

THE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CATALONIA

Catalonian Agency for Development Cooperation

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Since the 1980s, Catalonia has taken part in solidarity-oriented and development cooperation actions. As reflected in the Catalan Law on Development Cooperation (Law 26/2001), a credible, national construction project and an advanced democratic society cannot be created today without actively and decidedly participating in the construction of a more just and responsible international order.

This commitment to solidarity and development is also incorporated within the new, 2006 Catalan Statute which includes cooperation as the basis for development cooperation policy and peace-building around the world among its guiding principles. At the same time, Article 197 of the Statute establishes that the *Generalitat*¹ must promote development cooperation programmes.

Legal Framework

Since 1986, the *Generalitat* has allotted a specific share of its budget to international development cooperation and solidarity-oriented programmes. With the approval of the Law on Development Cooperation in 2001, the volume of this allotment has increased considerably, totalling 56,922,000 Euros in 2006. In addition, the Law has fomented a qualitative leap in Catalan development cooperation, establishing new planning instruments and organisms, and development cooperation policy coordination, implementation, and consultation.

According to the Law, the *Generalitat's* activities with respect to development cooperation are defined strategically in a four-year plan (Master Plan) and one-year plans (Annual Plans). The Master Plan outlines the *Generalitat's* main policy on development cooperation: it sets the geographical and sectoral priorities and the strategic objectives, products, and results it aims to achieve, as well as the human, material, economic or managerial resources needed to meet its objectives. The Annual Plans, by contrast, develop the objectives, priorities, and resources established within the Master Plan for each individual year.

The Catalan Master Plan 2003-2006, its revision, and the three annual plans approved and implemented thus far (2004, 2005, and 2006) have defined Catalan development cooperation policy over the last few years. The *Generalitat* has already developed a project for its second Master Plan for the period 2007-2010. The document has been prepared by means of a participatory process which began in February, 2006, and finished in September the same year with the favourable and unanimous approval by the three consultative organisms for development cooperation policy within the Catalan government.

¹ The executive branch of the Catalan Autonomous Community government.

Institutional Framework

The Catalonian Agency for Development Cooperation (ACCD) was created in October, 2003, and is the main organism responsible for managing the *Generalitat's* development cooperation, peace-building, humanitarian action, and development education policies. Additionally, another part of the Autonomous government's resources (22.6% in 2006) are managed by the *Generalitat's* departments and autonomous organisms. This current, dual implementation model allows for the diverse capacities and management trajectory found within different organisms of the local government to work for development cooperation.

Catalonian development cooperation has also endowed itself with a series of advisory organisms in accordance with the Law: The Development Cooperation Council, the Inter-departmental Commission for Development Cooperation, and the Commission for Coordination with Local Institutions. These are informative, participatory, and coordinative mechanisms which contribute to guarantee coherence in the formulation and design of development cooperation policy.

In terms of humanitarian action, Catalonian development cooperation has made considerable advances in the last few years, especially with the creation of the Catalonian Committee for Emergency Humanitarian Aid (CCAHE) in 2005. The CCAHE has facilitated the deployment of humanitarian action in emergency situations, thereby favouring different social initiatives while respecting the autonomy of each actor and applying the principle of complementarity.

At the same time, in terms of peace-building, the Autonomous Community government has created the Catalonian Council for the Promotion of Peace as an advisory organism with the participation of society in the *Generalitat's* activities and local organisms working in this area.

Specificities of Catalonian Development Cooperation

One of the specificities of Catalonian development cooperation, which the Law itself recognises and foments, is the conception of public intervention as a complement and motivator of civil initiatives regarding solidarity and development cooperation. In so doing, it aims at multiplying the impact of development cooperation actions and improve effectiveness, thereby contributing to the creation of synergies among the different actors, both public and private. In this sense, the importance of the associative fabric in Catalonia is recognised, as well as its commitment to development cooperation and awareness-raising programmes, and the specific weight development NGOs have in development cooperation.

Second, the development cooperation actions arising from the *Generalitat* give priority, given Catalonian history and capacities, to certain values and areas of intervention within the international development agenda, such as peace; respect and protection of human rights and democracy; the right of peoples to defend themselves and promote their culture; language and identity; rights and economic and social cohesion; development sustainability; an entrepreneurial spirit, respect for pluralism and diversity; the rule of law; decentralisation; and participatory democracy.

Third, development cooperation is based on existing capacities and those that need to be fomented or created. The aim is not to transfer Catalonian models, but rather, take advantage of the contrasted capacities in different development areas and their accumulated experience, working in association with Southern countries to find the most appropriate models for these countries. Catalonia has a long history

of self-government and management in areas so relevant for development such as health, education, the promotion of productive capacity and employment, governance, the environment, and multilingual education, among others. Its proximity to its citizenry makes it specially relevant in the framework of decentralisation processes occurring in many Southern countries. It can share its knowledge and good practices with decentralised institutions in partner countries by means of technical development cooperation or new instruments such as sectoral approaches and budgetary support for decentralised administrations.

In the fourth place, and in particular with regards to development education and awareness, the proximity to its citizens allows for a greater impact in mobilising resources and changing stances and behaviours with respect to the North-South relationship and the necessary changes to achieve a more just and responsible world.

In the same sense and in coordination with local organisms, development cooperation is an especially appropriate space to foment co-development actions based on support, accompaniment, and relationships with immigrant associations to promote their participation as actors in the development of their respective communities and countries of origin.

Lastly, arising from its conviction that it is part of the revision process on international practices in the area, the *Generalitat* coordinates and collaborates with national and international administrations, especially local Catalan administrations and the central Spanish government's development cooperation.

Challenges Faced

Increasing resources and assuming the commitment and responsibility of improving the quality and effectiveness of development cooperation implies challenges. These challenges are linked to management capacity, the strategic vision represented by the Master Plan and Annual Plans, and the instruments and mechanisms for coordination, collaboration, and coherence.

In terms of the management capacity of the growing resources committed by the *Generalitat*, Catalan development cooperation has created the necessary team of people to be able to assume these commitments. The challenge lies in consolidating this team and developing its potential in order to be able to face the challenges linked to increasing quality.

In terms of strategic vision, the need to place planning within the centre of the process is heightened and efforts must be made to facilitate participation by all agents in the definition of strategies, their follow-up, and evaluation.

With respect to instruments, it is necessary to progressively advance on the programmatic approaches that will permit going beyond specific and periodic interventions, combining efforts and ensuring greater and better participation of partner countries. In addition, it is necessary to advance on the development of new and appropriate instruments for the new objectives and the principles of suitability and alignment included in the Paris Declaration. At the same time and complementarily, coordination and joint work mechanisms have to be improved given the difficulties raised by aid impact.

Another challenge faced refers to the effective transversalisation of the topics which, given their importance, impregnate the set of development cooperation actions, in particular the issue of gender equality. In this sense, it is necessary to



continue to make headway in the revision of the current Master Plan which, with the aim of reinforcing transversalisation, has created a specific area of equality between men and women, in coherence with the V Action Plan and development of policies regarding women in Catalonia 2005-2007 without curbing the mechanisms that have to be incorporated in terms of planning, implementation, and evaluation to make progress in this area.

Lastly, another of the important challenges faced is advancing in terms of coherence between policies which have an impact on the development of partner countries, all with the assumption that development can never be considered the exclusive result of development aid. The Law also foresees a mechanism for the advisory organisms to deliberate and express their opinion which the Inter-departmental Commission needs to promote in order to improve Catalanian public policy coherence in terms of development within Southern countries.

FRIDE organised the project **“Spanish Development Aid - Mid-term Review and a Proposal for a Participative Consultation”** between June 2006 and April 2007. This project aims to develop a consultation process about the current Spanish government’s development cooperation policy. We have created a forum for participation and debate, in order to assess the Spanish development cooperation reform agenda and to identify the main achievements and shortcomings in operationalising the initiatives based on the principle of “More Aid, Better Aid”. A set of recommendation guidelines were developed, through participative methods, with the objective of putting into practice the aspirations of the Spanish development cooperation policy.

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