

Scoping Study

Role of Scottish Local Government in International Development

Purpose:

1. To provide an updated overview of the opportunities available to Scottish Councils in engaging in International Development Decentralised Cooperation of Local Authorities, that are currently available on the European and international level including the EU's development agenda and the UN.

Background:

2. Decentralised Cooperation is a widely used term for international development-led by local authorities. At the moment Local Authorities engagement international development is comparatively limited compared with other parts of the UK and certainly so Vis a Vis Local Authorities of other European countries both in Northern and Southern Europe. At present this essentially takes form by the participation of a small number of Councils in the Scottish Malawi Partnership.
3. COSLA as national association of Scottish Councils is frequently exposed through our European and international work and the exchanges with our European and Global umbrella bodies CEMR and UCLG¹ – who have dedicated lines of work on decentralised cooperation – and the bilateral contacts with our peers from other countries – many of which have also dedicated roles in this matter – as well as direct contact from EU and UN who regularly get in touch seeking Scottish Local Government participation in a range of initiatives, which we have circulated to Council colleagues as appropriate.
4. Both the Scottish Government 2015 *International Framework* and *International Policy Statement* continue to make Scotland as a Good Global Citizen one of its key priorities as well as the work on international development.
5. While COSLA has previously produced scoping studies on the available – and largely-untapped opportunity for Scottish Local Government involved in international development our contribution to the Smith Commission provides an opening to revisit this. Indeed COSLA submission to the Smith Commission recalled that *“there is no partnership arrangement whereby the role of Scottish Councils role is explicitly recognised in shaping Scottish and UK international development policy. This now needs to be redressed and our expertise in education, economic development, public health, transport, community development, governance and anti-poverty work in other countries accompanied by commensurate resources.”*

¹ Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the largest European body of local government and COSLA is the Scottish national member. United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) is the global version of CEMR and is part of the United Nations advisory committees structure, as well as participant in the negotiation rounds of the Sustainable Development Goals and the forthcoming UN HABITAT III on Sustainable Urban Development.

6. In the past COSLA has circulated similar updates of engagement possibilities for Scottish Councils well beyond the existing arrangements so this paper updates previous COSLA material by providing views we gathered from our counterparts involved in international development. Incidentally COSLA was invited to provide in kind support for an International Development activity in Senegal last February from our European umbrella CEMR which was a good source of evidence on what is actually feasible on the ground.
7. In the meantime the Scottish Government launched a public consultation on *“Meeting Global Challenges & Making a Difference. Aligning our International Development Policy with the Global Goals”* ending 20th May.
8. While the below assessment was not explicitly done to respond to this it might be used by Local Authorities and indeed COSLA to provide the local government angle to this consultation.

Detail

I. Legal Background

9. The Local Government (Overseas Assistance) Act 1993 is the UK-wide legislation that empowers all UK local authorities to provide advice and assistance as respects matters in which they have skill and experience to bodies engaged *outside* the United Kingdom in the carrying on of any of the activities of local government. This general power of competence is what legally enables Local Authorities to carry out international development work but also EU projects or other activities such as town twinning and the EU policy and representation work carried out by COSLA on Council’s behalf.
10. Interestingly the 2003 Act required the prior general authorisation of the Secretary of State prior to carrying out overseas activities. However this was removed, for English and Welsh authorities via the Legislative Reform (Local Authority Consent but apparently has not been removed for Scottish Local Government.
11. Paradoxically it is worth noting that the general power of competence is currently being modified for English and Welsh Councils through the CLG proposal of reform Local Government Pension Scheme: Revoking and replacing the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2009 which specifically recall that the “Secretary of State has made clear that using pensions and procurement policies to pursue boycotts, divestments and sanctions against foreign nations and the UK defence industry are inappropriate” and thus that (English & Welsh) Local Authorities *should “should not pursue policies which run contrary to UK foreign policy “*. We are adamant that this very narrow restriction does not apply to Scottish Local Government Pension scheme as operates under a separate jurisdiction.
12. Lastly the Smith Commission and the UK Government response made clear that UK reserved powers on international relations remain unaltered and thus new Scotland Act does not consider this matter.

II. Existing engagement:

II.a. Scottish Malawi Partnership

13. The Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP) is the national civil society network coordinating, supporting and representing the people-to-people links between our two nations. We represent a community of 94,000 Scots with active links to Malawi. It is a non-governmental network but it is supported by the Scottish Government. Half of Scottish Local Authorities are part of its 800 member strong organisations. It is as such the main international development

activity at present involving local government. As such it is a different approach to that taken in other countries where activities is not concentrated in a single country

II.b. Policy formulation

14. While this paper focuses on international development activities as such policy formulation is also a key aspect. As mentioned there is no established forum that Local authorities contribute to formulation of Scottish and UK positions even in issues that would not only concern developing Councils also affect Scottish Councils down the line.
15. This is partially compensated by way of COSLA membership of CEMR, where we participate in all working groups and one of our members is part of the Executive Bureau. In addition to that the COSLA President sits at the global local government body the UCLG World Council.

This mostly refers to the **UN Sustainable Development Goals 2016; the United Nations Climate Change Conferences and the UN HABITAT III Agendas**. [We have detailed material on these issues and the COSLA work on this which we are more than happy to share. For brevity we are not spelling it out here.](#)

III. Possible engagement :

III.a. Policy Formulation

16. In addition to increasing involvement in the above-mentioned forums and to seek a partnership discussions between local governed and national government there are a number of international partnerships that COSLA/Scottish Local Government is not currently involved

EU Development Agenda for Local Authorities

17. In 2008, the Commission for the first time explicitly recognised the role of local, regional and other devolved governments in development cooperation in its Communication 'Local Authorities: Actors for Development', which was later endorsed by EU leaders. It emphasised that the added value of involving local and regional authorities in the development process lies with their ability to mobilise local actors and create local partnerships to achieve shared development objectives. Local Authorities are indeed facilitating change, promoting sustainable development and good governance, responding to local needs, and raise awareness as many examples included in the Communication have shown.
18. This was built upon in the Commission Communication "Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes", adopted in 2013. It sets the Commission current policy as per Local Authorities in international development. Following detailed input from key actors (incl. CEMR/PLATFORMA) the Commission highlighted up challenges of involving local authorities including difficulties in involving civil society actors, remoteness from central monitoring and control mechanisms, lacking trust in local actors, corruption etc. Proper financial management, issues around co-financing were also recognised.
19. The Commission (supported by CoR) consequently involves Local Authorities in a structured dialogue on development policy, called [Assizes of Decentralised Cooperation](#), bringing together local authorities from EU and developing countries and the EU institutions. This is a more occasional forum compared to that of the Strategic Partnership/PLATFORMA (described below). It also created an [Atlas of Decentralised Cooperation](#) for mechanisms to report more effectively on cooperation activities and as part of a wider information platform. It also

dedicated EU funds to decentralised cooperation in a programme shared with non-governmental actors (see below).

PLATFORMA

20. CEMR has recently concluded a new agreement with the European Commission DG DEVCO for large multi-million, multi-annual grant to continue with PLATFORMA. This platform brings together local government and the EU institutions to discuss Decentralised Cooperation policies and funding but also provides funding support the development of partnerships at national level between national governments and local governments.
21. One of its main achievements was precisely the signature of a Strategic Partnership with the European Commission Directorate for International Development and Cooperation (DG DEVCO-EuropeAid). This 7 year political agreement recognises the role of subnational governments in capacity building projects international development and their role within the external policy of the EU.
22. Though not primarily aimed at carrying out actual projects in developing it has a role in advising the commission on the challenges faced by European local authority partners as they design the forthcoming calls and is used as a platform to bring together European local authority partners to join in bids.
23. Around 25 of the other CEMR national associations of Local Authorities are part of plus UCLG and CLGF. COSLA chose not to engage in PLATFORMA as the membership fee would be much higher and on top of our existing contribution to CEMR. However it should be noted that the EU funding that would then receive from PLATFORMA to support international development partnerships at national level in some cases offsets the initial investment made. Indeed when PLATFORMA was revamped a year and a half ago we were offered the chance to join. Equally they offered individual LAs to sign in. Out of due diligence we wrote to those Council colleagues that are involved in international work but none expressed any interest at the time.

Commonwealth Local Development Forum (CLGF)

24. The CLGF is a network of national associations of Local Authorities of the Commonwealth countries. Given the non-legislative nature of the Commonwealth the forum is a voluntary network to promote democracy and international development. Its membership is optional and COSLA chose not to be a member seven years ago. In England, over the last few years it has de facto taken up the work on international development of COSLA's English equivalent LGA as well as the so-called UK Local Government Alliance for International Development (LG-AID) which has been disbanded.
25. Many of CLGF policy functions overlap with those already provide by CEMR/UCLG and indeed they often sit in the same UN boards or international partnerships as CEMR/UCLG. It has however an international development project dimension, mostly focused on peer-to-peer capacity building (accountability, resource management, communication, monitoring and evaluation, adaptability and transparency) and Local Economic Development. While participation via CLGF has obvious advantages due to language and cultural affinities within the Commonwealth the added value of participation would have to be justified by a very significant intensity of participation offsetting not insignificant membership fees.

EU Committee of the Regions:

26. The Committee of the Regions of the European Union (CoR) is the official advisory body of local and regional authorities to the EU institutions. It has 350 full and alternate members. www.cor.europa.eu The Scottish contingent of 8 is nominated by the Scottish Parliament and COSLA. CoR carries out international development activities, mostly focused on the EU periphery notably the Working Group on Western Balkans (some Scottish participation over the years) , Turkey, Ukraine, Joint Committees with Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro and Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) and Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM)
CoR is also a partner of the Commission in the Assizes of Decentralised Cooperation (see above) and the European Development Days.

Council of Europe

27. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is a pan-European political assembly, the 648 elected members representing over 200,000 authorities in 47 European states. Its role is to promote local and regional democracy, improve local and regional governance and strengthen authorities' self-government. The Scottish contingent of 4 is nominated by the Scottish Parliament and COSLA.
28. Congress work in International Development (writ-large) focuses on election observation, particularly in countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia , as well as Turkey. This mainly carried out by Congress elected members but is open to practitioners and politicians not members of Congress).
29. There is however a capacity building element as well, by way of Congress there is support for decentralisation in the Southern Balkans, European Union-Council of Europe Eastern Partnership Programmatic Co-operation Framework (PCF) in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Belarus. For instance Cllr Evans has been involved in the "Strengthening the capacity of local authorities in Ukraine" and the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine peer to peer workshops, capacity building and support for decentralisation in Ukraine.

III.b Funding and Project Opportunities:

UK DFID

30. DfID is responsible for the majority of UK Overseas Development Assistance with a budget of around £12bn a year which is close to the UN commitment of allocating 0.7% of GNI per year to international development; indeed it has been one of the few protected departments in the Spending Review.
31. There are currently a range of five individual funds eligible for Local Government, notably the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme, which is run by the CLGF and is now targeted to South Africa, India, Ghana, Jamaica and Sierra Leone for local government corporate governance and local economic development.
32. This fundamentally means placement of LA practitioner in one of those countries and the budget is of up to £40,000 per partnership. COSLA was indeed involved in a previous iteration of this scheme back in 2004 that involved supporting Local Authorities in Jamaica improve corporate governance and strategic planning (work-shadowing, visioning exercises, organising and mobilising membership as well as working according to policy objectives and priorities.

33. There are other DIFD schemes currently available for Local Authorities – not tied to CLGF and covering 27 countries – such as “[Amplify: collaborative challenge fund](#)” a challenge fund which uses online collaboration to source ideas, research and insights before testing promising concepts with end users. Or the [Global Innovation Fund \(GIF\)](#) that provides grants, loans and equity of between £30,000 to £10m for social innovations to transform the lives and opportunities of people living in poverty.

Scottish Government International Development Fund

34. The Scottish Government's £9 million International Development Fund is focussed on seven countries around the world. This covers the above-mentioned fund with We have a partnership agreement with the Government of [Malawi](#) and around half of SG funding goes to projects in that country. We also support projects in three other countries in [Sub Saharan Africa](#) and in 3 countries in [South Asia](#). The [Small Grants Funding Round](#) has been set up to provide funding to smaller NGOs for projects in the SG 7 priority countries. In addition, the SG are currently funding work in Uganda and South Africa through our partnership with [Sport Relief](#) and over the last few years we have provided emergency humanitarian funding in response to the crises in [Syria](#), the [Philippines](#), Gaza and West Africa. The Scottish Government is also funding projects in Sub Saharan Africa through the [Climate Justice Fund](#).

35. The scope and remit of the SGIDF, including what could be the role of Scottish Local Government in it moving forward, is one of the subjects of the ongoing SG consultation.

International Development funding - International comparison

36. We have sought views and gathered evidence on international development work from a small number of European countries that are similarly sized as Scotland and with broadly similar local government systems (Sweden, Norway, and Denmark) and those with a Federal/Devolved structure broadly equivalent to that of the UK as a whole.

37. Such comparison shows that the DFID budget of £12bn and close to the UN goal 0,7% GDP allocated for international development compares very positively with similarly sized and regionalised states that are also quite invested in International Development such as France, Spain and Italy.

38. The Scottish Government budget of £9m does not obviously come anywhere close of 0.7% of Scottish GDP (£1,2bn) .If, as in some country do, the UN goal were to be translated to Local Government own block grant that would mean around £80m per year for local government to carry international development.

39. Other devolved/federal states in Europe offer useful points of comparison:

- In the **Basque Country** (2 m people but income and fiscal autonomy levels higher than Scotland's) the Basque Agency for International Development has a budget for projects of £30m per year. The Local Authority Partnership for International Development (Euskal Fonda) which brings together half of the 211 Basque Municipalities has a pooled budget of about £2m per year from the participating local authorities, but the total amounts earmarked by local authorities for international development amounts to about £20m per year.
- The **Catalan** Government Agency (6 million, broadly similar economic size) has an overall budget of about £22m. Local Authorities have their own partnership with a pooled budget of £2m
- In **Spain** as a whole its 17 autonomous governments do have a budget for international development and in 10 of them there are 10 municipal international development

funds. In each of them is often an official committee whether all public actors involved in international development plus third sector stakeholders are represented. State-wide the MUNICIPIA programme, jointly managed by the Spanish international aid agency (AECID), and the national association of municipalities and provinces (FEMP), gives support to municipalities, with incentives to coordinate international actions whenever possible. The size of local government international development monies is much larger, the latest pre-crisis data shows €147m of municipal international development budget.

- In **France** (not a fully regionalised state but with a size similar to the UK) the period 2010-2012, the ministry of foreign affairs has pledged to support 173 projects undertaken by French local and regional governments, amounting to €16.6 million total co-financing. (so about £5m government match funding for local government international development work); however size is much large of about €70m per year. Part of this volume is historical (links to former overseas possession) but also legal Municipalities have been given by law the right to earmark 1% of their budgets for international development
- In **Germany**, a federal state of 16 Lander, there is no federal government programme, though through development agencies like GTZ (now GIZ), and through some Lander programmes, German local governments do receive some support.
- In **Belgium** the three regions and communities have responsibilities for international relations –“*in foro interno in foro externo*”. Flanders is particularly active in International Development as a core part of its external policy; while the Federal Government is the sole Belgium representative in the UN as a donor it can participate in the UN system (the Flemish ODA programme amounts to about £42m per year - £2m of it is given to Flemish municipalities to carry out International Development)

40. European States with a size and a local government structure equivalent to Scotland:

- **Local Government Denmark** (LDGK) our Danish equivalent has kept in-house the functions equivalent to the our Improvement Service as a consultancy unit for their member councils, the same consultancy function is also used to provide consultancy support for capacity building, decentralization strategies, local government finance, development of Association of Local Authorities. Originally to support eastern and central Europe democratization of local government it has since expanded to support decentralization and local democratization in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These consultancy services have been financed by bilateral and multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, the EU, the OECD, OSCE, the UNDP, the Danish Government/Danica, the Swedish Government/Sida and the African Development Bank. Projects vary in size from 30,000 in capacity support in Albania, 150,000 ear for local finance reform in Afghanistan, 200,000 to develop the Ghana Local Authority Association, 80,000 to develop a Municipal Waste Strategy in Malaysia up to 1,2m for public procurement reform in Serbia.
- In **Sweden**, our equivalent there SALAR (SKL in Swedish) has a fully owned subsidiary SKL International AB. This company designs, plans and implements development projects in developing countries and countries in transition. Funding for projects is provided by external donors, with Swedish Aid (Sida) being the main contributor. Other financiers are international organizations such as the UN and the EU as well as bilateral aid donors such as Danish DANIDA and German GIZ. SKL International's projects centre on local democracy and local governance. Its main areas of expertise are: decentralisation; local democracy and governance; EU integration; local and regional development; municipal management and service delivery; thematic local partnerships; and support to Local Government Associations. SKL International also

works in sustainable urban development, the projects are carried out by employees as project managers/consultants together with experts and elected representatives from Swedish Local Authorities. Its annual budget is about £26m.

- Our **Dutch** colleagues VNG have a similar arrangement in *VNG International* a fully owned company with a total turnover of £18m per year. 51% of the turnover comes from foreign sources like World Bank, European Union, UN Agencies, and national governments of other countries. 49% of the turnover comes from Dutch funding namely the Government LOGON programme. Its activities are broadly similar to that of the Scandinavians however it has the notable differences: it has created a network of partner subsidiaries in each country it has major operations, some of the capacity building is done back in the Netherlands (Hague Academy for Local Governance) and it does not only do project but also does advocacy and policy towards the EU, UN jointly with VNG proper.

41. A key factor that explains the difference between these two groups of countries (large/federalised vs. Scotland-sized/Nordic) rest in that in the former legal power of competence and political culture enables Local Government to directly provide grant funding. In the latter, Nordic model there are more restrictions to that and thus their activities depend more on external funding, though often local governments are able to co-finance activities “in-kind” through their own staff or elected representatives’ participation ; so the actual volume of their activities is underreported in the above financial statements.
42. By way of **conclusion** of this international comparison it is clear that the shape and form is very much determined by financial, legal and historical tradition. It is however also clear that regardless of the format there is a great potential for Local Government to contribute to International Development and indeed the broader foreign policy objectives. Indeed compared with other actors such as the voluntary sector the local government “family” (in Scottish terms, Local Authorities themselves, COSLA, the Improvement Service, SOLACE Scotland and LG professional associations, regional, transport and health partnerships, joint boards, etc.) has a range of unique professional expertise to support democratisation, decentralisation and public service reform that could be deployed to contribute to Scotland’s ambition as a good global citizen.
43. Indeed given the large size of Scottish Councils, indeed the largest on average in Europe (with a large contingent of experienced workforce, Scottish unique models (Single Outcome Agreements, CPPs, local benchmarking, recent experience of three successive waves of major local government reform since 1973) provide opportunities to consider whether Scottish LG role in international development could become equivalent to that of our counterparts in Northern Europe and Scandinavia.
44. The crucial issue is obviously that of funding. Clearly the most readily available resource is in kind contribution (particularly local authority practitioners providing time and expertise) but even this is dependent on funding (for instance, travel costs). The above survey shows that Scottish national and Local Government financial commitments to international development are very low when compared to equivalent countries and regions and certainly well below the UN target of 0,7% of GDP. At the same time Scotland share of the UK International Development budget, and certainly local governments is negligible by international standards. Therefore in the event of a strategic decision were to be made that Scotland should increase towards internationally recognized goal of 0.7% of GDP this would have to be contingent on establishing earmark of the Scottish Budget and Local Government and/or earmarking a Scottish share of the DFID budget.

EU Funding:

45. The European Union as a whole (the Commission and the 27 Member States) provides around 60% of international development aid. The Commission provides for 20% of the total, which makes it the largest donor in the EU.
46. On the back of the Commission Communication ““Local Authorities: Actors for Development”, the EU has had a dedicated line for Local Authorities. Originally called Non State Actors – Local Authorities (NSA-LA) it was launched in 2008 with a budget of €30m a year for the first tie exclusively aimed at local authorities.
47. The Commission Communication “Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes”, adopted in 2013, provides
48. A comprehensive policy to frame the participation of local authorities in international development. The Strategic Partnership (and funding) with PLATFORMA is a direct result of that policy.
49. For the 2014-2020 period the Thematic Programme “**Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities**” for the period 2014-2020 has a total budget of €1.907 billion for the period 2014-2020. An envelope of around EUR 970 million has been earmarked for the Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2017. While specific allocations depend on each call it is expected that exclusively aimed for local authorities about £30m.
50. The programme is broken down as follows:
- Objective 1: Enhance LAs' contributions to governance and development processes as. actors of enhanced local governance, as Welfare providers (public basic services) and of local sustainable growth (managed by EU delegations) around 75%
 - Objective 2: Reinforcing Local Authority Networks (capacity building, institutional support, knowledge sharing, guidance) around 10-15%
 - Objective 3: Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) around 10-15%
51. Local Authorities in some EU Member States do not have the competence to commit funds to development cooperation, hence the Commission has tried to be as flexible as their own financial regulation allows on issues of minimum amount of multi-country partners and accept in kind contributions under the 25% co-financing rate (e.g. working time, expertise)
52. By way of **conclusion** to this section it is clear that this is a source of funding that is currently not fully used as per Scottish Local Government. Building on the experience (and if necessary the advice) of our peers from other European countries there is indeed scope to do so. It is worth noting that while the specific earmark for Local Authorities and Associations is comparatively small, the rest of the Thematic Action is also open to participation for local authorities. Indeed the above examples of projects from our European counterparts have been financed by different parts of the EU Aid budget.

UNDP ART

53. In the framework of the UN ‘[Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks of Cooperation for Human Development](#)’ (ART) global initiative, local authorities partners with counterparts in developing countries to assist in municipal capacity building and decentralised management of territorial development. Participation could focus on a contribution in kind, i.e. devoting staff time rather than financial resources, to jointly work on strategic planning to mobilise local communities, financial resources and to share best administrative and operational practices at the local level. Partnerships can be set up in various policy areas including health, education, local management, governance, environment, gender, local economic development etc. It uses a territorial approach to foster integrated responses, rather than sectoral activities, and seeks to involve stakeholders from civil society, private sector, academia etc. ART aims to

localise development by fostering democratic ownership, harmonisation, alignment to local strategy, mutual accountability etc.

54. Local Authorities interested in this programme are to identify one or various fields of expertise of good practice which could be shared with a partner in the country of interest and related to this country's priorities (e.g. decentralisation, quality and sustainability of public services etc.). A project is then to be developed jointly by partners involving technical exchanges and preferably missions to identify how financial, human and technical resources are to be allocated to deliverables. A working group shall verify the process to be approved by local governments. Once formulated, the project will be submitted for approval to a National Coordination Committee.
55. COSLA had been in the past directly approached by the UN office in Brussels with the opportunity to bring Scottish Local Authorities' expertise to international territorial development projects. Indeed the interest is that though there is co-financing expected (in the order on 1 euro provided for 1 euro match-funded) to be a full partner in one of the projects there was a clear indication that in kind support (providing experts) could be equally possible (thus reducing significantly the amount of financial and paperwork involved). We have relayed this proposal to colleagues in Councils already working in international development but there was no interest/capacity at that given time. However in the context of the current reassessment of international development opportunities for Scottish Local Government the engagement of UNDP –ART should also be factored in.

In kind support:

56. To conclude this overview , and certainly last but not least, this paper covers an often overlooked possibility, one with, compared with the participation as partner in the above programmes are certainly the least onerous both in financial and administrative burden terms; the provision of ad hoc expertise to a programme run by other bodies.
57. There are two recent examples that COSLA has been involved and which have helped us to assess in a practical, hands on fashion the findings and feedback we had previously gathered from our European partners during the research phase of this paper. Furthermore these two and other engagement opportunities are still available for immediate engagement from colleagues if they so wish to join.

Case Study I: Support for Local Government in Libya

58. Last December t year the Mayor of Tripoli wrote to European Committee of the Regions (CoR) President Markku Markkula to call for support in identifying potential European partners to aid efforts to stabilise Libya. Specifically, the Municipal Councils in Libya are looking for partnerships that can help build capacity in the health sector, transport, municipal police corps, waste management, education and skills and overall for consolidating and institutionalising Libyan municipalities.. The Europe Mediterranean Assembly of Local Authorities precisely discussed this matter at its last Plenary in January.
59. We followed up with ARLEM secretariat. The ARLEM Plenary decided to set up a range of capacity building meetings in Malta (the easiest place for logistical and security reasons). Furthermore interested national associations or Councils are invited to join the ARLEM database as to facilitate match-making between Libyan demands and skills support available in participating local authorities in Europe.
60. However a more direct route has also emerge via COSLA sister organisation in Cyprus, the Union of Cyprus Municipalities (like the above mentioned associations of Councils we are all based in the House of Municipalities in Brussels): Following the creation a new Libyan unity

government has been formed. Our Cypriot colleagues, who are leading the effort, have received already the commitment from the Commission that the EU would pay for bringing Libyan practitioners to a host Council to receive capacity building training in any of the above fields. This is no doubt an easier route because, rather than dealing with the logistics of going to a developing country the host Council in Scotland would essentially provide a work placement to a Libyan local authority colleague; UCM would deal with the financial and logistical issues. This is still possible so feel free to contact the COSLA Brussels Office.

Case Study II: Covenant of Mayors Africa

61. The Covenant of Mayors is an EU Partnership that aims to commit as many Local Authorities as possible to develop Sustainable Energy and Climate Adaptation Action Plans (SEACAPs) that go over and above the EU climate and energy targets. 6 Scottish Councils are already members and COSLA is the official Scottish Covenant of Mayor Supporting organisation. Indeed we co-organised a CoM awareness event on 12 February in Edinburgh.
62. The Commission's DG DEVCO has now agreed to [expand](#) the project to South Saharan Africa in the form of the CoM SSA. through an initial phase of £4.2m. The coordinator is COSLA umbrella body CEMR. This capacity building project as as main purpose to support participating cities in the design of the Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plans (SEACAPs).
63. Ahead o that a range of one-day information sessions were held in Cape Town on 12th February, Nairobi on 15th February, Dakar on 17th February, and Praia on 19th February (right down). Owing to a unexpected change in speakers' availability COSLA was invited at extremely short notice to give a presentation to the Dakar event about Scottish Local Government role in local sustainable development and its contribution to Scotland's climate and energy ambition as well a specific features such as Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreement. In so doing our participation was also a good testing ground of some of the above findings.
64. Clearly it was a very cost effective way of participating in municipal capacity building. The organisers took care of all travel and accommodation and paid upfront. The fact that the organisers was COSLA EU umbrella gave them an incentive to ensure that our participation was effective and uneventful. The meetings contained pretty high level mayors and experts on local government, planning and energy from half a dozen states in West Africa, some of them holding senior positions in the national government as well. As such they were exposed to some of the key assets that Scotland has to offer such as comparably sophisticated management tools and very ambitious sustainability policies that can be pursued at national and subnational level.
65. On the other hand it was also clear that participation would require the right balance between expertise and presentational skills including carrying out background research and managing political expectations. Though bilingual translation English and French was provided COSLA made the Scottish presentation in French as the majority of majors and senior officials were from French speaking Africa. Furthermore we carried out a certain degree preparatory work to be able to explain our Local Government system in terms they could be more familiar with given that their local government system is based on the one inherited from the French. We noticed that compared with other "off the shelf" presentations delegates also receive we noticed that our extra effort was particularly welcome as particularly politicians could better relate to the presentation . Clearly if the workshop were in Eastern and Southern Africa that would had been easier given the origin of their local government system in the English or in some cases Scottish local goverment system at the time.
66. Clearly participation in the future this kind short ad hoc and unexpensive participation is advisable for Local Authorities experts both at political and officer level on Sustainability, Corporate and Peformance management willing to engage in international development and

supporting the Scotland's goal of being a good global citizen. It is a matter of identifying practitioners in those areas that would be willing and able to be available for the next rounds of meetings and training sessions that will ensue once the programme is up and running.

IV. Conclusion: Challenges and Benefits

67. Our Local Authority colleagues from other Member States involved in decentralised cooperation have identified a variety of benefits in terms of transferring capacities, financial and technical assistance, new mechanisms of financing etc. Among the most prominent are learning, e.g. in water management (Brussels capital region, Belgium), exchange on micro-financing mechanisms, involvement of local businesses (Bonn, Germany), community involvement, reflective exercises on organising local services and horizontal cooperation between local authorities at home.
68. They have also experienced challenges as sending staff to development partners is very limited, often reducing their cooperation to remote technical assistance. It has also been pointed out that the Commission, notwithstanding the above flexibility approach, has restrictive view on 'in kind' assistance and instead supports transfer of skills and technical assistance through other means. In fact, local authorities' human capital is not counted as resource and therefore not monetised.
69. Also, some officials regret that decentralised cooperation is often taking place in isolation, while dissemination of good practice is needed to make outcomes sustainable. It appears that that the EU (and to a lesser extent UN and UK programmes) supports decentralised cooperation only in those countries that are already undergoing decentralisation processes and where central governments channel funding to the local level, to local authorities or civil society actors. It is therefore supporting and not initiating decentralisation and therefore decentralised cooperation. This seems to pose a challenge to local government in those countries (e.g. Eastern Europe) that are seeking political backing rather than financial or technical assistance.
70. In essence Scottish Local Government does have a realistic prospect of engagement on a strategically opportunistic way: that is prioritise a number of areas of expertise that Scottish LG comparatively has and use the opportunities of engagement when they appear.
71. Clearly the easiest way would be to provide an in kind contribution on capacity building activities in which we have a comparative advantage. The cases of UNDP ART, CoM SSA is a case in point.
72. In other words acting as consultants rather than partners of projects - thus avoiding a great deal of bureaucracy, management, preparatory meetings and membership fees that such partnership and network entail. An interesting option could be placement in Scotland (as the Nicosia municipal capacity building initiative on Lybia suggests) rather than having our guys going over.
73. At very least use existing networks to draw on know how should focus on those where Scottish Local Governed exercise some leverage over (e.g. CEMR) rather than joining others were Scottish partners would be smaller players and/or would entail additional overhead costs.
74. To be clear this scoping study is not for the exclusive benefit of COSLA itself but the large local government family (Local Authorities themselves, COSLA, the Improvement Service, SOLACE Scotland and the several LG professional associations, regional, transport and health partnerships, joint boards, etc.)

75. If a collective decision is reached about expanding the engagement of Scottish LG in international development the first thing would be to map out the expertise available and keen to engage well beyond the classic “international development” skills set: experts in areas where Scottish Local Government has a comparative advantage corporate governance, procurement, performance management, community planning, sustainable development planning etc.
76. Once that is identified the ongoing review of the Scottish Government international development policy should provide the ground for any financial commitment to support local government be that as part of the Local Government Grant , as a share of a new Scottish international Development Fund and/or a Scottish share of the UK DFID fund.
77. Lastly International Development is not just about projects on municipal capacity building. There are a host of UN and EU agendas on sustainable local development that contrary to assumptions does not apply to developing countries but to EU countries as well: Sustainable Development Goals, HABITAT III in particular. Following the agreed line by the COSLA convention a partnership approach in shaping Scottish and UK negotiating positions is thus necessary.

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