

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA
Mid Term Evaluation of
UNCDS's Local Development
Program (Gicumbi and
Rulindo)

Submitted To:

United Nations
Capital Development Fund

Final
Executive Summary

24 September 2007

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“The analysis and recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the view of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, its Executive Board or the United Nations Member States. This is an independent publication of UNCDF and reflects the views of its authors”

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAP	Annual Action Plan
AIP	Annual Investment Plan
BSF	Belgium Survival Fund
CDC	Community Development Committee
CDF	Common Development Fund
CDDP	Community Development and Decentralization Program (World Bank)
CEPEX	Central Public Investment and External Finance Bureau
DA	Development Advisors
DEMP	Decentralization and Environmental Management Program
DIP	Decentralization Implementation Program
DDP	District Development Plan
ECI	ECIAfrica Consulting (Pty) Limited
EDPR	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
FORMADIS	Districts Training (Formation des Districts)
HIMO	Labor Intensive Public Work (Haute Intensité de Main d'œuvre)
IFAD	International Funds for Agriculture Development
IGA	Income-Generating Activities
GoR	Government of Rwanda
JAF	Joint Action Forum
LF	Logical Framework
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government, Good Governance, Community Development and Social Affairs
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MIFOTRA	Ministry of Public Service and Labor
MINITERE	Ministry of Lands, Environment, Forestry, Water and Mines
MIS	Management Information System
NDIS	National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat
NTB	National Tender Board
LDP-GR	Local Development Project for Gicumbi and Rulindo
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PIP	Pluri-annual Investment Plan
PRODOC	Project Document
PRSD	Poverty Reduction Strategic Document
REMA	Rwanda Environment Management Authority
RIAM	Rwanda Institute of Administration and Management
RALGA	Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNS	United Nations System
VG	Vulnerable Groups
WFP	World Food Program

1. PROJECT SUMMARY

Country:	Rwanda								
Program number:	Rwa04c01								
Program title:	Local Development Project for Gicumbi and Rulindo (LDP-GR)								
Sector:	Governance								
Executing agency:	UNCDF								
ATLAS references:	<table> <tr> <td>UNCDF:</td><td>00034446</td></tr> <tr> <td>UNDP:</td><td>00041147</td></tr> <tr> <td>BSF:</td><td>00040560</td></tr> <tr> <td>Project Support Budget</td><td>00043040</td></tr> </table>	UNCDF:	00034446	UNDP:	00041147	BSF:	00040560	Project Support Budget	00043040
UNCDF:	00034446								
UNDP:	00041147								
BSF:	00040560								
Project Support Budget	00043040								
Starting date:	16/12/2004								
Amendment date:	August 2006								
End date (planned):	31/12/2009								
Project duration:	5 years								
Total budget:	(USD)								
<i>Government:</i>	<i>600.000</i>								
<i>UNCDF</i>	<i>2.000.000</i>								
<i>UNDP</i>	<i>900.000</i>								
<i>BSF</i>	<i>3.750.000</i>								
Total:	7.250.000								
Sector:	Governance/Local development								
Government Executing Agency:	Ministry of Local Government, Good Governance, Community Development and Social Affairs (MINALOC)								
Exchange rate:	1 USD=Rwf550								

2. PROGRAMME PROFILE

The Local Development Project for Gicumbi and Rulindo (LDP-GR) aims to promote “sustainable local development” in Rwanda¹, and in particular to reduce poverty and food insecurity in the area where it intervenes. Its first objective is “to improve access to basic infrastructure and services in the Gicumbi and Rulindo District in the Northern Province”.

The anticipated results, which are described in the Logical Framework (LF) of the Project Document (PRODOC), are as follows:

- i. “The local institutions are strengthened and able to fulfill their roles and responsibilities regarding local development, by following good governance principles”,
- ii. “An effective and transparent system of planning, financing and monitoring and evaluation of local development is defined and put in place by local authorities”,
- iii. “Households’ income has improved thanks to public investments in basic infrastructure, diversification of local economies and management of productive natural resources”,
- iv. “The project approach contributes to the provincial and national debate concerning decentralization policy and poverty reduction”,
- v. Local technical assistance,
- vi. Assistance from headquarter.

The Project Document (PRODOC) has been amended in September 2006 following the administrative and territorial reform, but without modifying the anticipated objectives and results. Essentially, this amendment has adapted the Project to take into account the new territorial configuration and proposed some modifications related to the funding Code² and how to “anchor” the Project institutionally.

The project approach is based on (1) building capacity at local government level, (2) the implementation of the principle of and best practice related to good governance, (3) the integration

¹ The notion of sustainable local development is defined as “socially sustainable development, managed by local authorities and by local institutions, and which enables delivery of social services suitable for the [local] people as well as putting in place measures focusing on local economic development and poverty reduction».

² By planning for an equitable repartition of public investments between Sectors and Cells.

of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) at local level, (4) the implementation of the national poverty reduction strategy³, (5) promoting an holistic and coherent development approach and, (6) funding socio-economic infrastructure for the benefit of the population.

³ Such as the new Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS).

3. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the evaluation is broken down as follows:

- To assist the LDP-GR partners to determine the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and impact of the project, the sustainability of program results and, the level of satisfaction of program beneficiaries with the project.
- To grapple with the issues of allocation effectiveness (especially to determine whether the project has been able to satisfy the priority needs of poor people and to provide them with affordable services) and productive effectiveness (to determine whether the Project has provided services at a cost as low as possible, comparing this to other strategies or approaches), and to provide some answers on whether using the Local Development Fund (LDF), channeled through Districts, has helped to improve governance, to build and to develop institutional capacity, to increase the efficiency of infrastructure and services provision and, to contribute to sustainable community development.
- To assess whether LDP-GR anticipated results have been achieved compared to the project scope, with a specific focus on the following areas:
- The project's general impact on poverty alleviation and food security.
- The project impact on the local economy, especially regarding job creation, household income, access to credit, productive capacity and productive sector as well as local fiscal revenues.
- Bearing in mind the Rwandese historical context, the impact of project activities on the peace and reconciliation process at the local level.
- General quality of the approach and its relevance towards Government policy on local development and the fight against poverty.
- Quality of the technical assistance provided to the Project team by the UNCDF and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).
- To draft recommendations regarding the general direction that should be followed in the project second phase and beyond.
- To express an opinion on the institutional structure of the project – in particular regarding the pertinence of a separate coordinating unit, and to propose a range of realistic institutional alternatives, together with their pros and cons.

The project started in December 2004 for a total duration of 5 years. This evaluation is therefore a mid-term evaluation.

4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION MISSION

Finding 1: Consolidation of Decentralized Administrations

Local entities' **institutional strengthening** has been without a doubt one of the most tangible achievements of this Project. That was done by providing technical assistance to local entities and their various components, supporting the creation at Provincial level of the committee evaluating the Districts' performance as well as making available Development Advisors (DA) allowing local entities to coordinate and mobilize local stakeholders effectively.

Another LDP-GR's achievement has been the setting up of some "**forums for dialogue**". This was done on the one hand through developing the Joint Action Forums (JAF) in each District which encouraged the coordination of various interventions, transparency and the emergence of strategic partnership at local level and, on the other hand by creating the "Gicumbi investment Group", following a discussion-workshop organized by the Project in 2007 which targeted the private sector.

The Project has also worked even beyond its intervention area, on **harmonizing evaluation procedures of Districts' performance**. That was done by suggesting evaluation criteria that were accepted by the Districts and linked to the performance contracts established between the Mayors and the President and, by developing a self-evaluation document for the Districts. This is an important achievement of the Project, especially as it promotes some debate at provincial and national level on improving good governance.

Although the Project's approach to institutional strengthening needs to be commended, the sustainability of progress achieved will be linked to (1) strengthening a "**good governance culture**" (in particular concerning financial management procedures and public tenders) and, (2) **continuing to "decentralize development and services"**, as recommended by the GoR, through increased capacity building directed at the Sectors; these being considered as the "entry door" to development.

The LDP-GR also stands out because of its specific **effort on capacity building for the whole range of local stakeholders**. In particular, a series of training activities were set; a "pool" of trainers was developed; a scoping study on "**training needs**" in each District was undertaken which has underlined in a very relevant way priority needs in training.

Regarding the significant effort in capacity building, the team reckons that the sustainability of these LDP-GR activities will depend on whether a coherent process is adopted, including a rational utilization of the trainers' "pool", putting in place technical and operational training as well as monitoring the training impact on beneficiaries' performance.

Finding 2: Planning

The project has fared well in supporting an effective and rapid implementation of a “ **bottom up planning** ” **process**, with strong people mobilization in the villages, taking into account the priority needs of the poorest⁴ at a reasonable cost; this shows without a doubt that the Project has had good allocative efficiency. The LDP-GR has also encouraged people to become more involved in projects; this is indisputably **value-added** by the project in both Districts. This process has also contributed to developing an environment promoting social peace and **reconciliation** at local level.

However, the speedy implementation of ‘bottom up’ planning, following the territorial reform and the creation of performance contracts, has led to a “ **mosaic** ” **of micro-projects**, which are difficult to integrate in a strategy of holistic development. Only better coordination between bottom up planning, priorities at District level and national directions (including a good integration of the MDG) can consolidate the sustainability of the planning tools put in place by the Districts.

We note that the Project has provided support to the elaboration of the District Development Plans (DDP) by, on the one hand providing a synthesis of documents from Districts/Towns in the former Byumba Province⁵ and, on the other hand undertaking a basic socio-economic research in each District. However, it is a pity that this research lacks relevant data on food security, particularly for Gicumbi.

Finding 3: Local Development Funds

At this stage, 35% of UNCDF funds have been transferred, in line with the PRODOC forecast budget⁶. Despite a one-year delay in projects’ implementation⁷, the spending rate of funds in the Districts has been satisfactory. This can be explained by the fact that Mayors were under pressure to deliver because of performance contracts but also because of capacity building in the Districts, better staff qualification and close support provided by the Projects Coordinating Unit (PCU). The

⁴ For instance regarding access to potable water and cattle supplies

⁵ This included an inventory of populations, infrastructures, services, agriculture products, economic activities, productivity and population’s access to basic infrastructures and services.

⁶ 10% in the first year and 25% in the second year.

⁷ The projects approved based on the 2005 budget have all been committed and disbursed before the end of 2006. The projects approved in 2006 are being implemented and should all be committed and disbursed in totality by the end of 2007.

performance fund has however not been used, since the criteria for evaluating Districts' performance are not yet in place.

A breakdown of projects by investment category shows important variations between the two Districts⁸, as well as from one year to the next, which makes it difficult to establish any link between these investments and the Districts' priorities. It seems that the LDF have been used by the Districts mainly for implementing development activities in the agriculture sector, rather than undertaking investments that were crucial for developing the areas envisaged by the PRODOC; even if it has to be mentioned that the satisfaction level of beneficiaries was high, particularly in the following areas: animal husbandry and agriculture, radical et progressive terracing.

The HIMO methodology⁹ was applied for instance in building terraces which has led to the **development of local technologies**.

A brief **productive efficiency** analysis of these activities shows the following:

- Unit costs for radical terracing was roughly similar to terracing funded by other Programs¹⁰ However, significant variations in unit cost have been observed in some activities, such as progressive terracing and cattle supplies;
- The rehabilitated dirt road is of average standard, compared with similar work in other countries (Madagascar);
- Generally speaking, delivery deadlines were enforced¹¹.

Even if the performance of the LDF is globally positive, the evaluation team is of the opinion that, to ensure the sustainability of the projects undertaken by the Districts, the following should be prioritize: analyzing and budgeting for recurring cost, analyzing profitability and sustainability of the activities as well as developing some management strategy for each type of investment.¹²

⁸ See the repartition of investments per District and per year, Annex 4.

⁹ Labor Intensive Public Work (Haute Intensité de Main d'œuvre).

¹⁰ Such as the World Food Program (WFP), with a cost around Rwf1 million per hectare.

¹¹ Districts put in place specific conditions as to when to allow the same entrepreneur to win several tenders during the same period; this was done to avoid costly delays when deadlines are constrained by seasonal conditions for agriculture investments.

¹² Service Infrastructures de services are the responsibility of the administration, infrastructures are managed by the population through beneficiaries' associations, economic infrastructures are the responsibility of

Regarding the management of the LDF itself, we noted some minor irregularities in the funds' usage (some expenditure not supported by any document and un-budgeted expenses). The team also believes that to sustain the LDF-funded interventions it will be necessary to prioritize **the Districts' financial autonomy** and a **more rigorous financial management** that will be achieved by controlling unit costs of tendered public work and by following accounting procedures linked to financial support.

Finding 4: Monitoring & Evaluation

Quite an **efficient monitoring system** has been put in place, using on the one hand the Annual Work Plans (AWP) and the activity reports which are based on the detailed logical framework and on the other hand the UNCDF Management Information System (MIS).

The team is of the opinion that the MIS is a relevant monitoring system, as it links a number of development indicators¹³ to development funding (reporting on funding disbursed per project), hence the interest from other Projects and from the GoR.

However, one can regret that the LF indicators have not been summarized in a matrix together with an annual summary, which would allow for a better appreciation of the Project's achievements. A systematic analysis could also have been done, considering the feasibility of data collection for the MIS as well as of the integration of indicators to monitor poverty and the MDG, keeping in mind what is possible or reasonable to collect.

Moreover, the monitoring system of investments and Income Generating Activities (IGA) funded by the LDF is still under-developed. The monitoring-evaluation system set up by the Districts will only be sustainable if the management procedures of the investment projects are improved and formalized, and if a database including structured socio-economic data is developed and made available on an electronic support at the level of Cells or even Villages¹⁴.

Finding 5: Contribution to the provincial and national debate on decentralization and poverty reduction

The LDP-GR contributed to the provincial and national debate on decentralization and poverty reduction policies through developing a **Guide for planning local development** (which has

decentralized administrations and collective equipment generating value-added are managed by the beneficiaries.

¹³ Including indicators on poverty and the MDG.

¹⁴ As for the database of the Gakenke District.

inspired the national Guide for planning, budgeting and monitoring-evaluation) and by **Setting up a MIS**, which is already piloted by the Community Development and Decentralization Program (CDDP) in half of the country, and will be institutionalized at the national level¹⁵.

Over and above its contribution to **reviewing policies on local development**, the LDP-GR has the potential to contribute to the debate at national level through the creation of **evaluation criteria on Districts' performance**.

Finding 6: Technical Assistance

It is important to recognize that the PCU, together with the DA, has provided very close and essential support to the local entities and to the projects beneficiaries, through for instance the facilitation of the “bottom up planning” process, the identification of micro-projects, the operationalization of local entities and their organs and, the supervision of capacity building activities targeting local stakeholders.

However, the results of the local technical assistance are less striking at this stage, when looking at the establishment of decision mechanisms which would guarantee the Vulnerable Groups' involvement in community development. The same opinion can be offered regarding the monitoring of indicators which enable the assessment of the Project impact on households' food insecurity in the area, and regarding the Project contribution to achieving the MDG. We also need to mention some irregularities in the Project financial management, which had been discovered during the PCU external audits in 2005 and 2006; this leads to questioning whether the Project's control level is sufficient.

Finally, we note that the UNCDF Head Office has provided effective support to the Project through, for instance, technical assistance from the Regional Technical Advisor, support visits from the Regional Office as well as the involvement of the UNCDF Program Officer in Rwanda.

¹⁵ The official demand from the Ministry to the UNCDF for adapting and transferring the system is currently in process.

5. LESSONS LEARNED

It is important to develop activities linked to strengthening decentralized administration (in particular capacity building) and to the establishment of a planning and monitoring-evaluation system. In order to improve and enhance the harmonization of development initiatives, this should be done with a willingness to **harmonize and coordinate with other interventions** and, to work within guidelines provided at national level. That means that any new management tool targeting local development (planning, approval, control, projects monitoring and evaluation) should be brought in with the idea of **support to all Districts** (and therefore in connection with the Province or even with the national level).

Getting people to participate in the planning and implementation process of activities promotes a sense of responsibility and ownership of the investments, as regarding for instance operating and maintaining new infrastructures.

For the District to be able to manage external resources, made possible through direct financial support, it is necessary to develop a set of detailed accounting procedures and for them to acquire specific expertise, which the LDP-GR is supporting. At the same time, in order to make local entities more responsible, they should be encouraged to mobilize financial resources (external and internal).

Managing development at grassroots level requires a detailed knowledge of the area, including knowing all the characteristics of the VG. This information is necessary for establishing priorities and to measure progress. It is recommended to put in place at the start of the Project, a process to quickly collect baseline information and to organize it in a database which can then be updated on a yearly basis, as it was done in the pilot project in the Gakenke District.

Managing a Project such as the LDP-GR should imply opening up on other projects' experiences with similar objectives. In this regard, we believe that the low level of operational collaboration between the LDP-GR and the Project implemented by the Belgium Technical Cooperation in the Gakenke District has been a missed opportunity to focus more on some crucial activities of the Project, such as monitoring indicators on food insecurity and VG.

Regular follow-up (for instance quarterly) on funding utilization by local governments is necessary for allowing the Project's partners (UNDP, BSF, Government partners) to monitor it and to make the audit work and the external evaluations easier..

Some types of activities, such as radical terracing, can give excellent results with sustainable impact on food security, by continually improving productivity and probably beneficiaries' income, and therefore reducing their vulnerability.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Consolidating decentralized administrations

Institutional strengthening:

The LDP-GR should as a priority, use its comparative advantage in supporting “services decentralization” to **boost the Sectors**, in the spirit of Vision 2020 *Umurenge*, through the following activities:

- Signing of agreements between the Districts and their Sectors (as envisaged by the PRODOC), which would be aligned with the performance contracts. Such documents would be used as a part of a learning process, aimed at defining the commitments from the Districts et the Sectors regarding local development and making them more responsible.
- Making Sectors’ Community Development Committees (CDC) operational. As opposed to Cells and Districts’ CDCs, the Sectors’ CDC has not yet played a role regarding local development. They should amongst other things, take more technical responsibility for the project planning and implementation process.
- Strengthening Sectors’ role in the financial management of local development, by raising their own resources or by broadening their tax base.

Within the objective of capacity building, the Project should support the Districts to better define priorities, to promote a more rational utilization of the pool of trainers and to put in place a system that monitor and evaluate the impact of the various training sessions.

Recommendation 2: Planning

As a priority the LDP-GR should support the Districts:

- To improve the way that interact with Villages, Cells and Sectors by using a new version of the Participatory Rapid Appraisal Methodology (PRAM), together with other tools already introduced by the *Ubudehe* team, which would allow to establish a better breakdown of social groups, such as the VG.
- To develop an electronic data base disaggregated by gender, that could identify different VG (by number, characteristics, localization).
- To finalize and implement the process of planning and preparing a results-oriented budget; that should include promoting budget realism within the framework of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) as well as yearly and multiple-year investment plans.
- To improve the format and content of micro-projects’ presentation and monitoring sheets (in priority in the Rulindo District, which until now has not received any specific support).

Recommendation 3: Local Development Funds

The BSF, a major partner of the LDP-GR in terms of financial support has indicated to the team that it was not satisfied with the “ low level of efficiency in the use of financial resources until now within the framework of the LDF ”, as the VG have not been characterized and no specific activity has been in place to improve their revenues and food security. In order to remedy this situation, the team recommends that the VG be characterized within each Sector (and Village if possible) and identify specific actions. The HIMO program should also be modified to facilitate the acquisition of technical knowledge which could increase employment in the non agriculture sectors.

As to avoid a scattering of interventions, both Districts should focus on some **main arrears of intervention**, in connection with the national priorities, these of the Districts and by enhancing the principle of subsidiarity:

- Protection and rehabilitation of productive natural resources, through radical and progressive terracing, and programs to fight erosion;
- Economic infrastructure and collective equipment, to add value to agriculture activities, whether related to plants, animals or fish;
- The IGA that target the VG (more specifically widows and landless people).

In order to improve the LDFs' productive efficiency, our recommendations are as followed:

- The Districts could first commission an **analysis of public investments** that were made within the LDF: that should be aligned with the socio-economic research realized by the Common Development Fund (CDF), while paying attention to unit costs.
- Developing some investment strategies that would reduce costs, while increasing beneficiaries' participation or extending the time for these works.
- The Districts should incentivize private operators to invest in the development of economic infrastructures, within a public/private partnership.
- The Project, in connection with the CDDP, could support the Districts in developing strategies to managing recurring costs, according to the types of projects.

The team is of the opinion that budget support to the Districts should carry on, since it fosters increased responsibility at District level, strengthen their funding capacity and enable them to fund

projects corresponding to the Districts' own priorities¹⁶. To promote better management of the LDF, the team recommends the following:

- Insist on usage of the quarterly reports on fund utilization and on investment distribution between various areas of priority interventions (as planned by the PRODOC)¹⁷.
- The CDF should shorten the time for transferring UNCDF funds to the Districts, insofar as the rates of using the funds have been satisfactory.
- The CDF should ensure that the Funding Code instigated by the Project is sufficiently known and understood, first within its own structure and also by the Districts' representatives; that would allow for a better utilization of funds.
- Consider some co-funding of Districts' projects, as per the Project's strategy that was set up to encourage resources' mobilization at District's level.
- Establish a formula that defines how the performance funds should be distributed based on the evaluation grid of District performance which is in the process of being developed.

Recommendation 5: Monitoring-evaluation

The team recommends that the LDP-GR select - using the logical framework - the indicators which can be documented by using information available at national and District's levels. The Project should also find a way to bring some coherence between its monitoring indicators and those applied by the EDPRS and the MDG. To this effect, a matrix of the Project's main indicators could be established and documented on an annual basis. That would provide some food for thought on how to target local poverty (based on principles of fairness and transparency).

The LDP-GR could assist the Districts to develop some projects management tools¹⁸ and to gather all available statistical data on a structured electronic support, therefore allowing monitoring the progress on specific parameters at Cells or even Villages' level.

¹⁶ As opposed to the CDF funds which are linked to national priorities.

¹⁷ This has been difficult to apply till now, in the post territorial reform context for the financial year 2006 (the investments were essentially concentrated within the last quarter of the year).

¹⁸ Identification/approval sheets, control and monitoring sheets, a statistical compilation which would describe and analyze per type of projects

Recommendation 6: Learning from the project

This is an area that the technical assistance should prioritize during its reconfiguration. More specifically, the UNCDF should proactively pursue its objective of encouraging the adoption of the MIS at national level. The project should showcase more of the field pilot projects, especially in the environmental domain.

Recommendation 7: Assistance technique

The team believes that restructuring the local technical assistance would be particularly useful in the second phase of the Project, as it would reduce the PCU staff complement, allow for re-designing each members' responsibility and increase the participation of the GoR and the Districts in implementing and monitoring the activities. Following discussions with and suggestions from some of the Project's managers, two options seems possible as per the restructuring of the local technical support:

- A national coordinator, based in Kigali, who would be responsible for supervising all the Project activities, including monitoring-evaluation and would enhance the partnerships at national level and with other donors to improve the present Project's results. The coordinator could ideally be based within MINALOC (as it is the ministry responsible for the Project). In that way, the coordinator could provide some technical support in developing decentralization and local development policies, in the spirit of the National Execution guidelines (NEX) of the UNDP in Rwanda. The local technical support would be provided by a technical officer assisting Mayors in each District (two days per week in Rulindo, as it is presently the case and three days in Gicumbi). This is the team's preferred option, because it focuses on making local stakeholders more responsible, while strengthening the technical assistance at national level with the view to learn from the project and provide technical support to the GoR.
- An officer providing technical assistance would be based in each District working along the Mayor and would be responsible for all the activities, including Project monitoring-evaluation. The Project coordination, as well as the interface with national partners and donors could be the responsibility of the UNCDF Program Officer. The team believes that this option, which some people interviewed by the team seemed to favor, doe not entirely comply with the requirements of the second phase of the Project and the guidelines provided by the UNDP within the NEX. That would also require reconsidering the responsibilities of the UNCDF program officer

Recommendation 8: Strategic partnerships

The team recommends to continue with or to put in place strategic partnerships that promote the principle of subsidiarity (as called for by the PRODOC) and are relevant to the specific focus to be developed:

Consolidation of decentralized administrations:

A formalized partnership with the CDDP could be put in place, to continue with Districts' capacity building in undertaking public work¹⁹ and to benefit from the CDDP experience in supporting the Districts in improving transparency and accountability.

In the area of capacity building, MINALOC could consider institutionalizing the methodology developed by the Swiss Cooperation's FORMADIS project which includes using a pool of trainers coming from the civil society and who are responsible for monitoring the impact of the training.

Environmental protection:

With a view to replicate at national level, it would be useful for the LDP-GR to enter into a partnership with the World Food Program (WFP) which is also present in the Project area, for instance in terms of food security. The Project, together with the authorities in the Rulindo and Gicumbi Districts, could also establish some linkages with the Ministry of Lands, Environment, Forestry, Water and Mines (MINITERE) and REMA (Rwanda Environment Management Authority), in order to discuss some common interventions.

Planning:

More regular interactions could be developed on the one hand with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) and on the other hand with the German Technical Cooperation which supports the planning process at national level.

Local economic Development (LED):

If the LED cannot be considered as a unique advantage of the UNCDF or the UNDP, the LDP-GR can complement other interventions, by on the one hand developing a facilitator's role in the Districts regarding LED (by for instance organizing training sessions) and, on the other hand by energizing the Gicumbi investment group and facilitating the start of public-private sector talks around concrete initiatives at local level.

Learning from the project:

A preferential partnership could be developed with the German Technical Cooperation, as the leading donor in the area of decentralization, in order for instance to push for the MIS institutionalization and the MIS being shared with other donors.

Food security:

¹⁹ Particularly to take into account environmental aspects in the provision of infrastructures and services, as well as the planning and budgeting process (DDP, MTEF, PIP).

The WFP-VAM is already working in both Districts and the LDP-GR has also collaborated with the WFP-VAM while creating terraces. This could be an opportunity to strengthen this partnership, with a view to improve food security.

Poverty reduction:

Within the framework of the pilot project aiming to reduce poverty in the thirty poorest Sectors of the country (Vision 2020 *Umurenge*), the LDP-GR could work along the European Union which is putting in place the second *Ubudehe* campaign, by sharing baseline data on poverty reduction and food security.

Recommendation conclusion

As a conclusion, the evaluation team wish to indicate that it is probable that the LDP-GR will contribute to promoting sustainable local development, considering the results already achieved in terms of mobilizing people and making them participate in the decision-making process and capacity building of local entities, therefore allowing for provision of social services fitting the needs of poor populations.

However, the activities undertaken by the Project to improve the poorest population's standard of living and to protect their ecological environment should be reoriented as to contribute in a tangible manner to increasing people's income and to trigger a process of sustainable economic development, with some visible impact for the VG.

The Project should also develop some interventions that respond better to the focus of its partners (i.e. the BSF) in terms of food security as well as to the EDPRS new priorities.

7. TEAM COMPOSITION

The evaluation team included three persons:

- Mr. Alexis Dukundane, local consultant, was responsible for the areas related to capacity building, planning and infrastructure.
- Mr. Raymond Audette, international consultant, was responsible for the areas related to funding monitoring/evaluation, food security.
- Mrs. Valérie Hindson, international consultant, acting as project leader, was responsible for the areas related to local governance, local economic development, and institutional architecture of the Project.