ART INITIATIVE
Scientific Committee for human development cooperation

A GUIDE TO LOCAL PLANNING PROCESSES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ART GOLD PROGRAMS

October 2005
Introduction

A core element of the ART GOLD Programs is to provide support to local planning processes. These Programs for International Cooperation arise from the idea that local development is the most effective means of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and of combating the effects and causes of poverty and social exclusion.

ART GOLD Programs have a two-pronged strategic objective: on the one hand, they support Governments interested in promoting local development as a national strategy for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. On the other hand, they aim to make a concrete and innovative contribution to the ongoing debate regarding the efficiency of international cooperation, by promoting cooperation as a system. ART GOLD Programs are presented as support programs for local development, intended to offer a single framework to the various interventions of local, national and international actors within the development sector. In such a way, these Programs aim to combat the inefficient spread of resources and the lack of impact which results from a fragmented approach to cooperation.

Within the field of international cooperation, the ART GOLD Programs adopt methodologies for local development which are well-known in the more developed countries, have already resulted in successful experiences and are underpinned by academic knowledge. These experiences show that it is possible to promote development and tackle poverty and unemployment, if the main territorial stakeholders identify by common consent the major problems and existing potentials in order to formulate and manage concrete development strategies. A more modern concept of governance have also been acknowledged from these experiences, which implies the ability of local authorities to interact with all local actors and to guarantee better territorial governance. In relation to strategic planning, this new approach to governance consists in processes and procedures for territorial governance, and relies on the participation and commitment of all public and private actors, including those from the civil society.

The ART GOLD Programs aim to reinforce the ability of local actors to plan and manage territorial development through an integrated and participative process that is open to international opportunities. In the regions (provinces, districts) prioritized by the Governments of each country, these programs start up and support a development process that exploit local resources while benefiting local populations, particularly the most vulnerable social groups. To optimize the use of local resources, avoiding overlaps or wastage and ensuring that external inputs have maximum impact on local living conditions, it is necessary to improve the ability of local communities to analyze, plan and manage development processes in an integrated manner.

Participants to the ART GOLD Programs at the local level include Regional and Local Working Groups, led by competent local authorities and open to the participation of representatives from public institutions, associations and the private sector within the area. These Working Groups lead the planning and local development process, through the technical support provided by the experts of the United Nations. The Working Groups provide support to international and decentralized cooperation partners and guarantee
that the interventions supported by one or the other are planned in a way that allows avoiding overlapping and gaps while maximizing impact.

At a central level, a National Coordination Committee (NCC), chaired by the responsible Ministry for the Program, ensures both efficient management and coherence with national policies within the territory in question. The NCC comprises all interested Ministries, the representatives of the participating UN Agencies and the international cooperation organizations supporting the Program. The NCC, in agreement with all partners, identifies the priority regions where the investments will be concentrated. This Committee allows reinforcing the action of the national structures and policies in support of local development, and in parallel, it enhances these policies through the elements originating within the territories. At the same time, it allows conveying resources of international cooperation towards the regions and municipalities of the country by coordinating the contributions of the different Donors in a complementary way.

Through this management mechanism, ART GOLD Programs are able to achieve the above mentioned objectives. Governments’ active participation at the national and local level ensures that all initiatives have an impact upon thematic and poverty reduction public policies. To international cooperation organizations, this participation guarantees a better sustainability of the projects implemented through their financial and technical resources.

The local programming methodology adopted by ART GOLD Programs results from the practical and consolidated knowledge of the experiences implemented in 18 countries in Latin America, Africa and the Balkans since the beginning of the 1990s. With the support of all relevant stakeholders, it is to be hoped that this methodology will continue to improve.

The methodology is based on the innovative experiences of local planning carried out in numerous industrial countries. Such experiences have led to the development of the strategic planning concept, born within the framework of the urban planning projects adopted in big cities of France and Spain. In response to criticism to the traditional planning model, seen as a tool to create rules and constraints to development, strategic planning is instead seen as a process that allows orienting territorial changes. Strategic planning is thus based upon a participatory analysis of the territory and its potential evolution, and on the development of strategies and projects capable of promoting its development.

“The strategic plan is a tool for integrated planning of socio-economic development. It is based on an analysis of the local environment and the participation of relevant citizens. The plan presents a vision of the future, and a set of strategic approaches to achieve pre-defined objectives, promoting cooperation and collaboration between all institutional, economic and social actors, who will in turn promote consensus and participation amongst populations. (J.Borja & M. Castells, "Local and global", 1996)
Strategic planning is seen as a dynamic process that follows three directions: the development of a long-term vision, based on the key problems of local communities; a concentration of activities around the most urgent problems; communication and collaboration among all core stakeholders within the community.

The word ‘strategic’ indicates, therefore, a planning approach that aims to produce concrete development projects. The active participation on the part of local authorities and universities of industrial countries enabled integrating such consolidated knowledge into international cooperation processes, substantially improving operational methodologies and favoring a thematic horizontal interchange between local administrations and universities from both the North and the South.

Local Planning and Program Management

ART GOLD Programs are developed through Annual Action Plans, drawn up by the NCC and the Regional Working Groups using the technical support of the United Nations experts in charge of their management. Each Annual Action Plan comprises an International Activity Plan, a National Activity Plan and Regional/District Activity Plans. These plans are elaborated on the basis of the financial amounts indicated by the NCC and the Donors. For further information regarding the characteristics and management methods of the ART GOLD Programs, we suggest you consult the ART Initiative Brochure.

The ART GOLD Program Regional Activity Plan represents - for each prioritized region - a first specific and structural output of local planning. During the start-up phase of an ART GOLD Program, the first activity of the Regional Working Groups - in cooperation with the relevant Municipal Working Groups - is to produce a first Action Plan that usually includes the implementation of quick-impact projects aimed to respond to emergencies and capable of improving local living conditions. During the first year - after carrying out extensive research, consultations and coordination in order to ensure in-depth knowledge of the area and its potentials - each Regional Working Group may develop integrated, comprehensive development strategies and projects to exploit all available local resources, both human and natural, taking into account the contributions of the Local Working Groups.

The second output of a Regional Working Group is the Regional Plan for International Cooperation, which includes territorial development strategies as well as integrated and complex development projects that rely on the exploitation of local, national and international resources. The Plan, which indicates not only the projects for which Donors have already been identified but also potential initiatives, allows orienting cooperation interventions towards a single vision of the future of the territory, as well as the concrete initiatives formulated by local actors.
The Regional Plan for International Cooperation is the instrument used by local actors, the NCC, and the Program for identifying new partners and sources of funding. Any Donor interested in participating in the Program is invited to develop specific cooperation initiatives based on the strategic guidelines and the project-ideas identified in the Plans. These Plans will be updated regularly according to the results of the activities that have been financed and completed, and to the impact of the technical and financial assistance of international cooperation.

ART GOLD’s Annual Action Plan therefore represents an additional and strategic tool to the existing “Institutional Development Plan”, and it is used specifically to attract and manage external financial and technical resources. The cooperation Plan must be coherent with the Institutional Regional Plan: this is normally guaranteed by local institutions and authorities. However, the cooperation Plan can also contribute to the improvement of the institutional Plan thanks to the concertation methodology adopted for its formulation, to the technical assistance provided by the experts of international cooperation and to the innovative experience brought by the local administrations involved. An important indicator of the ART GOLD Program success is the impact of such integrated and concerted planning methodologies on the “Regional Development Plan”.

Regional plans converge into the ART GOLD’s Annual Action Plan, which represents the programming tool used to manage the financial and technical resources made available by the organizations of international cooperation, according to the UN rules and procedures. A successful ART GOLD Program will allow the Annual Action Plan to be progressively enlarged to include new geographic areas and sectors of intervention as well as new sources of funding, depending on the participation of new local, national or international partners.

The methodological guidelines in this document refer to the development of a Regional Plan for International Cooperation, which includes plans at a municipal level.

Characteristics of the Plans for International Cooperation

In order to respond to the objectives of the ART GOLD Programs, Regional Plans for International Cooperation should have specific qualitative characteristics.

- The plans must fall within the framework of national policies. To be sustainable, local development processes cannot take place independently. On the contrary, it is essential that they fall within national policies managed by the relevant Ministries in the various sectors of intervention - including poverty reduction. To ensure that such an approach is adopted, ART GOLD Programs are based on the administrative intermediate levels (Regions, Provinces, Districts), which represent in all countries the context where interaction between local development dynamics and national policies occur. Thematic departments of the Ministries generally operate at the regional level, playing a crucial role in promoting development, be it economic, agricultural, health or educational. The regional Plan for International Cooperation therefore has the function of articulating the plans elaborated at a local level, embedding them in a strategy based on the operational guidelines and the current resources of the thematic ministerial
departments. Such an approach guarantees the sustainability and a greater impact of the projects implemented with the resources made available through international cooperation. In countries where decentralization laws do not provide for mid-level elections, people elected in the municipalities can use the Working Groups to promote the interests of their territories and of the social actors they represent.

- **Integrated dimension of local development.** Development of local communities within their own territory is a complex process which cannot be rigidly fragmented according to the institutional competences normally attributed to Ministries and thematic institutions. In countries and areas with fewer territorial resources, sectionalizing the analysis of problems and their solutions can in fact cause greater inefficiency vis-à-vis the objective of improving the quality of life of populations. Achieving this objective is the result of numerous combined factors, such as the possibility to exploit internal economic potential, to live in a healthy and pleasant environment, and to exploit cultural heritage. To reach this complex objective, a strategy for local development must be able to exploit all territorial resources, be it economic, social, human or natural, in a participatory and inter-thematic way. The Plans for International Cooperation must therefore be comprehensive, including the following essential fields of intervention: governance of local development processes, protection of the environment, access to basic public services (water, wastes, transportation, and communication), local economy, local health and welfare systems, local education and professional training.

- **Poverty reduction and social exclusion, priority needs and development.** The Plans for International Cooperation integrates a response to the most urgent problems and to the most vulnerable social groups into local development strategies. Major resources channeled through national programs and international cooperation to face the chronic needs of vulnerable groups or communities can be re-directed through a development approach that ensures a positive impact on the population as a whole. Such an approach avoids projects and initiatives that, whilst providing specific aid, actually result in greater exclusion of vulnerable groups in the long term (IDPs, single mothers, handicapped and elderly people). Similarly, the necessary interventions to respond to the urgent needs of local communities (bridges, roads, water depuration, problems related to natural disasters) can be programmed within the framework of more complex projects that provide sustainable solutions to the causes of the emergency. In any case, the Plans should include initiatives that allow structural responses that benefit local populations as a whole and that integrate vulnerable areas and groups into the development process.
• Governance, concertation and territorial pacts. The strategic planning approach adopted by ART GOLD can only be applied by local authorities that are prepared to rethink their own role in the process. The decision to function on the basis of projects for local development evaluated for their efficiency requires that local authorities accept new responsibilities and new approaches for territorial governance. In particular, more complex objectives can only be achieved if many local actors accept to undertake commitments and responsibilities. The ability to work in close collaboration with public, private actors and with territorial associations, through pacts on common objectives, creates a challenge for those local Governments that wish to promote efficient development processes. The Plan for International Cooperation is conceived with precisely this approach in mind: in the section dedicated to strategies and projects, the Plan specifies the role of the different actors involved in the initiative. The Plan also specifies the cooperation initiatives required for giving permanent and sustainable support to the programming and management structures, tools and activities in the territory.

Setting up Working Groups

Local Working Groups, both municipal and regional ones, represent a space for permanent dialogue between public and private stakeholders, and provides actors of international cooperation with a concrete and well-organized reference point, capable of achieving a sustainable development and oriented to the achievement of the MDGs.

Working Groups are initially established at a regional level (Provinces, Districts), with support from the National Coordination Committee (NCC). Regional Working Groups (RWG) are convened and chaired by the Governor or President of the region. Participants to the RWG include representatives from the regional thematic services, universities, social actors

To establish a strategic planning process, three principles must be taken into consideration: participation, governance and integrated approach. The key tool is the Strategic Plan Document, the results from the work of the various Commissions in which all relevant local actors participate. The main operational tools and key stages of strategic planning, which are debated and negotiated by the various public and private actors, are the following:

• identification of scenarios, extrapolated from data and trends, evaluating the possible evolutions and alternatives vis-à-vis the local reality and global trends: the mobilization of the civil society, which is essential to create a common vision of future development capable of influencing subsequent programming choices;
• identification of priorities, following a detailed study of the current regional situation: this provides a starting point, research into existing social and cultural resources to be used as a basis for any proposed strategy for development;
• definition of activities to undertake. The scenario offers a series of objectives to achieve in order to close the gap between current and future situations. Public and private members of the Commissions identify macro-objectives for each strategic sector, as well as macro-activities and strategic axes to implement;
• orientation of all public and private actors towards the objectives defined by the Plan. Acting in a context of ‘governance’ ensures that institutions are able to set up a new form of governance, allowing greater interaction with local actors.

Enrico Fontanari. Planning Institute of Venice University, Italy
associations, private companies, NGOs) and from the Local Working Groups (LWG). RWG are responsible for coordinating the production of the Regional Plan for International Cooperation, in close collaboration with all participating actors.

Within the ART GOLD Program, the Working Groups are in charge of the programming and management of initiatives at a local level. In particular the RWGs undertake activities aimed at improving regional services, promote local initiatives (at a municipal or village level), and coordinate the various contributions of the actors of international cooperation.

A preliminary activity of the RWGs is to identify the municipalities where the Program’s activities will be concentrated. The criteria for the identification are the following:

- interesting municipalities for the organizations of international cooperation involved in the Program;
- municipalities where decentralized cooperation activities or associations of local communities are already taking place;
- municipalities that show high levels of poverty or isolation, and that constitute priorities for national and local development policies;
- municipalities that have a strategic value for regional development (natural resources, important historic sites, regional communication or provision of services etc.).

In priority municipalities, Local Working Groups will be established under the leadership of the competent local authorities (Mayor, President of the Municipal Council, village leader), and will be made up of representatives from local services, associations, NGOs, producers’ associations and all interested organizational actors.

LWGs participate in regional planning activities indicating local priorities and strategies for development. They will also guarantee coordination of activities in their territories and mobilization of social actors, with a specific focus on most vulnerable groups.

An important indicator of a program’s positive impact is its progressive extension into other Communities in the area, through support from international actors associated with the program or through national/local institutions and resources.

The communities themselves should be the direct beneficiaries from the Plan for International Cooperation; however regional activities targeting infrastructure and services (transportation, health services, communications etc) should enable a complimentary impact with indirect benefits for the entire population across the region.
Organizing the Planning Activity

The Terms of Reference for the planning activity will be drawn up by the RWG, which establishes the roles of the various actors and of the LWGs, organizes thematic commissions, indicates methodologies and work plans for activities.

At this stage, the ART GOLD Program and the NCC inform each RWG of the funding dedicated to their corresponding region and of the criteria for the use of allocated funds. The actors of international cooperation who are interested in participating can inform the RWG about available funding, fields of interest (health, education, economy) and the geographic area of intervention (one or more municipalities). The planning process is open to the contributions of national and international actors that wishes to participate, with a view to establishing financial or operational partnerships.

The LWGs set up within prioritized municipalities are involved in the identification of projects and strategies to be included in the Regional Plan. These groups play an essential role in the planning activity at a local level since they can express more directly the point of view of the benefited populations. It is at the Municipal level that a comprehensive analysis of the community needs can be carried out, through the participation of the populations and their organizations.

The Terms of reference for the planning activity indicate that LWGs must carry out the following activities within priority communities:

- make an analysis of preliminary needs and development priorities within the area, and contribute to the production of a regional promotional brochure;
- participate in the planning activity in the various fields of action, organizing investigations and thematic Workshops, and mobilizing all local actors;
- promote participatory methods within Communities (Risk and Resources Maps) in order to develop quick-impact projects that form an integrated part of the “Regional Plan for International Cooperation”;
- elaborate the “Plan for International Cooperation” at the Municipal level;
- collaborate to the synthesis activity for the Regional Plan, indicating the strategies and projects programmed at a municipal level.

Programming outputs at a Regional Level

The programming process will aim to produce a Regional Plan for International Cooperation. The Plan comprises:
- A document presenting all the integrated development strategies for the area, providing a summary of thematic strategies (health, education, economy, environment);
- A summary of quick-impact projects in the various fields of intervention and a summary of strategic project-ideas (integrated, innovative, medium-term elaboration);
- A national territorial marketing document which presents all resources and potentials that can be developed.

In Mozambique, in the Sofala and Manica Provinces, during the district programming meetings, participants put the stress on one core concern: the absence of identity papers which prevented people from moving freely within the country and from forming associations, as well as preventing access to credit. In collaboration with the relevant services, individual identity documents were quickly provided to the population, using mobile teams in key rural villages. This quick-impact project was hugely popular among local populations and stimulated the effort on the part of institutions to extend the ordinary documentation service. This problem had not emerged during the meetings of the Provincial Working group. The analysis of needs carried out in a context that is closer to local population allows identifying the essential aspects of their living conditions. At the same time, the implementation of solutions would not be possible without the participation of provincial institutions, in charge of defending citizens’ rights.

The Regional Plan for International Cooperation provides for the complementary utilization of the resources made available by:
- ART GOLD Program and other international cooperation initiatives;
- International partners of decentralized cooperation already present in the territory;
- Both public and private local services and programs;
Institutions and local actors participating in the program;
National programs and services participating in the program.

The Regional Plan for International Cooperation will provide a reference point for identifying new funding sources. The document – which includes the integrated strategies for territorial development, a marketing document and a project dossier – is an important tool for the Working Groups, allowing them to orient all external, public and private actors of cooperation that are willing to invest in the area covered by the plan.

Thematic Development Strategies

The Working Groups organize Commissions in the different fields of intervention to build awareness and to elaborate strategies and thematic programs. These thematic commissions are led by regional representatives, and are based on the participation of competent territorial services at all levels, of associations, private companies, NGOs and universities.

Thematic programming plays an essential role in raising awareness about territorial problems and potentials; in particular, it allows projects in the different fields of action (health, agriculture, etc.) to be embedded into the corresponding national policies.

Thematic programming activities will result in strategic documents that reinforce services and programs in different fields of intervention. These thematic strategies will undergo comprehensive analysis by the RWGs through public debate, in order to identify municipal priorities and integrated projects that can have a relevant impact on regional development (tourism, economically and socially strategic infrastructures, exploitation of historical sites etc.).
The Projects Dossier

The dossier of integrated thematic projects usually includes two types of initiatives:

- **Projects with a Quick Impact** on the quality of life of populations, which facilitate their participation in the development process. These are grassroots initiatives developed within the communities themselves, mobilizing local actors, particularly the most vulnerable social groups. Such projects could be, for example, rehabilitation of a school or a health centre, construction of bridges or markets, reactivation of production and food conversion.

- **Strategic** Projects with a relevant impact on the sustainable development of the territory. These are integrated projects that require in-depth knowledge and a longer period of time for their formulation and implementation (eco-tourism projects, establishment of credit facilities and Economic Development Agencies, re-organization of medicine distribution systems, waste collection systems). The strategic project dossier will be developed over the medium-term, and the documents included in the project-ideas can be used in the initial stages to identify potential partners interested in supporting the Program through funding and technical assistance.

Establishing a Local Economic Development Agency (LEDA) is one of the strategic projects that all ART GOLD Programs encourage in-country. LEDAs put together both public and private economic actors. They provide the necessary services to support local economic actors, including those that may be less successful: identifying productive chains in the territory; supporting the creation and management of businesses, cooperatives and producers’ associations; technical assistance to develop projects within established productive chains, commercialization of products and internationalization of local economy. A loan fund, established by the Program before a national financial institution, is used by LEDAs to support local businesses. The 50 ADEL currently operating in Latin America, Africa and the Balkans have proved efficient and sustainable in the fight against poverty. In these countries, the Commissions responsible for developing economic development strategies party with the LEDAs.

The Territorial Marketing Document

During the organization of the planning activity, the RWGs formulate a preliminary regional promotional brochure for international dissemination. The document illustrates the characteristics of territory in question: institutional organization, population data, economic potential, environmental conditions, services organization in the various fields of action, needs and potentials that can be developed through the support of international cooperation and existing partners. These documents are used to motivate organizations of international and decentralized cooperation to participate in the Program, with support from the NCC and the ART International services. An example of this is the document produced by the Working Group of the Batnan Region (Libya), which can be requested to the address indicated on the last page of this paper.

During local programming, the document will be progressively integrated and enriched by the results of surveys and information gathering activities. The final product will be called the **Territorial Marketing**
Document, which is used to identify new partners for international cooperation. As such, these documents play an essential role within the Working Groups, allowing them to maximize the impact of the ongoing programming work and to promote a positive, dynamic image of the local community. They also demonstrate the strategic basis of the Programs that promote a municipal development mechanism based on the existing resources rather than the missing ones.

About tools

During the organization of the programming activity, the RWG identifies the most appropriate tools for research and analysis of data. The use of new techniques for collecting and analyzing data, such as tele-detection or Geographical Information Systems (GIS), are quite new in some areas. The GIS allows geographically referenced information to be gathered quickly and systematically, providing a rapid, accurate basis for programming. Digital mapping allows improving the quality and functionality of maps and plans at many levels.

Such tools, however, are not essential for local programming, which can be undertaken using more traditional methods. The use of GIS should only be envisaged in situations where local administrations have the necessary human, technical and financial resources to use them correctly and on a regular basis.

A problem frequently encountered in the various countries results from the use of different types of GIS, not always compatible between them because in most cases they have been implemented by local services and administrations with support from different actors of international cooperation. For example, agricultural sectors use a GIS that is not compatible with that used by municipal or regional administrations, or by the Education department. In such cases, it is necessary to create – in collaboration with the competent national institutions - a single tool to enable the RWGs to exchange information from different sectors and levels, thus facilitating the programming process and its subsequent evaluation.

Participation

During the draft of the Terms of Reference, RWGs also identifies the most appropriate methodologies and tools to ensure the participation of the population in defining activities. Programming activities usually involves:

- formulation, information and follow up activities, undertaken by RWGs and LWGs;
- collection and analysis of data, usually undertaken by technicians appointed by partner institutions and organizations. The establishment of this group of technicians represents the first step towards a future Regional and Municipal Planning Unit;
• thematic programming, undertaken by the thematic Commissions created within the RWGs and the LWGs;
• awareness-raising and consultation of the wider population, including the most vulnerable and often geographically marginalized groups that have difficult access to services and little opportunities to give their contribution to the public opinion.

In each country the most appropriate and culturally sensitive methods must be used in order to encourage maximum participation on the part of local populations in the programming activities. National laws sometimes cater for forums and concertation institutions (Regional or Municipal Committees) that encourage debates and the identification of solutions to specific problems. Elsewhere, local radio can play an important informative role. In all cases, the sustainability of the *Regional Plan for International Cooperation* depends directly upon the level of participation and commitment of social actors in the elaboration of the Plan.

In ART GOLD methodology, these wide consultation activities frequently result in day-long Thematic or Synthesis Seminars.

The entire research and thematic planning process is carried out and promoted by the Commissions created by the Working Groups. The process is systematically reinforced by people’s active participation through Thematic Seminar at a regional or municipal level. Such seminars, which are open to all interested local actors, allow the identification of the problems perceived as most serious by the local population. These public debates frequently allow identifying the most appropriate and satisfactory solutions to the pinpointed problems. The Thematic Seminars will play an important role in the definition of thematic programming, and in the identification of strategies and projects. They also provide a way to enhance popular participation throughout the process, enabling ongoing public debate on local priorities.

The results of the various Thematic Seminars are discussed at the end of the process within the framework of Synthesis Seminars, organized to define the strategies of integrated local development, which form the basis for the Regional Plan.

A useful tool that encourages the participation of local communities in the planning activities is the Community *Risk & Resource Mapping*. This methodology allows mobilizing schools, health centers, youth clubs and other actors. After consulting with the regional actors, the Maps register the risks, needs and available resources, identified by commonly agreed symbols. These Maps are used to debate over the results of the surveys and the solutions to the priority problems, identified in joint effort with local authorities, as well as to define the projects to be implemented. ART GOLD programs usually allocate resources for projects identified through the Maps, to give a rapid response to identified problems and to
encourage the participation of the community. As such, the most complicated processes of local development planning are paralleled with a more specific programming regarding the use of funds dedicated to quick-impact projects. This is intended to provide an opportunity for experimentation in participatory methodologies and to encourage the various social actors to get involved in the processes.

This methodology allows the identification of quick-impact projects during the start-up phase of a program, but also offers a possibility to work within a community and to formulate vulnerability and poverty reduction plans throughout the territory. For further information on this, please refer to the Guide to Community Risk and Resource Mapping.

Thematic Planning

As already mentioned, in order to increase knowledge at a local level and elaborate thematic strategies and projects, the Working Groups organize Commissions for each field of intervention. These Commissions are chaired by the competent Regional Directorates and involve the participation of territorial services at various levels, including associations, businesses, NGOs and Universities.

The outputs of the thematic programming include documents that propose strategies and project ideas for each field of intervention. Through public debate, the RWGs analyze these thematic documents in a comprehensive way at the end of the process, in order to identify municipal priorities and integrated projects that have an impact on regional development.

The final synthesis and formulation of strategies and projects is easier when thematic Commissions take a transversal approach, analyzing each element and initiative with regard to its interdependence with other fields of intervention.

Governance

As mentioned earlier, the programming process and the joint management of local development create favorable conditions for the governance of changes in the territory. In the strategies they develop, Thematic Commissions indicate the necessary governance elements to support the development initiatives planned. The RWGs are responsible for summarizing thematic strategies and for indicating the necessary governance elements to enable an integrated development process.

The field of intervention defined as “Governance” refers to those aspects of development connected to the functioning of public administration and public services and to the promotion and defense of rights and equal opportunities. These elements can themselves be an objective within the planning process, or can be integrated into the activity of the thematic Commissions. A Commission responsible for developing strategies for governance can be coordinated by the Regional Directorates of the relevant public administration. However, representatives of other competent institutions (defense of human rights, equal opportunities and justice) will be invited to participate in the Commission, together with competent regional and local services, universities, associations and NGOs present in the area.
Under the supervision of the Regional Directorate and taking national policies and objectives into consideration, this Commission programs and implements a participatory study into the functioning of public administrations and the citizens’ major problems. In particular, this study aims to produce the following results:

- a map of basic public services: official population registers, identity cards, property documents etc. The Map will show the level of service coverage across the territory and locate citizens currently not served by these services;
- a map of services regarding protection of rights and equal opportunities for citizens and the major needs of vulnerable groups within the territory;
- a map of judicial services and main problems of the territory;
- a document detailing qualitative and innovative activities previously implemented in the territory that may be useful for programming purposes.

On the basis of the results of the survey, the Commission will then develop Strategic Guidelines for the reinforcement of the governance system in the territory, taking national priorities and objectives into account. These strategic guidelines identify the core priorities for services and programs (extended documentation of citizens, installation of digital population registers, reorganization of land registers, reinforcement of the institutions for the protection of the most vulnerable groups’ rights, functioning of tribunals, rehabilitation of prisons etc.) and their interaction with other essential territorial services (transportation, social services). Quick-impact projects and strategic project-ideas for the reinforcement of services are also identified.

A Regional Thematic Seminar for the Programming of Governance Services - organized by the Commission in collaboration with competent local and national authorities - will allow debating over the strategic guidelines and drafting a thematic synthesis of the programming activities carried out. The Commission will then produce the strategic documents, taking the outcome of the Thematic Seminar and the contributions of all participants into account.

Protection and Promotion of the Environment

The Commission responsible for developing a strategy for environmental protection and promotion is coordinated by the Regional Directorate for the Environment, in collaboration with other relevant directorates (Public Works, Water, Forests, Civil Protection etc). Representatives of local and regional services, universities, the private sector, associations and NGOs present in the area are invited to participate.

Under the supervision of the Regional Directorates and taking national policies into account, this Commission programs and implements a participatory study into the functioning of the environment protection system. In particular, this study aims to produce the following results:

- a map of urban centers, development possibilities (population, means of communication, transportation, etc.), ongoing services and programs;
• a map of potential environmental resources (flora and fauna, medicinal plants, maritime and river resources, forests, soil characteristics, natural parks, energy sources) and of the ongoing services and programs;
• a map of cultural (artistic and historic resources, traditional crafts and trades) and of the ongoing services and programs focusing on their exploitation;
• a map of the territory’s specific risks and vulnerabilities, and of the ongoing programs and services focusing on their reduction;
• a document detailing qualitative and innovative activities implemented in the territory that may be useful for programming purposes (ecotourism, certified bio-products, local economies within national Parks, rehabilitation of historical sites, vulnerability reduction etc.).

On the basis of the results of the survey and taking into account national priorities and objectives, the Commission will then develop **Strategic Guidelines for the reinforcement of services and programs for the protection and promotion of the environment**. These strategic guidelines identify the core priorities of services (management of urban heritage, transportation and communication, etc.), and programs (tourism development integrated projects, production and use of medicinal plants, production of local construction materials, management of artistic and cultural activities, national vulnerability reduction, urban regeneration, reforestation, use of alternative energy sources etc.), and their interaction with other essential services and programs in the territory. **Quick-impact projects and strategic project-ideas** for the reinforcement of services and the exploitation of environmental resources are also identified.

In the Region of Vlore, Albania, the local University and the University of Ancona (Marche Region, Italy) produced in 2003 the *Tourist Plan and Guide to the Vlore Region*. In close collaboration with the Working Group, The Guide, which is printed in Albanian, English and Italian, is now being disseminated in bookshops, hotels and travel agents in Greece, Italy and the neighboring countries to promote tourism and encourage interested investors to participate. It presents most relevant local resources and potentials, as well as the history, culture and gastronomic specialties of the region. The Plan details all the necessary projects to develop such resources. Training courses for managers of bed and breakfasts and for hotel receptionists have already been carried out. The two Universities allowed some typical regional produce to receive the DOP certification. A tourist development agency was created in the town of Vlore to encourage locals to adopt the “Bed and Breakfast” model to accommodate tourists. The Regional Working Group manages these activities jointly with all public and private actors interested in implementing the tourist activities included in the Plan.

**A Regional Thematic Seminar for the Protection and Promotion of the Environment** - organized by the Commission in collaboration with competent local and national authorities - will allow debating over the strategic guidelines and drafting a thematic synthesis of the programming activities carried out. The Commission will then produce the strategic documents, taking the outcome of the Thematic Seminar and the contributions of all participants into account.
Economic Development

The Commission responsible for developing strategies for economic development is coordinated by the Regional Economic Directorate, in collaboration with other relevant directorates (Labor, Agriculture). Representatives of local and regional services, universities, the private sector, associations and NGOs present in the area are invited to participate.

Under the supervision of the Regional Directorates and taking national policies into account, this Commission programs and implements a _participatory study into the functioning of the economic development system in the territory._ In particular, this study aims to produce the following results:

- a map showing the economic potential of the territory and possible productive chains to develop, as well as the core problems and ongoing services and programs for the economic development of the territory;
- a document detailing credit mechanisms adopted at national and local level by the various competent institutions (banks, State specialized agencies, cooperation organizations);
- a document detailing qualitative and innovative activities implemented in the territory that may be useful for programming purposes (innovative entrepreneurship, efficient credit mechanisms, developed chains, etc).

On the basis of the results of the survey and taking national priorities and objectives into account, the Commission will develop _Strategic Guidelines for reinforcement of support services to local businesses and production initiatives_. These strategic guidelines identify the core priorities for the promotion of services to local businesses as well as initiatives coherent with the local productive chains (support to agriculture and food self-sufficiency activities, food agro-industry, environmental resource exploitation, eco-tourism integrated projects, transportation businesses, promotion of cooperatives and producers associations etc.) and their interaction with other services and programs in the territory (transportation, road system, environment, vocational training etc). _Quick-impact projects and strategic projects-ideas_ for the reinforcement of local economic development initiatives are also identified.

The Commission defines specific _funding mechanisms for local economy_, in collaboration with all relevant national and local actors: State institutions involved in economic development, local financial institutions and producers associations. The mechanism must include various credit lines for the different economic sectors and the participation of the private and public sectors in their management.
A Regional Thematic Seminar for Economic Development - organized by the Commission in collaboration with competent local and national authorities - will allow debating over the strategic guidelines and drafting a thematic synthesis of the programming activities carried out. The Commission will then produce the strategic documents, taking the outcome of the Thematic Seminar and the contributions of all participants into account.

Health and Social Security Systems

The Commission responsible for developing strategies for the reinforcement of the health and social security systems is coordinated by the Regional Health Directorate and by the Regional Directorate of Social Affairs. Representatives of local and regional social and health services, universities, the private sector, associations and NGOs present in the area are invited to participate.

Under the supervision of the Regional Directorates and taking the policies of the Health Ministry and of the Ministry of Social Affairs into account, this Commission programs and implements a participatory study into the functioning of the local health and social security systems and into the core problems of the population. In particular, this study aims to produce the following results:

- a map of the health service network at various territorial levels, showing the level of coverage of core services (GPs, medicines, emergency) and the social groups and areas that are not currently covered;
- a map showing the coverage of the main basic health programs, the population’s major health problems and the territories and social groups that are not currently covered;
- a map showing social service and programs in the territory, indicating the level of coverage and the quality of services in relation to priority problems of the vulnerable groups of the territory;
- a document detailing previous qualitative and innovative experiences undertaken in the territory that could be useful for programming purposes (programs targeting vulnerable groups, public-private partnerships etc).

On the basis of the results of the survey, the Commission will then develop Strategic Guidelines for the reinforcement of health and social services in the territory, taking national priorities and objectives into account. These strategic guidelines – formulated taking the most isolated local communities and the most vulnerable groups of the territory into account – identify the core priorities of

For the programming of health issues, the ART GOLD Programs follow the strategic guidelines of the WHO for the implementation of Local Health Systems.
the health services and programs (extension and improvement of the health centers network and the assistance coverage for mothers and children, reference system between hospitals and health centers, stock system for medicines and sanitary equipment, extension of the vaccination coverage, fight against transmittable diseases, water control and stock) and their interaction with other essential services and programs in the territory (transportation, road system, environment, economic activities, etc). Quick-impact projects and strategic project-ideas for the reinforcement of health services and programs are also identified.

Similarly, the commission should develop strategic guidelines for social protection in the territory, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable groups and the services that currently aim to cater for these groups. These strategic guidelines indicate the key priorities for social services and programs (support to the elderly or to the mentally and physically handicapped, educational facilities for children, daycares and child support services for working women, etc.) and their interactions with other essential public services in the territory (schools, transportation, economic activities etc.) According to this, quick-impact projects and strategic project-ideas for the reinforcement of social security services and programs are identified. Local initiatives are developed in collaboration with the national social security system, ensuring a basic provision of service to those previously un-served.

A Regional Thematic Seminar for Health and Social Services - organized by the Commission in collaboration with competent local and national authorities - will allow debating over the strategic guidelines and drafting a thematic synthesis of the programming activities carried out. The Commission will then produce the strategic documents, taking the outcome of the Thematic Seminar and the contributions of all participants into account.

Education and Vocational Training

The Commission responsible for developing strategies for the reinforcement of education and vocational training systems is coordinated by the Regional Education and Vocational Directorate. Representatives of schools at different levels, vocational centers, universities, local associations, parents associations and NGOs present in the area are invited to participate.

Under the supervision of the Regional Directorates and taking the policies of the Ministry of Education into account, this
Commission programs and implements a **participatory study into the functioning of the local educational and vocational systems and into the core problems of the children and adolescents**. In particular, this study aims to produce the following results:

- a map of school networks at different levels across the territory, indicating current coverage,
- a map indicating the main vocational training programs, the key training needs, the areas and groups of adolescents currently without coverage,
- a document detailing previous qualitative and innovative experiences undertaken in the territory that could be useful for local programming purposes (schools that interact with the territory, integration of handicapped children into the school system, vocational experiences related to local economies, mixed public-private management of services etc.).

On the basis of the results of the survey, the Commission will develop **Strategic Guidelines for the reinforcement of the systems and programs of educational and vocational training in the territory**, taking national priorities and objectives into account. These strategic guidelines identify the core priorities for the services and programs (improvement of school and vocational training centers network, teachers education, stock of teaching material, improvement of the control activities of the Regional Directorate, literacy, collaboration of schools and universities with the territory, integration of handicapped children into the school system, vocational training programs in coordination with local businesses, etc.) and their interaction with other essential services and programs in the territory (transportation, social services, economic activities, etc). **Quick-impact projects and strategic projects-ideas** for the reinforcement of the educational and vocational training programs and services are also identified.

In Guatemala, in the Quiché Department, the Commission for Education identified core obstacles to children's schooling. In particular, the formulated strategies suggested an adaptation of the school calendar to families' agricultural work day; they also introduced local languages into the schools, and included classes with the purpose to support endangered local culture (such as marimba playing). They also established school cafeterias. The Commission, which is coordinated by the Departmental Directorate for Education, set out to implement the established activities, gathering resources from all the public and private actors of the territory. The National Ministry of Education has given its approval for the introduction of local languages in schools.

**A Regional Thematic Seminar for Programming Education and Vocational Training Services** - organized by the Commission in collaboration with the competent local and national authorities - will allow debating over the strategic guidelines and drafting a thematic synthesis of the programming activities carried out. The Commission will then produce the strategic documents, taking the outcome of the Thematic Seminar and the contributions of all participants into account.
The elaboration of an Integrated Plan for International Cooperation

The Regional Working Group, in collaboration with the Local Working Groups and competent national authorities, organizes a Regional Synthesis Seminar on the programming process, during which the thematic commissions will present the strategic documents and projects in the multiple fields of intervention and will discuss the municipal development priorities. Through these seminars the program favors the definition of strategies and projects supported by both National Thematic Directorates in the regions and local communities. At the end of the Seminar, participants provide the RWGs with guidelines and basic documents for the elaboration of an integrated plan for international cooperation.

The RWG elaborates the first draft of the Regional Plan for international cooperation integrating the outcome of the various thematic and territorial plans. The group also defines the dossier of the quick impact and strategic projects in the five fields of intervention. These plans constitute a reference point for Program investments, for decentralized cooperation projects and for the identification of resources at all levels.

The RWG produce territorial marketing documents that form, in conjunction with photos and maps, a tool to mobilize national and international resources. The document includes the following: a territorial profile, local potentials that could be developed with support from international partners, as well as the strategic guidelines for territorial development and strategic and quick-impact projects. Any actor that so wishes, may choose to participate in these activities by providing technical support in the drafting of these documents.

During this phase, the RWG formulate and implement a promotion strategy for the territorial marketing documents and the Plan at a national and international level. In collaboration with the NCC and the Program team, meetings can be organized to invite all donors, UN Agencies and international cooperation NGOs present in the territory to participate in the program. The Working Groups also organize and oversee - at different levels - country visits and field trips for organizations that express interest in the program, and they identify and formulate specific cooperation projects within the framework of the Plan.

At the international level, ART International services ensure the dissemination of the Marketing Documents and the Plan for International Cooperation amongst UN Agencies, donor countries, local communities and social actors within those developed countries interested in establishing decentralized cooperation partnerships and in providing additional human, material and financial resources. During these missions, delegations meet with the competent national authorities, embassy staff, Provincial Working Groups and Local Working Groups of the territory, in order to define the decentralized cooperation projects that fall within the Plans. The projects always require financial and material resources as well as technical assistance from local communities of developed

ART International services have promoted, since the 1990s, the creation of more than 300 decentralized cooperation partnerships between local communities from the North and countries where local human development programs were taking place. This network of operational interaction between local administrations of industrialized countries is put at service to all newcomers to the ART Initiative.
Implementation of the Plan, Monitoring and Sustainability of results

The Regional and Local Working Groups undertake to implement the programmed activities and follow-up in collaboration with the Program experts and with the technical assistance from international partners.

The Plan for International Cooperation allows planning the exploitation - in each Region and in a participatory and permanent manner - of the additional resources made available by decentralized and international cooperation, integrating the public resources available to local administrations. However, the Plan can only become a sustainable tool if local and national administrations agree to officially establish the Working Groups and adopt a participatory methodology.

The Regional Directorate of the national institution responsible for the Program normally acts as an institutional reference point at regional level. This is usually best done through the creation of an inter-thematic technical unit that uses an integrated and participatory approach, to support activities and program and manage local development. The modus operandi varies according to the country, but the Program must always ensure that the methods selected during the planning stages are integrated into the functioning of local institutions.

Thematic Commissions also follow up and monitor thematic activities. In certain situations, other Commissions may be created to respond to specific needs of the territory in question, for example, disaster and risk management, active participation of women in the local development process or defense of the children rights.

The results of ART GOLD Programs in terms of institutionalizing structures and methods of participatory programming vary according to the specific characteristics of each country.

In some countries, (Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras), Councils for Regional and Local Development have been created...
within national institutions, involving the participation of all local actors in the programming and management of development. The Dominican Republic has even officially decreed that the Councils should maintain thematic Commissions for programming across different fields of intervention.

In some countries (Albania, Nicaragua), **Technical Planning Units** have been created within the framework of regional administrations, comprising technicians and civil servants from various sectors (agriculture, health, education etc). The Technical Planning Units allow institutionalizing inter-thematic and technical elements of local planning.

In the countries where the 50 **Local Economic Development Agencies** have been established, the Commissions of the Working Groups responsible for local economic planning have been institutionalized as the associative basis of the Agencies. In other countries (Mozambique, Angola, South Africa), the Agencies have been institutionalized through national laws, as organisms for the governance of local economies.

In other countries (e.g. Cuba), 50% of Municipalities and Provinces have integrated the Working Groups into the competent institutions for the programming and management of international development activities.

In all cases, the possibility of institutionalizing participatory methods for the programming and management of local development represents a core objective of ART GOLD Programs. Consolidating participatory mechanisms at the end of a program does not usually have a substantial impact; this should be done at the beginning of the process, in collaboration with competent national institutions and relying on the contribution and know-how of local partners.
Glossary

**ART** Support to Territorial and Thematic Networks of Human Development. This initiative is based on an agreement between UNESCO, UNDP, UNIFEM and UNOPS, and is open for partnerships with other UN Agencies. ART aims to provide a tool of ‘new multilateralism’, that is to say, a strategic alliance between national governments, the UN, associations and organizations at local levels in the North and the South, and related social actors, in order to promote, each through its own role and specializations, a more ‘human’ development. To do this, ART favors decentralized cooperation, meaning partnerships between local organizations in the North and the South, and the creation of thematic partnerships (technology, services, public administration, economy, environment, health, rights etc.) and public structures and associations, businesses, academic institutions and other actors in the North and South.

**GOLD** Governance and Local Development. ART GOLD Programs aim to support national governments in their own policies to support an ‘internationalized local development’. These programs collaborate with governments in the aim of reinforcing local capacities to manage development in a coordinated, inter-thematic manner through the mobilization of local actors.

Further Reading

To order documents, please contact: giovanni.camilleri@undp.org or giulia.dario@unops.fao.org

- **The ART Initiative.** Brochure and electronic publication available in English and Spanish
- **Local Economic Development Agencies.** Available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Albanian. Electronic version available in French
- **Guide to the production of National Marketing Documents.** Electronic document available in French and Spanish.
- **Guide to Community Risk, Need and Resources Mapping.** Electronic document available in Spanish only
- **Actors and Stakeholders in the Batnan Region of Libya**

Bibliography of Local Planning

**International Organizations**

Interesting Web sites include the following:
  Http://www.johannesburgsummit.org (Although not updated anymore)
  www.worldbank.org/urban/led (Local Economic Development site of the World Bank)
  www.worldbank.org/wbi/urban (Urban and City management issues site of the World Bank)

European Union

  European Commission, ESDP, European Spatial Development Perspective, Towards Balanced and Sustainable Development of the Territory of the European Union, 1999
  European Commission, Guide aux Pacts Territoriaux pour l’Occupation, November 1999
  Uffici di assistenza tecnica “TERRA”, “Terra, un laboratorio per l’assetto del territorio”, (Available at http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/terra/projects.html)
  Interesting pages of the European Union’s web site include the following:
    Http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int
    http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/index_en.htm
    http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/europaid/index_en.htm
    http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/governance/index_en.htm

Country Case Studies

  http://www.planningportal.gov.uk of the Government of the UK
  http://dplg.gov.za Of the Government of South Africa
  www.decentramento.it Of the Government of Italy
  Http://www.formez.it (Italian institution which supports public administrations, which has a specific site on local economic development and planning issues: Http://www.sviluppolocale.formez.it)
  http://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/fr_piano-ter.htm (site dedicated to territorial planning issues of the Region Emilia Romagna)