**Country Name:**
Benin

**WB Project Involved: Name of Project and Project Code:**
- National Community-Driven Development Support Project (P081484/P121104)
- Decentralized Community Driven Services Project (P117764/P146597)

**Name and Date of Legislation/Policy:**
- Manual of Procedures of the Commune Development Support Fund (Manuel Fonds d’Appui au Développement des Communes) (November 2008) – Available in French; it was revised in 2015 but only the 2008 version is available online.
- National Procurement Code (Code des marchés publics) (August 2009) – Available in French
- National Guidelines on Local Development Plan (Guide d’Elaboration du Plan de Développement Communal) (October 2009) – Available in French

**Description of Legislation/Policy:**
Benin is a unique and successful case of mainstreaming the CDD approach into country systems and reconciling CDD with decentralization. Over the past 10 years, the Government has adopted CDD as a core principle of decentralized local development. In the early stages, reforms centered on creating the legal framework for execution of public investment projects by communities. In the second generation of reforms, the CDD approach shifted from being used mainly in externally-financed projects, to one financed through the intergovernmental fiscal transfer system, with local governments encouraged to delegate investment funds to communities for simple projects. In the current phase, local governments are sorting all planned investments according to the principle of subsidiarity – with the most complex local projects managed by contract management agencies, medium complexity projects managed by the local governments, and low complexity and single village projects implemented by communities themselves.

Since the 1990 Constitution that provided the foundation for local self-governments, the Government has approved several laws and issued guidelines to implement the decentralization reforms. One of the important steps to institutionalize the community driven development (CDD) approach in the decentralization process is the adoption of the Law 2005-07 in April 2005, creating the legal framework for communities to implement public investment projects. Amending the Law 2001-07 on public contracting (La Maîtrise d’Ouvrage Public), this Law allows communes to delegate investment projects to communities and directed each commune to elaborate a local
development plan (Plan de Développement Communal: PDC). The principles of the CDD approach (e.g. participatory planning, roles of the communities) are explicitly included in the National Guidelines for PDC. Furthermore, a National Decree was issued in 2009, explicitly allowing for the transfer of public funds from local government to community accounts, and community-managed procurement practices were noted in the National Procurement Code adopted in 2009. Following the issuance of the National Operational Directive on CDD in sectoral policies in 2011, the Ministries of Health, Primary Education, Finance, Water, and Agriculture have incorporated CDD into their operational processes and developed toolkits on service delivery through CDD.

The Government also enshrined its ownership of the CDD approach in the Poverty Reduction Strategy for 2011-2015 (Stratégie de Croissance pour la Réduction de la Pauvreté: SCRP-3). The SCRP-3 focuses on decentralizing the responsibility for basic service delivery. SCRP-3 specifies that any given development intervention should be undertaken by the lowest-level actor that can effectively carry it out (the principle of subsidiarity). Benin's 77 communes have the responsibility for delivery of key basic services including primary education, health, and water management. SCRP-3 particularly encourages communes to delegate the implementation of small-scale, low complexity development activities to communities through the CDD approach. Resources are transferred to communes through the Commune Development Support Fund (FADeC), whose manual incorporates procedures for communes to delegate implementation to communities. Under this CDD approach, poor communities identify their local needs, receive training on project management, receive funds, plan and implement the projects chosen, and monitor the provision of services that result from those projects. For the Government, the delegation of service delivery to the lowest possible level has the benefit of increasing the participation of citizens at the grassroots level, lowering costs, and improving the rate of implementation of development projects.

**Background of CDD Project(s) involvement in Legislation/Policy. Type of TA provided:**

The National Community-Driven Development Support Project (Projet National d'Appui au Développement Conduit par les Communautés: PNDCC) provided technical assistance (TA) in: 1) development of the legal, policy and operational framework to support mainstreaming CDD and building the capacity of line ministries to realign their roles; 2) strengthening the capacity of communes to integrate the CDD approach into their local planning and implementation of small-scale investments; 3) strengthening the capacity of grassroots communities through provision of Grassroots Management Training; 3) participatory poverty assessments and identification of priorities in target communities; and 4) monitoring and evaluation, and communication.

Although significant results were delivered on the ground, as early as 2008 the Government perceived that PNDCC’s objective of fully streamlining CDD into decentralization would not be achieved by the project’s end. The reasons included: 1) a lack of ownership of the approach by the ministry in charge of decentralization created in 2007; 2) the failure to relay information regarding the 2005 law regarding project execution, which left doubt among some elected officials as to the legality of the CDD approach; 3) the absence of explicit provisions allowing communes to take into account CDD in FADeC’s operations manual, which was adopted in 2008 (leaving the impression that CDD was excluded; 4) low enthusiasm on the part of some line ministries in incorporating CDD in their sectoral strategies; and 5) skepticism of donors in the “decentralization group” about the CDD’s compatibility with decentralization. In order to close these gaps, in 2009 the Government and the World Bank made the decision to include a follow up to the PNDCC (i.e., this project) in the CAS.

The follow-on project, the Decentralized Community Driven Services Project (PSDCC), started in
2012, represents a shift away from some project-specific aspects of the previous approach to ensure that the CDD approach is fully streamlined into the country’s decentralization-deconcentration process. The project aims to improve access to decentralized basic services and mainstream CDD approach for such services by integrating the CDD approach into regular government structures. Whereas under the PNDCC IDA funds flowing to subprojects went directly from the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) to communes or communities, PSDCC resources are transferred to communes periodically during the year through the FAdeC fiscal transfer system. Eligible expenditures include investment projects in the areas of education, health, water, and commerce (public markets). It continues to provide TA and capacity building support to the national government, prefectures, communes, and communities. MDGLAAT receives TA to strengthen the performance of FAdeC and to ensure the necessary capacity is in place to supervise and mainstream the CDD approach.

The PSDCC has supported the revision of the Manual of Procedures of the FAdeC to incorporate explicitly the CDD approach. Capacity building is provided for CONAFIL to strengthen administration of the FAdeC, such as improving the transparency of the calculation of allocations, fiduciary controls, and monitoring and evaluation. Prefectures receive TA to strengthen their technical and financial capacity to ensure the quality of decentralized investments. The key sectoral and cross-cutting Ministries also receive technical support to implement decentralization and deconcentration while incorporating and streamlining the CDD approach into their regular operations. This TA builds on the previous support provided to sectoral ministries to include the CDD approach in their sectoral strategies through PNDCC.

The communes receive the capacity-building program that was initially supported by PNDCC. The program strengthens communes’ capacity to: 1) improve participatory preparation of PDC; 2) implement poverty targeting; 3) adopt the CDD approach for the implementation of small-scale community-level investment projects; and 4) implement social protection projects (safety nets) using the CDD approach. The project will provide TA to develop a specific CDD guide for communes describing how to implement small investment projects and safety net interventions (labor-intensive works and cash transfer programs) using CDD approach as a complement to the guide for PDC preparation.

The project supports the expansion of the Grassroots Management Training program as to improve community’s capacity to implement projects and participate in the local development process. The GMT program has been successfully conducted in over 2,100 of Benin’s 3,700 communities under the PNDCC and the PSDCC. This number is expected to exceed 2,500 by the end of the PSDCC. In addition, the project supports the rollout of community scorecards in communities as part of the GMT program. Through focus groups and facilitated meetings, the scorecard process engages communities in discussions with service providers on their performance and actions that can be taken to address shortcomings. The community scorecards will be implemented by the Secretariat for Decentralized Community Driven Services (SSDCC) together with a non-governmental organization to be contracted by MDGLAAT. The project also supports the monitoring and evaluation function of the SSDCC, periodic technical audits, and the impact evaluation of the safety nets pilot.

Background Documents:
MDGLAAT’s website


Email exchanges with John Van Dyck, Senior Social Protection Specialist, World Bank.

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