INTERMEDIATE EVALUATION OF THE UNDP GLOBAL ART INITIATIVE

**ANNEX 8b - A qualitative impact evaluation of the international UNDP ART program at the national level: preliminary results**

The UNDP/ART Framework Program intervenes at the national level to foster enabling conditions for sustainable human development – and where feasible strategies have been identified through local pilot initiatives. The aim of this Annex is to report the results of a qualitative impact evaluation of the effectiveness of ART program on promoting the functionings and capabilities of the national actors in Ecuador.

Table XX syntheses the results of a structured focus group discussion (SFGD) on international cooperation at the national level conducted in Ecuador.

The national SFGD was held in Quito at the UN headquarters in a meeting room on the first floor, where stakeholders usually meet. The SFGD was attended by five participants, three of whom represented stakeholders involved in local and national development and international cooperation[1]. In addition, an independent expert was included along with an ART/UNDP Program officer.
After the introduction, participants were asked to consider the dimensions of the evaluation matrix and to validate them (see table XX column 1). Specifically, they were asked to assess the relevance of the dimensions using a ten point scale (1=low; 10=high). The three most important dimensions were 1, 8, and 10.
In the second part of the SFGD we asked participants to rate the degree of functioning of the national system across dimensions, both currently and 4 years previously. A ten point scale was used where '1' indicates 'there is no functioning in the system' and '10' suggests 'the system is working' perfectly in the relevant dimension. The first five points of this scale reflect negative scores while the final five points are positive.
In 2009 the system was functioning in an inadequate way, with some dimensions scoring as negatively as "1".
In general, a positive trend is recorded. In fact, the situation has improved substantially in all dimensions and in some case dramatically, by up to five positive points. Four out of eleven dimensions became positive, scoring 6 or 7 each, while five dimensions almost scored near to positive, scoring 5. Only two dimensions managed a score of 4.
This change has been attributed to different actors in civil society, national government, CONGOPE (Consorcio de Gobiernos Autonomos Provinciales del Ecuador), AME (Asociacion de Municpalidades del Ecuador), CONAGOPARE (Asociaciones Provinciales de los Gobiernos Autónomos Descentralizados Parroquiales Rurales), local Government, the ART/UNDP Program, AECID (Spanish Bilateral Cooperation Agency) and actors engaged in international cooperation.
These results show that, there has been an increasing synergic action amongst actors in Ecuador with respect to international cooperation. This has contributed positively to the functioning of the national system, starting with contributions from national government to local development followed by the contributions of civil society and International Cooperation actors such as ART/UNDP.

The credit for these improvements were mainly attributed to national government, different coordination institutions (CONGOPE, AME, CONAGOPARE) and ART/UNDP, which played a significant role in collaboration with the above-named actors. Notice that ART explains a large part of the improvement across dimensions (that is between 28.6% and 75.0%.) given its role as catalyst. The dimensions of functionings in the table are (1) the capacity to elaborate cooperation and planning policies by taking into consideration the principles of the Declaration of Paris; (2) the capacity to elaborate cooperation and planning policies by integrating different levels of governance; (3) the ability to introduce good local practices into cooperation and planning policies; (4) the ability of the country to build relationships with international cooperation institutions; and finally (5) technical assistance and capacity building for actors in the field of cooperation and planning policies.

## Table XX - Evaluation of ART\Ecuador at the National Level: International Dimensions

1 Reunión Secretaria Técnica de Cooperación Internacional – SETECI; Reunión Secretaria Técnica de Planificación y Desarrollo (SENPLADES) Subsecretaria de Planificación y Políticas Públicas y Secretaria Técnica de Cooperación Internacional; Segretariat of Decentralisacion Policies , Home Office. Unfortunately the representant from Reunión Consorcio de Gobiernos Provinciales del Ecuador ( CONGOPE) could not attend.

| Dimension | Relevance of the Dimension (1 – 10) | Current Capability of Functioning of the System (1 – 10) 2012 | Capability of Functioning of the System 5 Years Ago (1 – 10) 2008 | Attribution to UNDP ART program (y/n); positive/negative (1-10) | Perceived Capability of Functioning of the System without UNDP ART (1 – 10) | Impact of UNDP ART (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Capacity to Elaborate Cooperation and Planning Policies by Taking into Consideration the Principles of the Declaration of Paris | 10 | 6 | 1 | Yes, +, 7 | 3 | 50% |
| (2) Capacity to Elaborate Cooperation and Planning Policies by Integrating Different Levels of Governance | 10 | 5 | 1 | Yes, +, 6 | 2 | 60% |
| (3) Ability to Introduce Good Local Practices into Cooperation and Planning Policies | 10 | 5 | 2 | Yes, +, 6 | 3 | 40% |
| (4) Ability of the Country to Build Relationships with International Cooperation Institutions | 10 | 4 | 1 | Yes, +, 7 | 1 | 75% |
| (5) Technical Assistance and Capacity Building for Actors in the Field of Cooperation and Planning Policies | 10 | 7 | 4 | Yes, +, 7 | 5 | 28.6% |

The main contribution of ART is reflected by the improvement of the system's ability to articulate both local and national agents. As emphasised by participants during the discussion, it is widely recognized that there has been good receptiveness from both local and national agents regarding the work methodology and technical support provided by ART/PNUD. A key strength is the improved capacity for dialogue with international agents, which, in particular, has allowed local actors to gain confidence.

According to participants, ART program's contribution is important and its presence has supported and fostered many relevant changes in the country. While other actors played a relevant role, the ART Program was the catalyst for supporting the processes facilitating many functionings. The program methodology is flexible and works through the articulation and integration of actions, unlike other agents which have a strict sectoral vision.
ART incorporates contributions with local agenda setting and guidelines for decentralization and planning at territorial level including the construction of *agendas zonales*.
ART is not only a catalyst for sustainable development but provides a feedback mechanism to sustain the process. It works by encouraging dialogue and consensus amongst stakeholders. The role of ART as a *case manager* or facilitator boots the process. The ART program is a practical implement, [which shows actors] "how to do it". It is based on the transfer of information, underpinning participatory processes with appropriate tools, and strengthens capacities at the national and local level.
Without the contribution of the ART program, international cooperation initiatives would have been inferior, since ART provides local and national support by opening up new spaces for dialogue. ART has brought new know-how regarding decentralization issues, tools and procedures. According to SETECI the role of ART in the cooperation domain is fundamental as, "without ART there would have been no improvements".
To conclude, the role of national actors is crucial in order to secure the results generated by the ART/UNDP program: national actors need to contribute to the stability of new processes introduced into the institutional architecture of the country. One possible way is the elaboration of new legislative frameworks or the build-up of a comprehensive policy framework where local actions can be included in a coherent way. In this sense, the contribution of ART in terms of technical assistance could be decisive. Moreover, the national frameworks have the crucial task of creating a direct linkage between local action and the principles and guidelines elaborated at the international level.