decentralization, communication officers from all line ministries and districts were trained on how to deliver key messages to the public, including the human rights and gender aspects. A visual identity for the reform was developed and internet based, social networking campaigns were conducted.

Moldova’s positive experience and best practices on the field of fiscal decentralization, participatory process on conceptualization and institutionalization of the decentralization reform, as well as good practices on local governance and local empowerment, shared by the Moldovan Government representatives at the International Conference “Making Decentralization Reform Work: Opportunities and Innovations for Local Governance and Service Delivery”, organized in Kyiv (Ukraine), were highly appreciated by the Conference participants from other 15 countries.

Additionally, JILDP adapted its activities to the priority areas of the National Program on Ensuring Gender Equality 2010-2015, such as: improvement of gender disaggregated data collection and analysis, capacity development of local authorities for gender mainstreaming, etc. JILDP, through its Roma social inclusion and Romani women’s empowerment initiatives, continued its support to the implementation of the National Action Plan for Roma support (2011-2015).

COMPONENT 2: Local Governance and Development

Output 2: Capacities of LPAs and communities strengthened to deliver better services to citizens and create models of LPAs - in line with changes brought by the Decentralization Strategy

Key Results:

2.1 Strengthen local self-governance and public management performance in 20 target communes to better respond to the needs of women and men, particularly the most vulnerable (National Decentralization Strategy: Objectives 2,3,6,7)

The target of JILDP was to develop model local communities in line with the provisions of the National
Decentralization Strategy; hence increasing the administrative capacities of target local governments was an imperative objective. The capacity building support was extended to all 30 target communities, although initially intended for only 20 of them.

JILDP’s approach to building the capacities of local governments was broad in scope and multilayered, linking central policies to local practices and covering all main areas of competence of local governments. The design of capacity building interventions targeted the institutional (mayorality), personal (local governments’ staff) and inter-institution levels (Table 1). To this end, a number of tools and methodologies were applied, like facilitation of participatory planning, comprehensive professional development trainings, coaching and consultancy, networking and exchange of information, with the view to improving administrative performance and efficiency of local governments, as well as their accountability to and engagement with community members for an inclusive local development.

Table 1. Capacity building approach implemented by JILDP at local level

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<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Improved Institutional Arrangements</th>
<th>Improved public services (access and quality)</th>
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| Institution                         | • Capacity assessment  
• Institutional development plans  
• Institutional development grants  
• Coaching and mentoring for local strategic planning and improving the internal systems, procedures and operations  
• ICT tools for daily internal operations – webpages, social media profiles, documents and records management system                                                                 | • Grants for improving specific local services  
• Technical support and equipment for local municipal enterprises  
• IMC models  
• Feasibility studies  
• Coaching and mentoring to develop IMC models                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Individual                          | • Professional development trainings  
• Local and international study visits  
• E-learning platform                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | • Coaching and mentoring to develop IMC models  
• Local and international study visits                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Inter-governmental                 | • Quarterly mayors meetings  
• Local and international study visits                                                                                                                                                                                                             | • Coaching and mentoring to develop IMC models  
• Local and international study visits                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

The institutional and administrative capacity of 30 local target local governments improved as result of JILDP interventions. The initial capacity assessment exercise performed in each community helped identifying needs and planning institutional development, and tailoring the program’s support accordingly. 30 small scale institutional development projects that resulted after this effort and financed by the JILDP, provided the necessary impetus to local staff and were conducive to improving the institutional performance and outcomes of target local governments, an aspect often disregarded by local mayors. The institutional development projects improved the work conditions for local staff though small scale renovations and upgrading IT equipment, increased transparency and communication through information boards and newsletters, facilitated access to mayoralty’s services through front desks and ramps, and created the necessary facilities for community gatherings.

A significant effort was channeled to upgrading skills and improving knowledge of all categories of local governments’ staff in their professional areas of competence - mayors, vice-mayors, chief accountants and accountants, tax and land management specialists, local councils’ secretaries. The comprehensive
professional development training programs included circa 95% of staff of all 30 target communities (552 public servants, including 386 women and 175 men) and extended to subjects like managing public finance, local taxes, public property, human resources and performing public procurement according to official requirements and standards, upgrading computer skills and using information systems for human resources. Additionally, members of local communities and mayoralties were also trained and coached in writing and submitting to different donors regional development projects.

The sustainability of the training program materials were ensured by transferring them to the Academy of Public Administration (APA) for further use in its professional development curricula. For that purpose, APA trainers were trained in delivering the developed training programs pertaining to the core areas of activity of public administration (namely the programs on: human resource management and public procurement (4 training days each program), public property management and tax collection (3 days each program) and local public finance management (9 days training program).

Through on-the-job coaching, local governments improved their operation and functionality. As a result of these interventions, local governments developed/updated their internal operations and documents referring to their main areas of activity, like guidelines for new employees and job descriptions, procurement plans, applied the provisions of the new public finance system and performance based budgeting for the local budget, organized public debates on the local budget, and other.

Acknowledging the importance of sharing experience for fostering capacity development of local governments, JILDP successfully stimulated networking, peer-to-peer learning and transfer of knowledge through regular mayors meetings and study visits. During 9 quarterly meetings, the mayors from 30 target communities discussed issues related to local governance, institutional development, decentralization policies, the new fiscal decentralization system, e-governance, fundraising, local economic development, cultural and youth activities at local level, etc. Those six in-country study visits proved to be efficient in stimulating cooperation among mayors and learning first-hand information and best practices on how to implement local development projects, improve transparency and engage communities in local processes, and foster local economic development. At the same time, JILDP was successful in transferring knowledge by exposing mayors from target communities to international practices to during 5 study visits abroad to Estonia (on e-governance), Poland (on economic development), Ukraine and Romania (on cross-border cooperation, local development, local services), Czech Republic (on IMC), as well as participation in several international conferences and fora. These study visits also occasioned the development of several partnerships and joint initiatives of with mayors from those countries.

Innovative practices and e-tools were tested in target communities with the view to identify potential areas of localizing the e-transformation agenda. The trust-based relationship resulted from JILDP’s intensive and comprehensive interventions in its target communities provided the favorable environment for testing innovative approaches and some e-tools for local governance. This refers to testing re-engineering of a public service using the design thinking methodology with the support of MiLab/UNDP, and also introducing innovative and e-tools for local governance. More specifically, a documents and records management system was developed and piloted in 10 communities and provided to the State Chancellery for further scaling up. The system increases the performance and efficiency of the daily activity of the mayoralties by simplifying the internal documents’ flow, improving tracking and record of documents, as well as generating reports. At the same time, four local governments were supported in piloting several e-mayoralty type of tools, like sms-ing to increase public information, GPS monitoring systems for public equipment, local websites to stimulate local employment and agri-business, electronic billboards to increase transparency and broadcasting online meetings of the local councils. The target LPAs share their good
practices, some of them being replicated by other communities. The **online presence and activity of target LPAs significantly increased** with JILDP support, by the end of the program half of the localities developed web-pages and most of them have social media profiles. The national average indicates that only 28% of local governments have webpages, whereas only three of target communities had them at the onset of JILDP.

JILDP adapted and responded to the **capacity needs triggered by the 2015 local general elections**, when 898 mayors were elected in local public offices. In this context, circa **80% of newly elected mayors benefited from induction trainings** (and a total number of 907 beneficiaries - mayors, vice-mayors, local councilors, etc.) that helped them better understand the specific of public service and their main duties in the context of the decentralization reform. This nation-wide induction-training program was a continuation of JILDP’s previous successful experience, when similar activities were conducted after the 2007 and 2011 local elections.

At the same time, an innovative tool was piloted in 2015, when in cooperation with the APA, the induction training program for the elected officials was developed in an e-learning format. **The e-learning platform** shall be further maintained and updated by APA, hence reducing future costs of trainings and ensuring easy and fast access of all elected officials from the country to induction training and knowledge about public service.

Due to the on-the-job facilitation and coaching provided to each target communities, the mayoralties have **improved transparency and communication** with local communities, through local information boards, community meetings and events and updating internal transparency regulations. The active involvement of local governments in the **Transparency Week** national awareness raising campaign significantly increased from one year to another, indicating on internalized practices and acknowledging the importance of accountability and transparent governance for local development.

Congress of Local Authorities of Republic of Moldova (CALM) as a voice for local governments in Moldova was supported in strengthening the capacity of local governments, both political leadership and technical specialists. The Network of Women Mayors created under the auspices of CALM was continuously supported in finalizing its **Plan of Actions for 2014-2017** and identifying priority directions for development, raising women’s issues and promoting women’s leadership. A database of women secretaries of local councils was created, and capacity building needs, leadership and women empowerment in local governance were identified during by the newly created network of women secretaries of local councils, which contributed to strengthening the LPA’s institutional and leadership capacities. Further, the CALM Women Network was assisted to share regionally their positive experience, and to develop the first draft of the new **CALM Women Network strategy**.

Also, the Programme supported the empowerment of community groups in becoming dialogue partners of LPAs. As result of mobilization and empowerment process, and capacity building provided to the community groups, the **newly created 18 community-based organizations** (11 of them led by women), and other 12 existing CBOs, implemented **22 human rights and gender mainstreamed projects** supported by JILDP (including 4 with focus on Romani community groups), and other over 15 local projects implemented with own resources and other over 20 projects implemented in cooperation with LPAs with local resources and from other donors, which contributed to improved access to pre-school education, healthcare, sports and social services, as well as ensured capacity building and social inclusion of marginalized groups.

JIDP also fostered **networking and exchange of experience** among CBOs on local development and social projects, learning and replicating viable project ideas, cooperation between vulnerable groups and local
governments, volunteering and fundraising for local development through in-country study visits.

The ongoing support to Roma women and girls from target communities resulted in the creation and registration of a new Roma Women and Girls organization – NGO “Romano Alav”, which today has 3 charter and 14 other active members of the organization, and have implemented several projects for ensuring information, guidance and assistance to further empower Roma girls and women in Moldova. The Roma Women and Girls network was strengthened with JILDP support and backed up with a small grant in 2014. Later capacity building interventions made by UN Women-UNDP joint project “Women in Politics” led to two Roma women, for the first time in Moldova, being elected as councilors.

2.2 Improve management, access and quality of municipal service provision in 20 communes and 10 clusters of communities (National Decentralization Strategy: Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5)

By receiving a comprehensive JILDP technical assistance packages, 30 target communities succeeded to update their socio-economic development plans in compliance with the human rights and gender equality principles hence setting the base for an integrated local development. These plans are also conducive to an enabling environment for rural economic and business development. It was for the first time when these communities prioritized their development projects by involving not just active local stakeholders (administration, business and civil society organizations), but also representatives of women groups and community vulnerable groups: elderly, poor, disabled, youth, ethinical (particularly Roma) and religious minorities groups.

Following the identified priorities, 20 communities were supported with on-going coaching to prepare, submit, implement and monitor 20 community development projects to improve the service delivery at local level. The project ideas were selected and implemented through a transparent and participatory process, through consultation with the community inhabitants and prioritization of development needs of the community. The projects targeted improvement of a range series of local services, as indicated in fig.1, through grants up to $15,000 for each initiative. In addition, each LPA had to secure a minimum of 20% co-financing, which impacted positively on local ownership of the projects. An important indicator of the ownership of the LPA is the fact that they contributed with a total average of 62% of additional financing, out of which 15% of funds were mobilized from other donors. The projects implementation was based on HRBA principles, following the inclusiveness and transparency principles.

The support JILDP provided to the LPAs in the process of strategic planning and improvement of above-mentioned local services was a successful capacity building and on-job coaching exercise. Benefiting from guidance in a learning-by-doing type of process, local governments were capacitated to project writing and applying for funding to meet communities’ development needs. Based on this experience, LPAs, in partnership with community groups, developed about 100 additional project proposals and
submitted to other donors; about 50 received support, thus **mobilizing about 1 mln USD** additional funding for local priorities.

The programme investment in piloting partnerships between LPAs through building **inter-municipal cooperation** and other forms of partnerships, as models for improved local services is an example of **best practice**. The inter-municipal cooperation component focused on **10 clusters** of municipalities, which were assisted to pilot several forms of inter-municipal cooperation for common priority sectors and services, encouraging clustering of municipalities around common needs.

The **IMC model was developed** based on lessons learned and models from other countries (e.g. Romania, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Czech Republic, etc.), but building in the local solutions, through bottom up and needs based approach for organizing services in more effective manner (fig.2).

Document review and stakeholder consultations with LPAs applying IMC but also wider stakeholder groups confirm that IMC is an instrument for improving efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and offer better service for lower cost. Joining services brings some 25% of cost reduction for individual municipalities (sewerage, waste, water) and especially if more communities join to organize regional hubs. The approach to building IMC included joint trainings, exchanges and joint work towards developing partnerships: from planning and creating them, selecting the most appropriate model of cooperation to effectively managing and maintaining the selected public services.

Following the Governmental priority to promote the Inter-Municipal Cooperation (IMC) as an important tool in supporting the decentralization, the JILDP contributed significantly to **upgrade the national local service delivery regulatory framework**, by allowing the IMC schemes in organizing and operating the legal units for communal services. In this regard, the regulatory changes offered to the LPAs the right to establish joint municipal enterprises – operators with several LPAs-founders (the Government Decision from 03.07.2014 on adjusting the Regulation on municipal enterprises), building the necessary local capacities and setting up the ground for piloting a wide range of public services based on IMC.

At the same time, prior to the scale-up in 10 clusters, a **demonstration pilot project on joint waste management service provision** has been implemented in the Telenesti cluster (Telenesti town and 7 neighborhood communities), ensuring access to garbage collection services to over 25,000 citizens.

The practical capacities of the representatives of targeted-LPAs have been increased through **transfer of knowledge** from Czech Republic in the field on Inter-municipal cooperation (study tour to demonstrative
IMC associations in Czech Republic for 16 mayors and government officials).

Applying the acquired knowledge and national legislation, **10 pilot and demonstrative projects on inter-municipal cooperation (IMC) have been operationalized.** In this regard, 40 municipalities, bunched in 10 territorial clusters, have been assisted with a comprehensive methodological guidance (professional legal, economical and technical expertise), as well as granted with a $100,000 funding (per each cluster) for technical endowment. Three contracted consultancy entities delivered comprehensive assistance packages to 10 target LPA-clusters: trainings, opportunities assessments, feasibility studies, inter-municipal cooperation agreements, management plans.

The granted assistance resulted in setting up of 10 Inter-Municipal Cooperation Associations (the pioneering initiatives in Moldova) for joint communal service provision: settled up 10 joint communal operators, established joint regulatory framework, as well as a single tariff system. To be mentioned that, for the first time in Moldova, – 4 communal operators have been founded as "joint public institution” – “municipal enterprises with several LPAs-founders”. Another 6 communal operators have been established by reorganizing, restructuring and revitalizing the existing communal operators, also extending them from "municipal" to "inter-municipal" activity approach. The 10 new IMC operators are planned to ensure a multi-functional approach, by covering the whole range of communal activities in targeted communities: water and sanitation, roads maintenance and snow removal, waste management and greening, public lighting. In this regard, the targeted communal operators have been endowed with new specialized multi-functional tractors and accessories (waste bins, electro tools, etc.) Within the capacity building measures, all targeted mayors and operators’ managers learned the most advanced national experience in organizing communal services in Telenesti and Ungheni.

The IMC support was **largely co-financed by the beneficiaries** (over 100, 000 USD), but also enabled clusters of communities to benefit from the Regional Development Fund, which supports local and regional initiatives.

Being initiated on some basic public services (waste management, water supply and roads maintenance), the newly established joint IMC utility operators have been strengthened to ensure the sustainability and to launch complimentary communal services to citizens and firms, which are significantly increasing their financial and economic sustainability and viability. The projects implementation was based on HRBA principles, following the inclusiveness and transparency principles. From January to July 2015, monitoring and evaluation frameworks were put in place with support of community facilitators, thus ensuring interventions’ sustainability.

The JILDP granted assistance resulted in pro-active business plans, enhanced financial management (breakeven points exceed), increased the staff number (over 100 jobs were created) and substantially extended technical capacities (JILDP granted each enterprise with specialized vehicles, as well as full utility inventory: welding equipments, pump & trash pumps, gasoline generators, air-compressors with accessories, angle grinders, chainsaws, hammer drills, lawnmowers etc.). By expanding and diversifying their activities, the IMC utility operators are both increasing the quality of life in deprived rural areas, and ensuring their financial and economic sustainability. Within the capacity building measures, the targeted IMC operators’ managers learned the most advanced Romanian experience in organizing the utility services in rural area, by participating in a study tour to 12 IMC communal operators in different regions of Romania.

To date, the piloted IMC utility companies are serving over 40 localities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Over 40,000 citizens from rural area obtained access to regular waste management services, and other 10,000 to public street lighting. Over 50,000 rural inhabitants got access to basic roads maintenance services, inclusively effective and timely snow removal during the winter. More than 10
illegal landfills were liquidated and others are in the process. All established IMCs are functional and effective, and do not require subsidy from the local government.

So far, the JILDP IMC model, based on ‘joint municipal enterprises’ legal form, became the IMC model promoted by the Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova (CALM) among Moldovan municipalities. In partnership with CALM, within 3 regional seminars, over 60 mayors have been in field visits to piloted IMC projects, for results dissemination and replication.

As a result of efforts and lessons learned from modelling IMC, the IMC Guide of Council of Europe was adapted to Moldovan context and published, as a tool for raising awareness and guide how to organize such services locally.

For further enhancement of IMC in the Republic of Moldova, the Ministry of Finances has been supported to design a policy concept for developing financial incentives to stimulate inter-municipal cooperation (based on advanced international experience and national potential).

2.3 Support an enabling environment for rural business development, creation of economic opportunities and diversification of rural economies (National Decentralization Strategy Objectives 4, 7)

In order to support an enabling environment for rural business development JILDP has developed and tested a multilayered approach to local economic development. Thus, 30 LPAs were supported to identify feasible instruments to foster local economic development.

As first step, a training program for all target communities was implemented to respond to the needs of representatives from the target communities (mayors, deputy mayors, secretaries of local councils, head of municipal departments, representatives of local CBOs, etc.), in terms of understanding principles in LED, and role and actions of different actors in promoting and fostering local economic development. Out all 30 target communities, 12 were selected for testing a more advance approach, defining the economic profile of their localities and, development objectives and opportunities and additional interventions necessary to enhance the economic factors. A series of workshops were carried out in these communities addressing two different target groups: (1) local authorities’ representatives, and their role in Local Economic Development, and (2) private sector representatives, and their problems, needs and priorities for future development. As result, 12 selected communities developed and approved Local Economic Development Plans. Over 40 LED initiatives were developed additionally serving as base for future fundraising for LPAs in order to implement identified economic opportunities.

JILDP strengthened local CBOs to become reliable partners for LPAs and businesses in local economic development and engagement process.

An innovative instrument piloted in these 12 communities was the support provided in setting-up a communication platform with the local business community in order to enable creation and functionality of local economic councils. To date, the majority of the 12 communities have created and approved regulations for such local economic councils.

The programme provided support in creation of 3 public-private partnerships in the field of local service provision through providing trainings and assistance to elaborate feasibility studies and implement 3 selected PPPs, including at least one inter-community initiative.

In addition to supporting LPAS, the programme has been providing assistance to rural population from target communities to initiate small businesses and develop entrepreneurial skills. During the first stage, a series of business trainings were conducted for 363 persons (including 233 women). The main
goal was to capacitate the participants to open, expand, and manage innovative rural enterprises. It is worth mentioning that due to a great number of requests, the total number of trained participants was double as planned initially. Based on their assessment of general business management skills acquired after the trainings, almost half of the applicants were supported to draft business plans. As result, 164 of them (including 101 women) developed business plans for their ongoing or new businesses, thus increasing employability potential at local level.

As result of the capacity building efforts described above, 38 small businesses of which 48% existent and 52% newly created benefited from assistance and support in financing and business development. It’s worth mentioning, that this component was implemented in two rounds, the first round in 20 localities with businesses financed by JILDP/UNDP and later, in 10 localities, financed by JILDP/UN Women. In the second round, only women from JILDP localities were eligible to participate, and thus focusing on women’s economic empowerment.

Creation of new jobs, especially for vulnerable people and women was the main purpose of providing financial support in the form of grant. As result of project implementation, in average, each business created 3 new jobs, summing up to a total of 115 new jobs created.

38 financed businesses represent different business areas, but mostly agricultural sector, including apiculture, zootechnics, food processing, horticulture, flower growing, crafts, clothing etc. (as per. Fig.3).

Additionally to the business grants, to further enable the local environment for increased employment opportunities for women and vulnerable groups, the CBOs and local governments in 4 communities, with JILDP support, created 1 crèche group and increased the number of places in 3 kindergartens, thus creating additional 4 new jobs and already providing opportunities for 42 women to get employed as result of extended child care services in their communities.

Scaling-Up

Supporting local development was the main focus of three consecutive programs phases (I phase -ILDP 2007-2009, II phase - JILDP 2010-2012, third phase JILDP 2013-2015), and shall remain for the next programmatic intervention (IMLDP 2015-2017). Throughout almost ten years of interventions, the JILDP was persistent in supporting the same policy level development related to decentralization, coupled with consistent methodologies and approaches to local development perpetuated and improved over time. The long-term interrupted work allowed the JILDP to address the issue of sustainability and scalability of its interventions programmatically, both vertically and horizontally. Hence, the JILDP ensured that policy level reforms were reflected in local level interventions, while local level practices were supported by a permissive legal framework.

More specifically, at policy level, the JILDP worked closely with the State Chancellery to develop the National Decentralization Strategy, and consequently its horizontal spread to other fields, particularly fiscal, education, environment, social protection, youth and culture, property, etc. At the same time, JILDP’s support was significant in conceptualizing the fiscal decentralization reform, and subsequently piloting it in three rayons and Chisinau municipality, and expansion nation-wide the new system of local public finance. The pilots (in the ILDP phase) and the capacity building support of JILDP to all first level local
governments in (in 2015) in implementing the mandatory performance based budgeting methodology at local level is also noteworthy in this context.

At the same, at local level JILDP had successfully tested, piloted and ultimately extended to larger scale innovative models for local service provision (IMC) and community mobilization for empowerment. The first IMC tested in the second phase of JILDP provided valuable methodological insight for a functional IMC model in Moldova, and was further applied in the ten pilot IMC projects for different types of local public services. In parallel, the IMC piloting experience was used to inform the development and official approval of a supportive legal framework in the country with the support of JILDP. JILDP’s soft interventions at local level were based on the community mobilization for empowerment methodology developed and piloted in its second phased, and continuously applied in its 2013-2015 phase as well. With its strong focus on including the vulnerable in the local decision making process, human rights and gender sensitive local strategic planning, this approach was applied in selecting, implementing and monitoring the specific public service investments and tailored interventions in each target community. This methodology is commonly referred to by the State Chancellery and other donors for ensuring genuine inclusive and participatory processes at local level.

IV. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility efforts within the Programme were focused on two areas: assistance to promote decentralization reform and showcasing progress reached at local level in 30 target communities.

With regard to the policy component, the communication consultant’s effort continued to outline the progress in the development and discussion of sector decentralization strategies and focused on transferring reporting and web management skills and competencies to the State Chancellery Decentralization Policy Division. The consultant helped arrange more than 20 interviews in the national media with key stakeholders on the decentralization reform, which emphasized the Moldovan Government’s commitment to advance its implementation. One video spot for promoting decentralization benefits was produced and broadcasted on several TV stations.

For a better project promotion, the visual identity of Programme was enhanced: logo, slogan, site, facebook account etc.

The communication and the cooperation between LPA and citizens were improved through dedicated activities, like the Transparency Week organized in last two years. In October, during one week, about 65 thousand people from more than 30 municipalities from 17 districts of the state had the opportunity to participate in activities organized by local public authorities; mayors, local councilors, and community opinion leaders have conducted more than 300 local activities with the support of the JILDP team. Many more people were informed by press about the importance of transparency in decision-making (36 appearances in 25 media sources, including reports, interviews, broadcasts, news). An innovative communication instrument – a mobile cartoon exhibition – was presented during the Transparency week and will continue to be exhibited until the end of the programme.

A better communication between LPA and central authorities was ensured by study visits and discussions. Over 50 mayors and local civil servants were informed about the advantages of transparency during eight study visits in Moldovan municipalities. There was also organized a specialized training in decisional transparency.
UN Day, 69th anniversary. JILDP reaffirmed UN global mission and the universal values of mutual respect and human dignity on the 69th anniversary of the UN Organization, in Singereii Noi village, which is a JILDP target community.

International Anti-Corruption Day. In the framework of the International Anti-Corruption Day, celebrated since 2009, citizens of Moldova were informed about negative effects of corruption in the educational system. 100 students and teachers from 22 schools from JILDP target communities attended the events "Break the corruption chain". Their actions have helped to increase awareness on the effects of corruption, and this event was covered by 50 media sources, with 55 releases (reportages, news, and articles). A greater coverage of pupils’ anticorruption messages was ensured through 10 short videos produced and posted on social platforms. An awareness campaign was conducted aiming to make young people rely on their own efforts and break the corruption chain. The campaign had a spot with a Moldovan musician of international stature. This spot was broadcasted on several TV stations with national and local coverage and was distributed on social networks.

CALM Women Mayors’ Network has received support from JILDP for organization of the event “Women in Society – Authority, Power, and Leadership” in 2015 on promoting women in leadership positions, gender equality and HRBA in local development, practices of good governance and the need and importance of women leaders capacity building. Also, an awareness raising and visibility photo brochure was developed. The event attended by more than 150 women and men mayors, heads of districts, secretaries of LPAs and local public servants, as well as representatives from the central authorities and international development partners. It was organized in partnership with other international development partners, including GIZ and USAID.

National media campaigns. The biggest local media campaign „Watch. Listen. Understand” was conducted by Radio Free Europe in Moldova in partnership with JILDP, in August 2015. Its team traveled throughout the country, stopped in large and small localities and promoted local projects. Local leaders, non-governmental organizations and citizens took part in debates. Following these meetings radio and TV channels made reports about the difficulties of these communities. This campaign was covered by 50 media sources, with 70 releases (reportages, news, articles).

All the results of JILDP were promoted within 30 national and local events. 7000 visibility products were printed, including: street banners (20), entrance panels (20), stickers for purchased equipment (1000) etc. Uniforms with the JILDP logos were ordered for the personnel of IMC companies (40).

7 video toolkits were produced to support local public authorities in identifying local problems.

An international final conference presented the results achieved during programme implementation. Key persons from ministers and local authorities had the opportunity to understand the complexity of the decentralization reform. An exhibition focused on the main programme results was held at the conference. It had 4 stands presenting the main locally developed solutions for intermunicipal cooperation, local economic development, community mobilization, e-services.

A close cooperation was established with mass-media to promote the idea of a model community. During the reference period, the Programme had 300 appearances in mass-media, of which seven were debate shows and interviews exclusively about JILDP.

The communication efforts were focused on presenting JILDP best practices in 30 target communities, in order to improve communication between JILDP beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders. There were published 6 editions of JILDP Newsletter, in Romanian, Russian and English. These contain information about all areas of JILDP interventions at national and local level. The newsletters were widely distributed
to all governmental and nongovernmental partners, local public authorities, donors, partner organizations and media, including online. In order to reach a larger audience, the web page www.descentralizare.gov.md and the facebook page were continuously updated; a milestone of 1000 members was reached on facebook. To ensure visibility to current local and national partners and development partners, information about the main activities was published on social networks (on Facebook, Reforma de descentralizare had 600 posts, viewed by 90,000 people; the number of those that liked the page increased by 70% from January 1, 2015).

V. COOPERATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND SINERGIES

As JILDP was designed under the sign of partnership and cooperation, without which such a complex reform affecting a large part of the central government and all of the local authorities, would not be possible. Moreover, this kind of reform needs the support of the population and the civil society organizations. Hence, to achieve its targets, JILDP chose its partners strategically and fostered cooperation with the main central governmental authorities, development partners, local stakeholders and other UN projects and agencies.

A strong partnership of with the State Chancellery was part of the JILDP design and imperative for contributing meaningfully to the decentralization agenda. This partnership started in the second phase of JILDP and grew into trust-based relationship and constructive teamwork.

The partnership with governmental institutions extended to all ministries and governmental agencies involved in the decentralization reform, and focused on responding to their priorities and needs for carrying sectoral decentralization. In this regard, the cooperation with the Ministry of Finance was particularly meaningful for assessing the impact of the new public finance system and implementing performance based budgeting at the national level. The productive cooperation with the Ministries of Environment and of Education allowed for advancing sectoral policies in these fields.

The partnership with the APA was particularly efficient and appropriate for ensuring the sustainability of capacity building interventions. It resulted in APA taking over the ownership of the professional development programs and the development of the e-learning platform for the newly elected local officials.

Partnerships with local stakeholders were essential for the local development activities. During its three years of implementation, JILDP fostered strong cooperation with local governments and CSOs from target communities, as well as facilitated the collaboration among them for a genuine integrated local development.

The continued cooperation with the Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova was conducive to a stronger Women’s network within CALM and a relevant dissemination of good practices of IMC. Thus, JILDP has contributed to institutionalizing the women’s network through accurate collection of data, capacity building and networking efforts for empowerment of women secretaries and mayors. The four roundtables organized with CALM ensured that IMC models are popularized and accepted by local governments from Moldova.

JILDP cooperated with the main think tanks and consulting companies (IDIS Viitorul, IDU, Contact, Institute for Economic Research, Magenta consulting, CBS Axa, IHS Romania etc.) to create IMC
models, provide trainings and guidance for economic development and business startup, but also to identify technical solutions and for the decentralization reform and local development.

Special collaboration and synergies were ensured with the other UN projects. Thus, synchronizing its efforts with JILDP on supporting performance based budgeting at local level, the Environmental Fiscal Reform Project introduced environmental aspects in local budget planning in 6 pilot towns of Moldova. Also this instrument will be applied to support the National Planning for Adaptation of the Republic of Moldova on Climate Change in six districts. A study of the tax system for natural resources elaborated and discussed under EFR project ensured logical complementarities to the sectoral decentralization strategy on management of natural resources developed previously with JILDP technical assistance.

With the view to testing innovation at local level, JILDP successfully cooperated with the E-governance Center and MiLab/UNDP. An initial exercise of local public service re-engineering using design thinking was conducted in one of JILDP target communities.

Cooperation with UN joint “Women in Politics” and OHCHR led to further empowerment of women and vulnerable groups at the local level. Concerted capacity building, guidance and assistance to women in local governance, Romani women, persons with disabilities, older persons, etc., led to increased participation and representation of women from marginalized and vulnerable groups in decision-making and politics.

Embarking in an active dialog and coordination process, JILDP was successful in building solid partnerships and implementing meaningful initiatives with the main development partners in this field, as presented below.

JILDP joined forces with Soros Foundation Moldova, other local and international development partners and NGOs for organizing the Forum of Women Leaders from Rural communities. The national Forum that included over 100 participants concluded with a Resolution that included women’s concerns in politics and decision-making, social entrepreneurship, community strengthening through art, culture and traditions.

JILDP continued its cooperation with e-Government Centre and USAID Local Government Support Project on developing a platform for community websites. Once the platform was developed by USAID, JILDP disseminated it and supported its target local governments in using it to develop community webpages.

A dialogue regarding decentralization / regional development, as well as gender mainstreaming and women empowerment involved a number of bilateral donors and embassies (USAID, GIZ, SDC etc.). Thus the JILDP approach for creating IMC was successfully applied by the SDC project in the field of water supply and sanitation.

The international study visits were also organized thanks to the successful setting of joint efforts. The partnerships with the Representative of the Solidarity Fund in Moldova was instrumental in organizing the study trip to Poland for Moldovan mayors, as well as a return study visit of Polish mayors in Moldova; while organizing the study trip to Romania was possible due to the cooperation with the Euroregion Siret-Prut-Nistru from Iasi.

The International Decentralization Conference “Decentralization: the path to modernization of the Republic of Moldova”, organized by the State Chancellery in partnership with CALM, required the concerted efforts of all major donors in this field – the Council of Europe, USAID/LGSP Project, GIZ and Representative of Solidarity Fund in Moldova, with JILDP having the leading role in ensuring this
successful coordination. During the conference, the main stakeholders took stock of the results achieved in implementing the National Decentralization Strategy and its Action Plan during 2012-2015, and formulated new strategic directions for the decentralization reform.

VI. MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Joint Integrated Local Development Programme is managed as a joint initiative of two development agencies (UNDP and UN Women) and the Government of the Republic of Moldova, the State Chancellery being the National Implementation Partner. Cooperation between national and international partners has been achieved through the following institutional management structure (1) Steering Committee; (2) Inter-Agency Coordination Committee; (3) JILDP Management Team.

During implementation period the Steering Committee (SC) had six meetings. The meetings resulted in approved progress reports, work plans, quarterly and annual budgets, as well as decisions on specific implementation issues related to the selection of target beneficiaries, establishment of grants’ size to support community initiatives, the transfer of assets from the JILDP balance to the beneficiaries and many others.

The JILDP team consists of: (a) the management team: a Programme Manager, a Project officer and a UN Women placed Programme Analyst on GE and HRBA. Additionally, the programme team is assisted by the National Consultants specialized for providing technical support in the specific areas, and (b) the support team: Financial Associate, Programme Assistant and Driver.

The Programme Manager was responsible for facilitation and coordination of the Programme and of other general activities including interaction with the Government, as well as reporting, monitoring, and evaluation.

The Policy Advisor/Project Officer of Local Government and Development component was responsible for planning and management of activities, as well as for achieving the proposed performance indicators within this component.

The National Consultants and Facilitators that shared their best practices and concerns, at weekly meeting, provided technical support to the programme in specific areas: Capacity Building, Sectoral Decentralization, Inter-Municipal Cooperation, Gender Mainstreaming, Business Development and Monitoring and Evaluation, at community level.

The Programme Analyst had the responsibility to ensure a synergy and efficient achievement of programme objectives and the activities through gender mainstreaming and women empowerment, as well as through operationalizing HRBA.

Monitoring of the implementation of programme activities was conducted through: Semester’s Activity Report, Operative meetings and field monitoring missions for evaluating the programme activities. Semester reporting was done by preparing progress reports, accompanied by comments on the achieved results and performance indicators. These reports were approved at the SC meetings. Operative meetings were organized in a planned or ad-hoc manner in order to assess the interim results or the final implementation of certain activities, such as submission of studies, support of community initiatives etc. Special monitoring missions were organized in order to verify the results of the field implemented
activities. Usually, these missions were conducted by project’s managers or/and advisers, national/local consultant.

Evaluation of the results of project implementation was carried out by an international and a national evaluator and was accompanied by a final report. A summary of the conclusions and recommendation of the evaluators is attached to this report.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Decentralization is one of the complex and difficult reform which require strong political will and government commitment. Usually, such a reform faces an inherent political risk. Five years is a too short period for the implementation; it provides no respite for overcoming some political risks related to elections, change of government or change of ministers.

The new system of local public finance positively influenced the advancement of the decentralization reform. Despite the fact that the new public finance system was piloted in a small number of LPAs (less than 8% of total numbers of LPAs), it covered a large number of inhabitants - over 30%. Piloting the new system made the fiscal decentralization reform irreversible, facilitated the establishment of new inter-relationships procedures and prepared the ground for implementing fiscal decentralization in the entire country.

Insufficient human and financial resources impeded the implementation of sectoral decentralization strategies. Despite the fact that main ministries have elaborated the sectoral decentralization strategies, their approval is pending because there are not enough human and financial resources for supporting the implementation of the action plan. Sectoral decentralization strategies have to be linked to / integrated into the general sectoral development strategies (e.g. Education Strategy and Education Code include decentralization provisions), which in their turn should be rights-based and gender-mainstreamed.

Territorial-administrative structure remains a key aspect of the decentralization process. The high fragmentation lead to inefficient use of human and financial resources, hindering development and access to local public services. Also territorial fragmentation makes it difficult and costly to fully implement a functional decentralization, for example, fiscal decentralization, property delimitation or the clarification of sectoral competences mandates. Although absolutely indispensable, territorial administrative reorganization is a difficult political subject. The government needs to find a rational solution, which will also be politically acceptable. As showed by the international experience, the voluntary territorial amalgamation could be beneficial for the initial stage of reform, but it could not take a long time If it is to be done, it can start from as soon as possible. The new more efficient territorial administrative structure would be created by 2019.

Strengthening capacities and changing institutional culture needs champions of change, characterized by motivation, commitment and trust that the change will bring benefits to the institution and wider community. Mathematical selection of targeted LPAs or central government beneficiaries is not enough – it does not analyze the ambition of the municipality/institution. Competitive selection of municipalities may bring additional results in programmes focusing on local development.
Modeling new approaches to service delivery and basing advocacy for new policy or legislative solutions for improvement of public services is a good approach. JILDP modelled IMCs and based its advocacy with the government on positive experiences and lessons learned gathered. Showcasing new practices and models assists government to grasp the extent to which new approaches can facilitate development, which in turn facilitates adopting decisions and legislative/policy solutions for replication of such practices.

Greater **impact of program activities can be achieved when “hard” interventions are accompanied by “soft” activities.** This approach is effective when targeting institutional development of local governments, but also when working toward improving service provision at local level. Small-scale granting and comprehensive training and specialized coaching for local governments proved to be an efficient mix of interventions in building understanding of the importance of efficient institutional management as a key element for better public service provision. Following the same philosophy, public service provision improvement should not be limited to technical consolidation, but should be linked to real local needs, involve all community stakeholders, and should be supported by a continuous learning and upgrading process.

**Capacity building of local governments is particularly necessary when vast and complex national reforms are envisaged.** Interventions targeting professional development and coaching in using the new analytical and practical tools were particularly timely for the pilot local governments to ensure their smooth transition and acceptance of the new local public finance system.

**Investment in strengthening local level good governance through investment in LPAs and on community mobilization** (through strengthening CSOs and entrepreneurship) brings positive outcomes for citizens. JILDP experience shows that there is potential for positively affecting livelihoods by programmes that offer holistic approach towards strengthening duty bearers and empowering right holders.

**Enhanced communication, cooperation and partnership between LPAs and communities** should continue to be fostered for an integrated development. The decisions of the mayors and LPAs should respond to the needs the community members and respond to the community problems. To know the perspectives of all of the groups and to know how to respond to the needs of those groups LPAs should invest more in communication with the representatives of all groups in the community. By inviting the stakeholders to be involved and participate in community activities, by learning the others’ perspectives, the ownership of the activities will be ensured and could be extended towards all the members of the community. This will also contribute to the sustainability of the activities undertaken in those communities.

**Synergies amongst communities should be encouraged** through study visits and exchange of best practices. People as well as LPAs learn better if they have a clear example of what was done and how was done. During the study visits, organized nationally and internationally, the participants get more ideas what could work in their own communities, learn lessons from their peers and may decide to replicate a certain model or avoid certain mistakes, steps have proved to be effective. Additionally, this contributes to a healthy networking.

After 20 years of international assistance, **Moldovan LPAs built up an ample magnitude of first-rate in-house know-how.** Consequently, the peer reviews (municipality-to-municipality) could be explored as an excellent opportunity to exchange information on successful and promising practices, approaches, organizational structures and tools used in the delivery of local public services.
Innovation and thinking out of the box should be encouraged. Each LPA is a living body with its own profile, processes and specificities. What works in one community does not necessarily work in another, therefore, if replicating an approach, system or product, the communities should take into account own specificities and adopt an individualized approach.
VIII. FINANCIAL REPORT

The JILDP budget for Programme implementation was funded from the following sources, as shown below.

JILDP sources of funds, USD

<table>
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<th>Received, USD</th>
<th>Total 2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIDA – UNDP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>311 643</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIDA – UNWOMEN</td>
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<td></td>
<td>33 752</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2 379 916</td>
<td>2 289 022</td>
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<tr>
<td>DANIDA- UNWOMEN</td>
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<td>292 775</td>
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<td>DGTTF Anticorruption</td>
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<td>65 000</td>
<td>10 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN Women Core funds allocations</td>
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<td>17 538</td>
<td>835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total received</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 942 028</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 782 556</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 144 027</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Incurred project implementation costs in 2013-2015 made up:

JILDP project expenditures for 2013-2015, USD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Total 2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>UNWOMEN</td>
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<td>26 835</td>
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<tr>
<td>Component 2 UNDP</td>
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<td>1 876 421</td>
<td>640 539</td>
</tr>
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<td>93 417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management UNDP</td>
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<td>362 892</td>
<td>326 503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNWOMEN</td>
<td>101 246</td>
<td>24 641</td>
<td>35 304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 266 726</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 115 044</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 187 593</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNWOMEN</td>
<td>675 302</td>
<td>291 381</td>
<td>155 555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL JILDP</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 942 028</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 343 410</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 343 148</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
ANNEX 1. List of JILDP products

1. Guide for Sectoral decentralization strategies
2. Draft of the decentralization strategy in culture
3. Draft of the decentralization strategy in youth and sport
4. Sectoral decentralization strategy for social services
5. Methodology of the decentralization strategies in communal service
6. Sectoral Strategies for decentralization of services in water and sanitation, waste management and natural resources management
7. Study on perspectives of inter-municipal cooperation in Moldova
8. Advisory note on mainstreaming HRBA and gender dimension into the development of the administrative-territorial reform options and related processes
9. Advisory note on the monitoring and evaluation process of the new local public finance system in the pilot localities
10. Advisory Note on HRBA/GE as applied to IMC
11. IMC Guide
12. Guide for LPAs on public property management
13. Guide for LPAs on public procurement
15. Guide for LPAs on human resource management
16. National local service delivery regulatory framework related to IMC in organizing and operating legal units for communal services was amended (Government Decision from 03.07.2014 on adjusting the Regulation on municipal enterprises)
17. New system of local government finances approved for implementation from 2015, while three districts and the Capital City piloted the system during 2014 (Law nr.267 from 1.11.2013, [http://lex.justice.md/md/350367](http://lex.justice.md/md/350367))
18. Study of local revenues and study visit on increasing the local revenue base
19. Assessment Report on the impact of the new local public finance system in 74 pilot LPAs
20. Public Policy Document on efficient territorial-administrative organization of the Republic of Moldova
21. Plan of Action for implementation of the reform of efficient territorial-administrative organization of the Republic of Moldova
22. Methodology for monitoring and assessing the degree of implementation of the National Decentralization Strategy

24. Baseline survey in 30 communities

25. Methodology for assessment of LPA capacity


27. Report on international practices on fiscal incentives for inter-municipal cooperation

28. Methodology for LPAs to evaluate local employment markets, with focus on women’s employability.
ANNEX 2. List of information sources

2014

http://www.publika.md/ziua-internationala-de-lupta-impotriva-coruptiei_marcat-a-moldova/
http://www.europalibera.org/content/article/26634893.html
http://www.europalibera.org/content/article/26636911.html
http://www.europalibera.org/content/article/26637472.html
http://www.europalibera.org/content/article/26641918.html
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GD80K5R32Ls&feature=youtu.be
http://ziarulnational.md/primarul-care-trimite-sms-localnicilor/
http://ziarulnational.md/premiera-saptamana-transparentei-in-r-moldova/
http://ziarulnational.md/primarul-care-trimite-sms-localnicilor/
http://www.cuvintul.md/article/5041/
http://www.timpul.md/articol/100-de-elevi-au-lansat-campania-impotriva-corupiei-67224.html
http://www.zdg.md/stiri/cna-spune-nu-coruptiei
http://adevarul.ro/moldova/social/coruptia-combatuta-prinjocuri-1_5487fff448e03c0fd9f3c0a/index.html
http://adevarul.ro/moldova/social/combaterea-coruptiei-osarcina-nimaniu-strainii-vor-rezolva-1_5487fccc448e03c0fd9f2726/index.html
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http://adevarul.ro/moldova/social/primar-moldova-comuna-cetatenii-sms-uri-radiouri-platforme-online-1_5448cfc90d133766a82b7b1d/index.html
http://www.ipn.md/ro/stiri-locale/65066
http://www.ipn.md/ro/stiri-locale/65067
http://www.ipn.md/ro/stiri-locale/65197
http://agora.md/stiri/4113/ingeniozitate-de-primar-protejeaza-copacii-de-nuc-si-aduce-si-bani-la-buget

2015
A. Conclusions

This chapter sets out the Evaluators’ conclusions on the strategy and performance of the JILDP Programme based on the triangulation of data gathered through desk review, interviews and focus group discussions as well as site observations.

The programme has been relevant in view of existing and emerging priorities of the Moldovan government to furthering the decentralization reforms and in light of existing gaps in evidence-based policy inputs and solutions at central and local levels and also low awareness and skills of relevant actors of the process, new mechanisms and their benefits. The project addressed important gaps in the evidence base for existing and new policy frameworks, as well as capacity development needs of partners from government, civil society and business sector. The project also addressed the needs of right holders: most vulnerable groups, through empowering them to take more active part in community life.

Evaluation findings as regards contribution to envisaged results are positive, overall, albeit lower effects are recorded for support to policy level. The programme has succeeded in achieving strong results in its work with local level duty bearers and right holders. However, the achievements in the area policy making are partial, mainly due to external political factors, beyond control of the Programme. At policy level, contributions are visible in encouraging dialogue and supporting evidence based and inclusive policy making processes, albeit not all supported policy processes materialized in adopted and implemented policies. At local level, the Programme achieved a lot of promising results in stimulating an inclusive process of municipal planning and service delivery with enhanced good governance mechanisms. Programme’s support to LPAs, CSOs, business and inter-municipal cooperation enhances access to social services, thus improving livelihoods and increasing economic prospects. Cooperation between civil society and local governments towards enabling access to, empowerment of vulnerable groups, and strengthening mechanisms for citizen participation are already bringing results in the communities.

JILDP has been efficiently implemented, contributing to effectiveness of results. Yet, the programme has tackled a range of issues at different levels of governance and involving diverse stakeholders, both duty bearers and right holders, which provides the risk of spreading resources thin and fragmentation. This risk was mitigated by JILDP’s experienced team with expertise in policy making and local development as well as ongoing support by both UN Agencies involved in the programme and the donor. Management efforts by JILDP team were appropriate and contributed to the effective and efficient implementation of planned initiatives. While grants and cooperation agreements with individual partners varied in size, they often contributed to achieving results that have the potential to positively influence further development of communities and partners.

However, the sustainability prospects of the Programme achievements are mixed. Envisaged policy changes have not been achieved as planned, which makes the sustainability of the development efforts limited only to areas where government response was ensured in the form of adopted policies/legislation (e.g. Sectorial decentralization strategies for education, social protection; Regulation for IMCs, etc.). At local level, acquired skills and institutionalized governance mechanisms, services and practices have higher sustainability prospects. Improved and established infrastructure and structures (IMCs, businesses,
CSOs, social and community infrastructure) have also high sustainability prospects. Also, staff turnover, frequent institutional changes reduce the benefits of capacity building investment.

B. Recommendations

Recommendations presented below are based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation as well as on consultation with all key stakeholders that were interviewed during the field phase. Each interview and discussion group has checked the perceptions of various stakeholders (government counterparts, UNDP and UN Women, development and programme partners and beneficiaries) concerning the priorities of reforms of local government that need to be addressed in the coming years (see Interview Guides in Annex 2). Validation of recommendations was done in two phases: 1) during de-briefing session with UNDP and UN Women, 2) following submission of the draft report with evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

For ease of reference, recommendations are divided into two categories, as follows:

**Strategic Recommendation 1:**

*Continue the initiatives started by the Programme towards further institutionalization of positive results and to contribute to the Programme goal to support better and equitable service provision and sustainable local development, facilitated by the improved legal and institutional framework resulting from the implementation of the National Decentralization Strategy.*

The joint development initiative of UNDP and UN Women, government partners and donors for enabling stronger framework for advancement of decentralization reforms and strengthening duty bearers and right holders should be continued. The JILDP Programme laid foundations for good governance and more inclusive policy processes and created momentum for change. This momentum should not be lost but utilized for supporting government to reach the national and international priorities and standards in service provision and policy making. The new programme should include, but not be limited to efforts to:

**At central level:**

- Further support and advocacy for territorial-administrative reform as a prerequisite for all other related reform activities in different sectors

**At local and regional levels:**

- Continued capacity building of selected LPAs to apply good governance principles in developmental planning and service provision (insisting on transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of municipal operations, while ensuring participation and inclusion of citizens);
- Replication of good practices of IMCs and PPPs for better service provision;
- Continue with in-country exchange visits between target communities and eventually include communities not covered by the project, to contribute to possible spill-over effect.
- Invest in CSOs as drivers of change and community development, empowering them to be policy actors;
- Integrate entrepreneurship and business development initiatives in the programme support to local development.

**Strategic Recommendation 2: Conduct Impact Assessment of the (J)ILDP Programme(s)**

The (J)ILDP Programme has been investing significant efforts and resources in building policies, capacities and new models of services and good governance approaches since its first programme which
started in 2007. Impact assessment of the (J)ILDP is seen as an important process to gain knowledge on effects and impacts of these interventions within the Programme. It should be an in-depth assessment of outcomes and impacts of the development interventions on duty bearers and right holders, and should apply sound impact assessment methodologies. Such assessment will be used for designing better development policies at national and local level, as well as for creating new development interventions that will better suit the needs of local government units and citizens. It is recommended that the potential successor Programme is designed based on a comprehensive impact assessment, which would serve as a baseline study for Programme’s results (and indicators).

**Programme and delivery recommendation 1: Ensure good governance principles are mainstreamed into all development efforts towards integrated local development**

Integration of some good governance principles in Programme activities has already been bringing positive results. Further on-going efforts towards integrated local development should ensure good governance principles are imperative for all efforts in order to benefits for LPAs and impacts on improvement of livelihoods. Also, it will contribute to improvement of investment prospects of municipalities, as they will contribute to better competitiveness. The future impact and long term sustainability can be enhanced by focusing on good governance elements.

**Programme and delivery recommendation 2: Identify and provide capacity building support to local/community experts (agents of change) for community facilitation and mobilization (Community Facilitators)**

During the evaluation, the benefits of outsourcing Community facilitators have been visibly shown. The programming of such future efforts should ensure that local/community experts (agents of change) are identified and capacity building support to them is provided towards strengthening critical mass of local experts in targeted communities or regions is maintained.

**Programme and delivery recommendation 3: Continue investing in local economic development and IMCs.**

The Programme has established important foundations and developed successful models for economic development and IMCs. These models should be further replicated in the follow up and other UN/DP programmes.

**Programme and delivery recommendation 4: Invest in CSOs representing business interests (e.g. Business associations, associations of employers, etc.)**

Invest in CSOs as drivers of change, empowering them to be policy actors (evidence based advocacy) from different areas of business sector to enable them to influence policies relating to economic and business development (e.g. supporting advocacy in agribusiness by agribusiness associations).