



Kontigo

Evaluation of ICLD 2009- 2010

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Summary

The Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) is a non-profit association based in Visby, Gotland, whose operations are currently financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). ICLD's task is to contribute towards reducing world poverty and strengthening the individual's freedoms and rights by promoting local democracy, decentralisation and local autonomy. The ICLD divides its work into three principal fields of activity:

- A research-based function for knowledge and capacity development, and a meeting place for Swedish and international players;
- Partnership programmes for Swedish municipalities, county councils and regions in co-operation with equivalent institutions in 20 of Sida's co-operation countries; and
- Four international training programmes per year, which will gradually be set in place.

An incentive for having the centre is that it enables ICLD's three functions to support each other, and thereby create synergies.

Kontigo AB was assigned to evaluate the extent to which ICLD has fulfilled its goals as stated in the agreement with Sida 2008-2012; the strategy for 2009-2011; and the operations plan for 2009-2010.

The organisation has to a large extent, established itself and carried out its activities according to the plans. The Knowledge Centre has developed and sustained valuable relations with scientists; the Municipal partner program has processed a large number of partnership projects and is highly appreciated by Swedish municipalities involved in the partnerships; the International Training Programme has started one program and purchased one, which is in accordance with the plans. However, during the establishment phase the organisation suffered from a high staff turnover, which limited the opportunity to create continuity as well as the possibility for ICLD to learn and successfully develop its activities and synergies from the three fields of activities. This was not entirely due to the fact that ICLD, through a regional policy decision was placed on Gotland, but is also due to the internal management, the working conditions and inchoate internal communication.

The ICLD has successfully established several aspects of its operations and is heading in the direction of the goals in the steering documents. However, ICLD still lacks some of the committed and effective internal mechanisms that need to be developed to make optimal use of its partners and its own assets and engagements.

1 Introduction

The Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) is a non-profit association based in Visby, Gotland, whose operations are currently financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The operations are regulated in an agreement between Sida and the ICLD for the period 2008 to 2011. The operations are long-term and a new co-operative agreement is planned from 2012. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), Lund University and Gotland Municipality, are the ICLD's parent bodies and representatives from these institutes constitute the ICLD board.

ICLD's task is to contribute towards reducing world poverty and strengthening the individual's freedoms and rights by promoting local democracy, decentralisation and local autonomy.

The overall target for ICLD's operations, as stated in its operational plan, is "to promote local democracy in developing countries by gathering and adding to knowledge and experience in Swedish municipalities and regions, and to research and knowledge development on issues related to local democracy and decentralisation that exist in an international context." In order to achieve this target, the ICLD divides its work into three principal fields of activity:

- A research-based function for knowledge and capacity development, and a meeting place for Swedish and international players;
- Partnership programmes for Swedish municipalities, county councils and regions in co-operation with equivalent institutions in 20 of Sida's co-operation countries; and
- Four international training programmes per year, which will gradually be set in place.

One ambition of the centre is for the ICLD's three functions to support each other, and thereby creating added value in the organisation.

1.1 The assignment

Kontigo AB has been assigned to evaluate the ICDL. The main purpose of the evaluation is to assess whether ICLD has worked towards its goals in the first two years of operations - 2009 and 2010. The evaluation will describe how far the ICLD has progressed during the initial establishment phase in relation to the implementation documents. Additionally the evaluation will give recommendations for future development of ICLD's operations.

The evaluation will form the basis for operational planning and budgeting for the activities in the period 2012-2014.

In summary, the evaluation has two specific aims:

1. To provide knowledge on the appropriateness (in relation to the targets) of the work processes and activities; and
2. To provide knowledge for future discussions on any changes to the ICLD's work processes and choice of activities.

The questions to be answered in the evaluation are:

The establishing Process 2009-2010

- Has the process of establishing ICLD in 2009 and 2010, had a clear focus on the overall objectives of ICLD?
- What strengths and weaknesses can be identified in the process so far?
- Which are the success factors, the opportunities and obstacles related to the planned development of the operations of ICLD?
- Can some criteria for success/favourable conditions be identified?

Activity-specific processes

- Have the processes within each field of activity had a clear focus on the stated objectives of each area?
- Have quality assurance efforts within each field of activity had a clear focus on the fulfilment of objectives?

Collaboration between the three functions/activities

- Are there forms of direct cooperation/collaboration/interaction between the different fields of activity of ICLD?
- What kind of synergies has been created between the different activities of ICLD to date?

Relations with external stakeholders/target groups

- To what extent have relationships to the target groups connected to the different activities, been established and further developed?
- What are the expectations of external stakeholders, such as municipalities and county councils, on ICLD?

The effect of policy documents on the establishing process

- How have the policy documents been used during the establishing phase of ICLD?
- How have the actual operations within the ICLD been carried out in relation to the objectives for this period?

1.2 Method and data collection

The evaluation is based on interviews with the Board of Directors, the Secretary General and the Administrative General at the ICLD.¹ Kontigo has also interviewed the ICLD staff, some individually and some in a group interviews.

Furthermore, representatives from Sida, Sipu International, UNCDF, ITP Programmes and members of the Advisory Group were interviewed. One person answered a questionnaire in writing.

Kontigo also attended a two-day training course for Swedish municipalities held in Härnösand, where group interviews were held with participating municipalities connected to the Municipal Partnership Program.

The evaluation is also based on analysis of the agreement with Sida, policy documents and other material and documents received from the ICLD.

1.3 Evaluation team

The evaluation was carried out by Jenny Halldén and Irene Dickman. Cecilia Ribeiro Goncalves and Eldridge Adolfo have also been part of the team as capacity reinforcement and support.

¹ For a complete list of those interviewed see appendix 1.

2 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation's point of departure was the policy and regulatory documents, which were also the starting point for the activities in 2009. These documents, explicitly: the agreement between the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the ICLD; ICLD's three-year strategy; and the 2009 and 2010 operational plans, are important when investigating whether ICLD has performed inline with the requirements in these documents. The main features of these three documents are summarised in this chapter and create the framework for the evaluation.

2.1 The agreement between Sida and the ICLD

In July 2010 a revised agreement between Sida and ICLD was signed. This agreement replaces the agreement signed in September 2008. According to the new agreement, ICLD's activities shall be performed according to the operational plan for 2008-2011, submitted in the application to Sida. However, due to delays (partly due to the fact that the payment for the Municipal Partnership projects are disbursed in arrears), the agreement has been deferred until 2012. In accordance with the agreement, ICLD is to carry out its activities according to the annual operational plans.

Furthermore, ICLD has committed itself to creating a Knowledge Centre that will develop knowledge and act as a knowledge resource to municipalities. ICLD has agreed to establish a Municipal Partnership Program and a maximum of four International Training Programs, of which at least one training per year is to be carried out.

The agreement also states that an independent evaluation of the ICLD activities should take place in 2011. Thus, Kontigo AB was commissioned to carry out the evaluation.

2.2 Strategy for 2009-2011

The strategy was formulated by ICLD and adopted by the board. The strategy expresses how ICLD planned to fulfil its task. It also clarifies ICLD's role and priorities, together with the reasons behind these priorities. Furthermore, the strategy clarifies what the ICLD aims to achieve by 2011, and indicates guidelines and priorities for the period 2009-2011.

The strategy is primarily based on the following documents: The 1995 Paris Declaration, Sweden's Policy for Global Development (PGD), the agreement between Sida and the ICLD and ICLD's rules and regulations.

2.2.1 The ICLD assignment

The ICLD's assignment, as set out by Sida, is "to promote local democracy in developing countries". The implementation of the assignment will be done through three main fields of activity:

- Development of, and responsibility for, capacity-building within the field of local democracy, local governance and decentralisation;
- Responsibility for Municipal Partnerships between Swedish municipalities, county councils and regions and their counterparts in developing countries; and
- Responsibility for International Training Programmes concerning local democracy, local governance and decentralisation.

2.2.2 Vision, aims and priorities

ICLD's long-term vision, according to the strategy is:

The ICLD will actively contribute to strengthening individuals' influence and participation at local level in matters affecting their own living conditions.

Aims:

Within the next five years, the ICLD will become a distinguished international player and co-operational partner within the field of local democracy and local governance, as well as local self- government and decentralization by focusing on conditions in developing countries.

The strategy sets the following targets/priorities for the overall operations:

- Through concrete work contribute to the development of local democratic public institutions;
- Create an interface between practical experiences/requirements and the knowledge development within research;
- Make the ICLD an in-demand advisory function for our target groups and co-operational partners in Sweden and internationally;
- Assure quality in all of the ICLD's operations, both internally and externally, including tools for income reporting and evaluation;
- Pay particular attention to possible synergy effects between the centre's three fields of activity. In other words, between research, training and practical experience; and
- Initiate plans to expand operations and gain more co-operational partners in the field of local democracy/local self-government/decentralisation.
-

2.2.3 Quality

According to ICLD's strategy, quality management should have a prominent place in ICLD's operations from the outset and throughout the entire period. This includes all of the ICLD's branches of operation and sectors of the organisation. Each unit will, according to the strategy, work systematically to improve quality management in its area of operation, and to also relate this to the organisation as a whole.

The strategy further states that the ICLD has appointed one person to initiate, plan and take responsibility for quality management. This work is to be discussed and

implemented in the organisation in gradual stages, and a quality assurance plan should be in place by 2010.

2.2.4 Approach and organisational structure

According to the strategy all ICLD's staff are pivotal people with different competences that should complement each other and provide minimal overlap.

The strategy further states that the areas of responsibility ought to be clear and easily understood by each employee and that the working processes and procedures should be transparent. The work done by each individual are, in principle, to be known by everyone else in the organisation. The main reasoning for these clear and transparent working procedures, is that they will give rise to synergy effects between the different fields of activity, and will also generate fruitful discussions in greater depth and improve the quality of work.

The organisation should, according to the strategy, be based on teamwork, where each employee's competence is utilised and forms part of the process of implementation and decision-making.

2.3 Operational plan 2009 and 2010

The operational plans for 2009 and 2010, indicate the targets ICLD are to achieve within that period. The documents are important as they form the basis from which to explore whether the ICLD has been able to accomplish the overall objectives. The priorities mentioned in the operational plans for the period 2009-2010, will be described in chapters 3 and 4, where each and every field of activity is described and analysed separately.

3 The ICLD organisation

3.1 The creation of the ICLD

The Swedish government has assigned Sida (UD2005/3144/GU) to build operations in Gotland in the form of a centre for Swedish municipalities participation in development cooperation. The decision was based on Swedish regional policy.

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities (SALAR) created a non-profit organisation – ICLD. Its members are SALAR, Lund University and the municipality of Gotland. The activities are mainly based on the grant application to Sida (26 of May 2008).

The ICLD:s organisation consists of a total of ten posts, including Secretary General, administrative manager and employees connected to the three fields of activity: the Centre of Knowledge; the Municipal Partnerships; and the International Training Programmes.

The Secretary General is responsible for the overall operations and answers to the board. Each field of activity should, according to the strategy, have a programme manager, who is responsible for each area and who answers to the Secretary General.²

3.2 The role of the policy documents in organising the activities

The activities of the ICLD rest upon the Swedish Policy for Global Development. The main policy documents for the ICLD are the Sida agreement, the ICLD strategy for 2009-2011 and the yearly operational plans for ICLD.

The Sida agreement was originally set up in September 2008, but was revised in august 2010. The main reason for this revision was to decrease the micromanagement from the first agreement, as a result of the management progress up to 2010.

The non-profit organisation ICLD also has statutes. These are formulated in a general manner, mainly describing the form for meetings of the board and the annual meeting. The Board also has specific working rules set by themselves and submitted to the annual meeting, which clarify that they are responsible for approving annual budgets and plans of operation, and providing instructions for the Secretary General.

3.3 The establishment phase

The organisation was created in spring 2008. Throughout 2009, the emphasis was laid upon establishing the organisation, recruiting members of staff and establishing

² The ICLD strategy for 2009-2011

the three different fields of activity. In the operational plan for 2010, the objectives were to:

- Develop and implement management tools according to results based management;
- Strengthen the organisation and its culture towards a balanced organisation with clear responsibilities;
- Create a structure for communication between the three different fields of activity;
- Set up a framework for ICLD:s compound quality assurance, and for the three fields of activity; and
- Develop common routines and policies for code of conduct, media, information etc.

A management tool based on results-based management, has been developed and is used in the operational planning process.

In august 2010 ICLD carried out a review of the organisation drawing upon the experience of being in full activity for a half year, the audit performed by Sida and the rising of a vacancy. No changes in the organisation were made as a result of the review, except from clarified responsibilities among the staff.

The staff has weekly meetings where the current matters of the organisation are discussed and taken on board.

According to the operational plan, the framework for ICLD:s compound quality assurance and for the three fields of activity, should have been completed by February 2010. At the time of this evaluation there was still no such framework in place. Within the three different fields of activity, there has been scattered and inconsistent work to strengthen quality in the activities.

ICLD has developed administrative routines and policies for code of conduct, procurement, purchase, service travel etc.

The ICLD experienced a high staff turnover during the establishment phase. This is associated with problems to attract qualified staff willing to settle in Gotland. It is also associated with issues related to the structure and organisation of the daily work/operations and internal communications problems. This is mainly a management concern, which is foremost the responsibility of the leadership i.e. the Secretary General.

The first Secretary General of ICLD is now retiring and a new Secretary General has been designated from the first of May 2011.

3.4 Critical factors identified in the evaluation

The ICLD has in a short period of time, and despite some difficulties, managed to establish in many ways a functioning business focused on its objectives.

The Sida agreement and the strategy form a solid base for the activities of the ICLD, and have thereby governed the activities of the organisation.

The yearly plans of operation are gradually being developed. The ICLD aim to work according to results-based management is mirrored in the operational plan for 2010, which presents goals and a results chain with clear indicators. These, however, are not linked to resources or to a management focusing on performance. The annual report does not clearly express to what extent their goals have been fulfilled and how the operations of ICLD and partners connect to the overall goals. The structure of the annual report does not follow the same structure as the operational plan, which makes it difficult to make connections between the fulfilment of the goals in relation to what was initially planned. One of the basic requirements for the annual report ought be that there is a structured follow-up of the indicators that ICLD has formulated. The annual report presents activities carried out by ICLD (outputs), but it presents to a lesser extent the results of activities in relation to the overall goals (outcomes). It is not clear how the ICLD has made use of the indicators in the operations and if there has been a *structured* follow-up based upon the operational plan.

The staff turnover has created problems at the ICLD. It limits the opportunity to create continuity and the possibility for ICLD to learn and successfully develop their activities. As has been mentioned, the staff turnover cannot solely be explained by the difficulty to attract qualified personnel willing to settle on Gotland, but this also has to do with how the work is structured and organised to create a good work environment, and provide incentives for those who are employed to stay within the organisation.

There is a need to strengthen the organisation and its culture in order to provide the basis for a stable organisation with clear responsibilities. Changes of programme managers have occurred. This has created an undefined division of responsibility, which has escalated due to internal communications problems and unclear structures of decision-making, information dissemination and clear mandates. Further, there is a need to strengthen the teamwork as stated in the strategy.

As already mentioned there has been some internal communication problems and problems linked to the staff turnover, which have had a negative impact on the operations and the organisations results. The evaluation indicates that this have not been addressed by the leadership early enough, and further more has not been brought to the attention of the board. The responsibility of the board, concerning their follow-up on the activities and the results of the ICLD, is accordingly not sufficiently described in any of the policy documents or working rules.

According to the interviews the employees are unsure about their responsibilities and it has effected their work situation negatively. This indicates that the ICLD has not fully implemented clear and transparent areas of responsibility of the staff, as stated in the ICLD strategy. Thus, it has limited the possibility for synergy effects between the different fields of activity. Lack of transparency and unclear responsibilities also

increases the risk of dependence in individual employees, which in turn makes the organisation vulnerable.

The framework for ICLD:s compound quality assurance and that for the three fields of activity has not yet been completed (June 2011). The organisation therefore needs a quality framework in order to ensure that the overall goals are adhered to. The existence of a quality framework could also facilitate cooperation within the ICLD and promote synergy effects. On the other hand, a quality framework does not compensate for the responsibility of an active management, to bring about structures and routines in the daily work.

3.5 Recommendations for future work

- I. During the spring 2011, measures have been taken to improve the organisation in order to create clearer accountability within the organisation. This needs to be followed-up by further developing clear roles and mandates, primarily the programme managers. The internal management and control needs to be structured, as well as forms and routines for decision-making, cooperation, communication and follow up;
- II. The responsibility of the board needs to be clarified. The statutes could be developed to lay responsibility on the board to follow-up the activities and the results of the ICLD;
- III. Complete and implement the compound quality assurance. This would help support and strengthen the internal management and control functions;
- IV. Considering that there is an awareness of the difficulties to recruit qualified personnel, an active recruitment policy needs to be put into operation. This would clarify the skills needed, working conditions and also include the ICLD actively searching for the desired competencies;
- V. The follow-up process is an area that needs to be developed. The annual report does not present the operations and activities in relation to the budget, and the actual activities of the municipal partners are not described. This makes it difficult for stakeholders to evaluate whether ICLD has performed its assignment in an efficient and effective manner;
- VI. In future development of the operational plans, it is of importance that the ICLD emphasises in the breakdown (to the greatest extent possible), realistic tangible goals and to find appropriate ways to measure results.

4 ICLD's fields of activity

One of the incentives for establishing the ICLD was to benefit from synergy effects resulting from the consolidation of municipal partnership programmes, international training programmes and centres of knowledge into one operation under the same roof. In this chapter the ICLD's three fields of operation will be explored to answer the questions related to how the work achieved so far is creating possibilities to accomplish the overall objectives. Furthermore, it will show the main critical elements identified in this process.

4.1 The Centre of Knowledge

The main purpose of establishing a knowledge function within the ICLD was to strengthen the relationship between the operational workflow, the Municipal Partnership programmes and the International Training Programmes.³

Further, the Centre of Knowledge aims to act as a hub for both research and experience-based knowledge and has the responsibility for utilising, developing and channelling the internal knowledge and competence related to local democracy, local self-government and decentralisation, being developed within the ICLD's various fields of activity.

This work of the Centre is of importance in order to achieve the goal stated in the agreement with Sida that ICLD shall constitute a knowledge resource for Swedish municipalities and regions in their international development cooperation.

4.1.1 Activities planned for and carried out in 2009 and 2010

According to the operational plans, the main priorities for the years 2009 and 2010 were to recruit staff, create guidelines for the Centre of Knowledge's international operations as well as assure quality assessment, initiate ICLD as a meeting place for relevant players and introduce ICLD as a significant player within the field. Furthermore, it is stated that the Centre of Knowledge should collaborate with ICLD's other fields of operation and establish internal structures and procedures to utilise synergy effects between the different operations etc.⁴

The creation of the Centre of Knowledge took place at the end of 2009 and 2010, and this has been characterised as a development phase. Thus far, much of the work achieved has involved proactive information gathering, network building in Sweden and internationally, visits to relevant research institutions and international UN organisations and initiating research and in-house seminars.⁵

³ Annual Report 2009

⁴ The operational plan 2009 and 2010

⁵ The annual report 2009 and 2010

Furthermore an advisory group⁶ of international and Swedish researchers has been attached to the Centre of Knowledge to ensure that up-to-date research results will benefit the ICLD. The purpose with the Advisory Group is to offer principled advice concerning the development of ICLD, to assess quality and relevance of research projects or programs and to create access to a global network for the ICLD. The Advisory Group and a budget for its expenses are consequently not defined in the Sida application.

In 2010, two new partnership agreements were signed with the East West Centre in Hawaii and UNCDF, and five research projects have been financed by the ICLD. Visits to different international organisations have been carried-out with the aim of creating a research network connected to the Centre.

In April 2010, the workshop "*State of the Art of Local Governance - Challenges for the Next Decade*" was held in Visby, from which a Working paper series, Research reports, Policy briefs and some other papers presented at the workshop, have been published by the Centre. They have been distributed to universities in Sweden and abroad, and to some of ICLD's partners.

The ICLD is a comparatively small organisation with quite high expectations in relation to being a well-known player in the international field. Collaboration and relationship building is therefore of importance to the Centre and this is where the organisation has made most of its efforts so far.

However the Centre was created to strengthen the relationship and create synergies between the operational workflow, the Municipal Partnership Programmes and the International Training program. To make this possible the Centre has to be able to act both as an international player and at the same time "translate" research into tangible and concrete action points that can be used in programmatic work by, for example, participants in the ITP Programs or the Municipal Partnership Program. The evaluation indicated that this has been achieved to a lesser degree. None of the research papers commissioned by the ICLD between 2009 and 2010, to date (June 2011), has been translated to anything concrete. They still remain as research papers and there is no existing plan to translate them.

Accordingly the operational plan is fulfilled to some degree, but still certain priorities are lacking behind. Critical factors connected to this are accounted for below.

⁶ The members of the Advisory Group, *shall* according to ICLD criteria have proven experience and competence in the field of local governance and local democracy; Have performed research and be published within the field in question; Be based at key institutions/organisations/universities; Possess a certain degree of seniority within research or policy fields; Have reasonable knowledge of the Swedish and/or international development policy context in this field. Be prepared to occasionally spend some limited time and energy on behalf of ICLD. In addition, overall, the Advisory Group *shall* consist of a mix between candidates being based in Scandinavia on the one hand, and international on the other. There should also be an as good as possible gender balance within the members of the group.

4.1.2 Critical factors identified in the evaluation

In this section the main critical factors identified in the evaluation of the Centre of Knowledge are presented. By illustrating success factors and obstacles, the aim is to be able to present learning for the future.

The Centre of Knowledge began its operations in autumn 2009 when all of the initial staff members were recruited. This was later than estimated in the agreement between ICLD and Sida. Therefore some of the work has lagged behind, compared to the operational plan for 2009.

The guidelines and criteria for the research that the Centre of Knowledge initiate, support and produce, are not sufficient. More objective and reliable criteria for assessments are needed. The insufficient guidelines make it difficult to estimate whether the research produced is inline with the guiding principles of the Centre. According to the agreement with Sida, these guidelines and criteria were supposed to be completed at the beginning of 2009.

Sida makes the final decisions on research subsidies granted by the Centre. This creates unnecessary delays in the process.

A number of interviewees have stated that the reports and working papers produced so far have been mainly directed to other researches and are thus, difficult to use in the ICLD's other fields of operation or for municipalities whether in Sweden or abroad. Similar arguments were raised concerning the workshop "*State of the Art of Local Governance - Challenges for the Next Decade*," as some interviewees considered it to be of less relevance for ICLD's other activities.

Accordingly, the work carried out so far in the Centre of Knowledge, has mainly been concerned with acting as an international player and establishing collaboration with researchers and organisations. This has to some degree positioned the organisation as an international player through their outreach work. For example the Advisory Group could work as an important advocate for the ICLD, and through the group, the ICLD can gain academic knowledge, insight on current research and suggestions for future research through it. Further, it can provide input to the Centre of Knowledge regarding strategies to increase ICLD's access to, and impact on, the international community engaged in the field.

This is a useful result in relation to the goal that *the ICLD will become a distinguished international player*, but more has to be done to make sure that the research can easily be made usable for local authorities and change agents. The goal of creating synergies between ICLD's different operations will be accomplished, only when this is achieved. To date, there has been very little, or no, cooperation and no internal structures and procedures to utilise synergy effects established.

While the Advisory Group is highly respected, questions have been raised by some of the interviewees concerning the benefits for the ITP Programmes and the Municipal Partnership Programme. Of the work achieved in the group so far, very little of it has extended to the entire organisation.

Another problem identified in the evaluation of the Centre of Knowledge is the poor communication within the Centre and between the different operations.

A lot of the international networking, as well as planning and administration of activities has been carried out independently and through individually taken initiatives. This has created a certain dependence upon individual co-workers in the organisation. This makes the organisation vulnerable concerning the external relationships and in regard to the creation of long-term relationships between the ICLD and the Advisory Group members and networks.

4.1.3 Recommendations for future work

Kontigo gives the following recommendations with regards to the Centre of Knowledge:

- I. Formulate appropriate guidelines and criteria for the research that the Centre of Knowledge initiate and support, as this has so far not been sufficiently formulated;
- II. To simplify the processes on grant subsidies to researches, we suggest this decision are taken by the ICLD, and not by Sida;
- III. To further optimise the use and benefits from an Advisory Group comprised of international experts in the field, ICLD need to create effective mechanisms for strategic communications and commitment between the Advisory Group and the ICLD as a whole. This would also provide the means for the Advisory Group members to improve the relevance of its inputs for the whole organisation and only then, can it offer principled advice concerning the development of ICLD;
- IV. Create internal structures and procedures to utilise synergy effects between the different fields of activity and to act as a hub for both research and experience-based knowledge, as this is lacking at the Centre today;
- V. ICLD might consider whether the reports and working papers produced are relevant for the ICLD's other fields of operation or for the municipalities, and therefore of relevance to achieving the objectives of the organisation;
- VI. Another question Kontigo would like to raise is whether the ICLD as an organisation could benefit from research on municipalities and regions in a Swedish context, to complement the one-sided research on international development work?

4.2 The Municipal Partnership Programme

The programme's overall target is, according to the operational plan for 2010, to combat poverty, which will be achieved by strengthening local self-government and local democracy. Swedish municipalities, county councils and regions co-operating with similar local authorities in 20 prioritised partner countries, strengthens the development of local operations in these countries. The co-operation will also consist of mutual development within the prioritised co-operation areas for the Swedish municipalities.

Sida's targets with municipal partnerships are to:⁷

- Facilitate meetings and result-oriented co-operation between municipalities in Sweden and the selected partner countries;
- Contribute to creating long-term relationships between society in Sweden and in the partner countries; and
- In Europe, to focus particularly on strengthening democracy, fair treatment and sustainable development, as well as developing a closer relationship with the EU and moving towards adapting to its fundamental values.

4.2.1 Activities planned for and carried out in 2009 and 2010

Much of the work accomplished during 2009 and 2010 has involved building a basic structure for the administration of the programme.

The operational plan for the Municipal Partner Programme (MPP) 2009 and 2010 state that the main work should consist of handling the process with the partnership projects, training and networking, strengthening the program and work with quality assurance, informing and communicating with Swedish and international actors and developing the program by involving and recruiting new partners in Sweden and in development countries.

The operational plan was mainly fulfilled. The deviation found is principally due to the fact that the program has suffered severely from the high staff turnover.

According to all the interviewed representatives for Swedish municipalities, the MPP has conducted training and networking and started a much-appreciated special training program for project leaders from the Swedish municipalities.

A special initiative in relation to three of the new partner countries, Botswana, Vietnam and to some extent Indonesia, has been started with the aim of matching local authorities.

Even though ICLD has failed to produce an overall quality frame for the ICLD:s activities, several quality assurance activities have been performed within the MPP program, such as criteria for assessment, the decision making process and demands on follow-up information from the projects.

4.2.2 Partnership project

The MPP was an activity taken over by the ICLD from SALA IDA (the former international department at SALAR). It was already a functioning program and the ICLD has managed it well.

One of the strategic aims of the programme is to contribute to creating long-term relations between society in Sweden and the co-operation countries. The MPP is considered by all municipalities and by other interviewees, to be promoting long time relationships. At the same time the municipalities question building relationships just

⁷ The ICLD operational plan 2010

for the sake of it , as the most important thing is that the projects give long term effects.

All the municipalities that have been interviewed express satisfaction and give appraisal for how the ICLD is handling the activities, even though the staff turnover has a negative effect on the continuity in the relations.

4.2.3 Application

In the 2009 period, there were three occasions for project applications. This changed 2010, and since then the aim is to have two occasions for applications, complemented by extra occasions if needed for specific reasons. This decreases the workload and makes it possible to focus a little more on the quality assurance of the process, which is regarded as a step in the positive direction of the staff. The ICLD guidelines for MPP give direct instructions for how to apply for projects and there are appropriate forms for the municipalities to use. It is, however, perceived by the Swedish municipalities and the co operational partners as a problem that the guidelines and the forms are not available in English. Thus, they have to personally translate the information. This complicates the communication in the partnerships. However, ICLD argue that this deficiency only occurred during a two-month period in the spring 2011 and that all material now is available in English.

4.2.4 Assessment

The assessment of the project applications has evolved during the years. ICLD has developed clear assessment items aiming to lead up to a more equal assessment between projects and between ICLD:s officers. The assessment process within ICLD has also evolved, using the officers assessments, together with the Partnership Council, consisting of two delegates from SALAR and two delegates from ICLD.

Within the assessment process, ICLD communicates with the candidate municipalities in a way that is highly valued by the municipalities.

The municipalities have called for extended possibilities to use the web in all communication and reporting to the ICLD. Today this is possible for some reporting, but not all.

4.2.5 Decisions

Sida makes the final decision on recommendation of ICLD. Sida usually makes a single decision, but considers each and every application. However, Sida has called for clearer and more result-oriented summaries of the applications.

Due to the fact that the decision is taken by Sida and not by the NGO - as is the matter in several other Sida supported partnerships - this causes an unnecessary and inconvenient delay for the partnerships and to the process.

4.2.6 Follow-up

A performance report is required after the project finalisation. If the project runs for more than one year (3 year max.), a performance report is required after every year.

The requirements are the same for finalised and running projects. The municipalities consider this as creating an extra workload and they call for a more simplified performance report, while the projects are running.

The evaluation analysed a small number of performance reports given to ICLD. They principally fulfil the demands from the ICLD. However, the overall problem that Sida and the municipalities experience is how to measure and assess results. One reason for this can be that the definition of results, communicated by Sida, is not sufficiently defined.

An important question to raise is that the municipalities are not given financial support to measure results, but to carry out different kinds of activities, and the municipalities cannot use municipal tax money to finance international development cooperation in any way.

In the template for performance reporting the ICLD does not ask for results concerning local democracy. This must be considered as a disadvantage, as a major purpose for the MPP are to promote local democracy in developing countries.

4.2.7 Critical factors identified in the evaluation

Here the main critical factors identified in the evaluation of the MPP are presented. By illustrating success factors and obstacles related to Projects, Staff and New partners, the aim is to be able to present learning for the future.

Projects

Concerning the project assessment process, the most critical factors identified are:

- The importance of having all forms and information used in the partnership available in English;
- A transparent and well supported assessment;
- Decisions ought to be made and communicated to the partnerships as soon as possible;
- Follow-up information that makes it possible to assess the effect of the projects in accordance with their goals; and
- The long-term relations are a critical factor for Sida, but are not considered as a critical factor for the municipalities. Instead they highlight the long-term effect of the partnership, not the partnership itself.

Staff

The staff turnover during the establishment phase was a major problem, not only within the MPP, which is the field within ICLD that has suffered the most, but also to the whole organisation. The development of good partnerships rests upon both skillfull and permanent staff in the organisation, that has the important role of mediating the partnerships.

The Swedish municipalities ask ICLD and Sida to have a better understanding of Swedish local government and their terms. Development work is not a priority activity in the municipality. There are very clear distinctions of what is allowed to be done and that all development work must be done through external financing. A reason to value and protect the role and the function of municipalities in development work is that they possess very high competence suitable for aid work, which several of the interviewees have emphasised.

New partners

The big challenge for ICLD and the MPP is to recruit new partners, both in Sweden and abroad. The evaluation does not indicate that development cooperation is well known or even desired among the Swedish municipalities.

The local partners, who are already recruited, call for extensive education and training, as they themselves admit, lack knowledge and experience. This demand could, however, be infinite.

The special initiative in the three partner countries Botswana, Indonesia and Vietnam is a good attempt to recruit partners in developing countries. The ongoing ITP also works as a channel for new partnerships. This possibility clearly points out the benefits of multi-combined activities, which is an objective for ICLD.

New partners in the program, in certain occasions, have their origins in their direct relationships with Swedish municipalities. That is an additional reason to value and protect the role and the function of municipalities.

4.2.8 Recommendations for future work

Kontigo leaves the following recommendations concerning the MPP:

- I. Decisions on partnership-projects could if possible be completed by the ICLD. The main reason for this is to simplify and speed up the decision process. It may also be in the interest of Sida, in the matter of accountability in the relations between the NGO and the Swedish government;
- II. As one of the main reasons for the MPP is to promote local democracy, the ICDL might consider demanding follow-up information in the results reporting from the projects that concerns the aspect of local democracy;
- III. Sida and ICLD might discuss the question of long-term relationships in the strategy work that initiates the application for support for the coming years;
- IV. Strong measures need to be taken in order to reduce the staff turnover, which has had a suffering effect on the development of partnerships. As mentioned in the organisation chapter, this includes management, recruitment policies and staff development activities. One such activity could include enhancing the knowledge and understanding of Swedish local government and their terms;
- V. To facilitate the recruitment of new partnerships, ICLD may have a long-term plan for communication and marketing; and

VI. The ICLD could form a strategy as to how, and to what extent, the training and support given to local municipalities may be designed to create a balance between the requirements by the municipalities and the resources of the organisation.

4.3 The International Training Programme

According to Sida's programme description, the overall targets for the International Training Programmes (ITP) are that they "shall contribute to institutional strengthening and capacity development in the co-operating countries and other developing countries to combat poverty through effective contributions". The ICLD works along the same lines of understanding, apart from the fact that the particular purpose of the ITP is to strengthen institutions at local level. By recruiting key persons with a clear mandate to initiate change processes, the ambition is for the ITP to lead to capacity development at local level.

4.3.1 Activities planned for and carried out in 2009 and 2010

When the strategy was formulated, the thought was that ICLD would be responsible for four International Training Programmes during the period 2009-2011: three to be purchased and one to be administered by the organisation. This was later revised and instead one program was purchased and three were to be administered by the organisation. One reason for this change was to enable synergies within the ITP and between the ITP and the other fields of operation at the ICLD.

In the operational plans for 2009 and 2010, it is stated that ICLD during 2009 will be responsible for one ITP Programme and one to be purchased. Simultaneously ICLD in 2010 will plan for a further two training programmes.

Accordingly, the ICLD purchased one ITP (title: *Local Democracy and Local Self-Government*) from Sipu International and carried out one with a gender perspective to highlight the importance of the relationship between gender and politics at local level (*Decentralization and Good Governance with a Gender Perspective*).

ICLD has also planned for another two training programmes: "*Towards Local Democracy and Local Development through Local Governments*" in conjunction with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and "*Urban Governance*" in conjunction with UN-HABITAT and SKL International. Thereby the ICLD has in this regard lived up to the agreement between ICLD and Sida and to the overall goals in the Operational plans for 2009 and 2010.

4.3.2 Critical factors identified in the evaluation

2009 was characterised as a build-up phase and in 2010 the activities that started in 2009 were consolidated as two training programmes got up and running.

Generally those interviewed believe that the ICLD managed the ITP in a satisfying way. A general response from those interviewed was that they are impressed by the amount of work achieved in a relatively short time.

The ICLD has produced new guidelines for documenting and following-up programmes, for example to measure knowledge and development among the participants. This creates the possibility to revise the programme continuously and bring about improvements to the programmes. Internally, the staff responsible for the ITP has been working in the team to assure quality in the activities, but no formal strategy for quality assurance has been outlined.

Generally the interest to participate in the training programmes has been good and both the ICLD and Sipu International have received a large number of applications. However, the quality of the applications have varied between the countries and due to the lack of quality in applications from Laos, the ICLD decided to end their participation in the programme. This is an important lesson for future work, as it is of great importance to receive high quality applications.

A question raised by the evaluation concerns the fact that the two new programmes now planned for, in collaboration with UNCDF and UN-HABITAT and SALAR International, are not being administered by the same staff as the programme "*Decentralization and Good Governance with a Gender Perspective.*" The reason, we suppose, is related to how the collaboration was initiated and by whom, but it still leaves questions regarding how lessons learned can be used in the forthcoming programmes, and furthermore, how synergies between the programmes will be achieved. Another issue that needs to be raised with regards to the two forthcoming training programmes, is that it is important for ICLD to assure that the participants will be given the opportunity to learn about Swedish experiences, Swedish models and state of the art knowledge, as planned. Some of the interviewees have raised concerns regarding the risk that this perspective might get weakened when these programmes are run from outside the ICLD.

To date the ICLD follow up the training programmes by questionnaires to the participants, but there are no plans for how the overall ITP will be monitored and evaluated.

4.3.3 Recommendations for future work

The following Kontigo recommends for the future:

- I. Outline a formal strategy for quality assurance as planned, as this would greatly help to assure quality in the activities;
- II. Outline a plan for monitoring and evaluation of the overall ITP. Preferably this could be done in a similar way as those executed by Sida and other NGOs;
- III. The ICLD might consider increase their efforts in promoting the ICLD and the training programmes for future application rounds, possibly with the help of the municipal partnerships; and
- IV. Make sure to communicate lessons learned between the programmes already up and running, those programmes now being planned for and, furthermore, lessons on how synergies between the programmes can be achieved. This is an important question for the future work;

5 Interaction and synergy effects between the three functions of ICLD

5.1 Synergy is one incentive for the establishment of ICLD

As already mentioned one of the incentives for establishing the ICLD was to benefit from synergy effects from the consolidation of municipal partnership programmes, international training programmes and centres of knowledge into one operation under the same roof. Synergy effects are also one of the main targets/priorities for the overall operation in the three year strategy. Thereby, this is an important question for the evaluation.

Closely connected to the question of synergies is whether the ICLD managed to create an interface between practical experiences/requirements and the knowledge development within research, which is one of the other main targets/priorities for the ICLD?

Synergies might occur both in Sweden, in relation to the Swedish municipalities, in the co-operation countries and within the organisation.

5.2 Synergies occur to limited extent

As described in chapter 3, ICLD have not succeeded in building the organisation and working conditions in a manner that would provide the basis for stable organisation, with clear responsibilities and based on teamwork to promote synergies.

The evaluation shows that the synergies achieved have occurred to a limited extent and are not as a direct result of a strategy. Synergies detected are primarily between training and practical experience, i.e. the ITP and the MPP. Examples of synergies are when partnerships in the development countries created motivation to apply for the training programmes, which have regularly occurred, and where participants in the training programmes have visited Swedish municipalities while in Sweden for training. Other synergies are likely to have been developed in co-operational countries through cooperation and relations that benefits the goals of the ICLD. The limited scope of the evaluation (second hand information through the interviewees), gives no opportunity to confirm that other forms of synergy are occurring, or that the work is moving in that direction.

The evaluation further illustrates that collaboration and possible synergies occurred to a lesser extent between training and practical experience on the one hand and the Centre of Knowledge on the other hand. According to the interviewees, the reasons are that the research produced (working papers and so forth), can to a very little extent be used in the training programmes or in the collaboration with municipalities in the co-operation countries. There is a greater demand for practical information and manuals to distribute to the partners of cooperation and hands-on practical information on how to achieve change. However, some positive work have been

directed towards utilising mutual benefits, such as in contacts between researchers and the work with ITP.

As already mentioned the Centre of Knowledge is of great importance in strengthening the relationship between the operational workflow, the MPP and the ITP, and in acting as a hub for both research and experience-based knowledge. However there seems to have been a lack of effort in this area compared to the efforts to create networks of researchers. Therefore the ICLD has not yet managed to create interface between practical experiences and the knowledge development within research, which is one of the overall goals for the ICLD. Nonetheless, a lot of work has to be done to fulfil the demands in the agreement with Sida, which states that ICLD shall constitute a knowledge resource for Swedish municipalities and regions in their international development cooperation.

5.3 Recommendations for future work

- I. ICLD might consider creating working conditions that benefits the creation of synergies between the ICLD activities; and
- II. Aim to create an interface between practical experiences/requirements and the knowledge development within research.

6 ICLD's external relations

The MPP forms the base of the ICLD and given the objective to promote local democracy in developing countries, the main target group consists of local authorities in Sweden and in co-operational countries comprised by Swedish aid, according to Swedish government policies.

According to the interviews with Swedish municipalities and SALAR, the direct relations of ICLD to local authorities in Sweden must still be considered fairly weak, even with pertaining municipalities engaged in partnerships. The partnerships are not seldom managed in a limited context within the municipality. The close relation to the municipalities goes through the SALAR, which has an established connection in development countries, through their operations.

The degree to which ICLD has developed relations with countries that are partners in cooperation was not possible to estimate in this evaluation, as this would have demanded a more thorough data collection and examination, which was not part of the assignment. However the findings of the evaluation show that the steps taken so far indicate a possibility for success in this area. The conclusion is partly based on the high-quality results from the ITP evaluation reports and the interviews made, which are positive concerning ICLD's work so far.

Given the ICLD assignment - to build a connecting function for research - the second target group are scientists in different fields of research, connected to development work. ICLD supports research in this area and by forming of the Advisory Group and organising the two international workshops, combined with bilateral contacts, the development of external relations has made great progress. The Advisory Group will constitute a pool of scientists on international policy research on issues regarding local governance and local democracy, which allows ICLD access to a global network.

The forming of the Advisory Group is, however, neither treated in the application to Sida, nor in the agreement with Sida.

6.1 Recommendations for future work

- I. The ICLD activities might preferably focus more directly on the MPP and the relations with Swedish municipalities and local partners in cooperation countries, than on creating international recognition in the scientific community;
- II. The role and purpose of the Advisory Group need to be discussed and raised in the coming strategy for ICDL, as well as in the forthcoming application to Sida;
- III. One challenge for ICLD is to create a more international imprint. Use of the English language in communication will be necessary. To ensure the knowledge of international cooperation within the ICLD, professional training of the staff and the development of relations in the international community are also important; and

IV. A key factor in ICLD reaching the Swedish municipalities is to increase the level of knowledge about Swedish local government and their terms. Without Swedish local governments, there are no possibilities for municipal partnerships to promote local democracy: and this is crucial. The combat against poverty alone is not the purpose of the ICLD.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

In this chapter the main conclusions from the evaluation will be accounted for. Whether the ICLD has been working towards the main objectives will be discussed first. Thereafter, the strengths, weaknesses and success factors identified in the evaluation will be outlined.

7.1 The work achieved in relation to policy documents and goals

The Sida agreement and the strategy form a solid base to the activities of the ICLD.

The yearly plans of operations are gradually developing. The statutes need to be developed in order to lay responsibility on the board to follow-up the activities and the results of ICLD.

Regarding ICLD's achievements in relation to the goals/priorities stated in the strategy they have been accomplished in varying degrees and the creation of the Centre of Knowledge has been characterised as part of the development phase.

Regarding the goal concerning *expanded operations and co-operational partners* in the area of local democracy/local self-government/decentralisation, the ICLD has started the process. The evaluation shows that there is a need to strengthen and expand partnerships with municipalities and collaborations partners in Sweden and abroad. The ICLD has quite high aspirations in aiming to be a well-known player in the international field. In order to achieve this, the Advisory Group comprised of researchers and organisations has been created; visits to research institutions have been carried-out; and workshops have been organised. This has positioned the organisation as an international player and created a network within the area of local democracy. Even if there is more to be done concerning *expanded operations and co-operational partners* in the area of local democracy/local self-government/decentralisation, the evaluation shows that the work achieved so far has had a focus on the objective.

ICLD has worked with quality assurance in the ICLD operations. Nonetheless, ICLD has not produced a framework for quality assurance for the comprehensive organisation or for the three fields of activity as planned. Within the three different fields of activity there has been scattered efforts to strengthen quality in the activities. ICLD can, however, not as yet be said *to assure quality in all of the ICLD's operations*, both internally and externally. Moreover there is a need in the organisation for a quality framework in order to ensure that the overall goals are adhered to. The existence of a quality framework could also facilitate cooperation within the ICLD and promote synergy effects.

ICLD has not to any great extent paid *particular attention to possible synergy effects* between the centre's three fields of activity, in other words, between research, training and practical experience. This is for two reasons: Firstly, because there are

no strategies or structures in place on how to achieved synergies. Secondly there are no results to be found in that direction, except from isolated cases.

The ICLD has created *an in-demand advisory function* for target groups and co-operation partners, mainly in Sweden. This could be further developed, for example, by the creation of a crossing point between practical experiences and research.

So far ICLD have created a base for knowledge and development, but there are still no traces of an *interface or collaboration between practical experiences/requirements and the knowledge development within research*. To be able to reach this goal the ICLD would have to make the knowledge easily useable for municipalities and change agents in Sweden and abroad. Subsequently, this gap has contributed to the goal of creating synergies between ICLD's activities, being partly accomplished.

Finally, the ICLD has carried out *concrete work that contributes to the development of local democratic public institutions*. This has been done on several levels – by the ITP, by the MPP and by supporting research in the area. However, to develop democratic public institutions is a long-term assignment and cannot be fulfilled in a couple of years. Local conditions also affect this being accomplished in the long term. By managing the activities as planned, the ICLD creates possibilities for strengthened democratic institutions in the collaborating countries. The evaluation indicates that the ICLD operations have been carried out in relation to this objective.

7.2 Strengths, weaknesses and success factors

In this section the main critical elements identified in the evaluation of the ICLD are presented and divided into relationships: staff and competence; and management and performance. By illustrating success factors and obstacles, the aim is to be able to present learning for the future.

7.2.1 Relationships

Looking at the strengths, it is clear that the ICLD have developed contacts with researches and international experts in relevant areas. This has in a positive way made be ICLD perceived as an important international player in the field. ICLD also has a good relationship to Sida and SALAR.

It must also be considered as strengths that all the municipalities that have been interviewed expressed satisfaction and appraisal of how the ICLD are handling their activities. The municipalities' call for more education and training and practical support in the form of a helpdesk for MPP. This demand could be infinite and it is important that ICLD form a strategy to address this demand, and be mindful of to what extent it can meet this demand.

7.2.2 Staff and competence

The ICLD has experienced a high staff turnover during the establishment phase. This is a major problem for the ICLD. It limits the opportunity to create continuity and the possibility for ICLD to learn and successfully develop their activities. It also has

negative effects on the continuity in the external relations and it has delayed the implementation of planned activities.

This can not solely be explained by the problems to attract qualified personal willing to settle on Gotland, but has to do with how the work is structured and organised to form a good working environment and providing incentives to retained those who are already employed. There is also need for an active recruitment policy.

The challenge for ICLD is to create an international imprint. It will be necessary to use the English language in all communications. Safeguarding the knowledge of international cooperation through training of staff and developing relations in the international community, are also important.

Another big challenge for ICLD and the MPP is to recruit new partners, both in Sweden and abroad. The evaluation does not indicate that development cooperation is well known or even desired among the Swedish municipalities.

A key factor for ICLD to reach the Swedish municipalities is to increase the level of knowledge about the Swedish local government and their terms. Without Swedish local government there won't be the possibility of municipal partnerships to promote local democracy: and that is crucial. The combat against poverty alone is not the purpose of ICLD.

The direct relations to local authorities in Sweden must still be considered fairly weak, even with regards to municipalities that already are engaged in partnerships. These partnerships are not seldom managed in a limited context within the municipality. The close relation to the municipalities goes through the SALAR.

7.2.3 Management

In the activity fields of ITP and MPP, the ICLD has successfully carried out the activities according to the agreement with Sida, the strategy and the operational plans.

The internal communications problem and the problems linked to the staff turnover, which have had a negative impact on the operations and the organisations results, have not been addressed early enough by the leadership and have not been brought to the attention of the board. The responsibility of the board, concerning following-up the activities and the results of the ICLD, is not sufficiently described in any of the policy documents and working rules.

To further optimise the use and benefits of the Advisory Group for all of ICLD's operation, ICLD would have to create effective mechanisms for strategic communication and commitment between the organisation's leadership and the Advisory Group. This would also provide the means for the Advisory Group members to improve the relevance of its inputs for the whole organisation.

7.2.4 Performance

The ICLD has within a short period of time, and despite some internal difficulties, managed to establish a in many ways functioning business that focuses on their objectives.

The monitoring process can though be strengthened. Plans could be used when it comes to develop routines and structures for the activities, outcomes and impact of ICLD's operations. This is of vital importance in order to ensure the fulfilment of the overall goals of the ICLD.

To summarise, ICLD has in several aspects successfully established its operations in accordance with the goals in the steering documents. However ICLD still lacks some of the committed and effective internal mechanisms that have to be developed both to make optimal use of its partners and its own assets and engagements.

7.3 Concluding recommendations

To summarise Kontigo leaves the following recommendations concerning the different areas touched on in this evaluation.

Recommendations concerning the organisation
During the spring 2011, measures have been taken to improve the organisation in order to create clearer accountability within the organisation. This needs to be followed-up by further developing clear roles and mandates, primarily the programme managers. The internal management and control needs to be structured, as well as forms and routines for decision-making, cooperation, communication and follow up.
The responsibility of the board needs to be clarified. The statutes can be developed and could lay responsibility on the board to follow-up the activities and the results of the ICLD.
The compound quality assurance ought to be completed and implemented and this should help support and strengthen the internal management and control functions.
Considering that there is an awareness of the difficulties to recruit qualified personnel, an active recruitment policy needs to be put into operation. This might clarify the skills needed, working conditions and also include the ICLD actively searching for the desired competencies.

The follow-up process is an area that needs to be developed. The annual report does not present the operations and activities in relation to the budget, and the actual activities of the municipal partners are not described. This makes it difficult for stakeholders to evaluate whether ICLD has performed its assignment in an efficient and effective manner.

In future development of the operational plans, it is of importance that the ICLD emphasises in the breakdown (to the greatest extent possible), realistic tangible goals and to find appropriate ways to measure results.

Recommendations concerning the Knowledge Centre

Formulate appropriate guidelines and criteria for the research that the Centre of Knowledge could initiate and support, as this has so far not been sufficiently formulated.

To simplify the processes on grant subsidies to researches, this decision might be taken by the ICLD, and not by Sida.

To further optimise the use and benefits from an Advisory Group comprised of international experts in the field, ICLD may create effective mechanisms for strategic communications and commitment between the Advisory Group and the ICLD as a whole. This would also provide the means for the Advisory Group members to improve the relevance of its inputs for the whole organisation and only then, can it offer principled advice concerning the development of the ICLD.

Create internal structures and procedures to utilise synergy effects between the different fields of activity and to act as a hub for both research and experience-based knowledge, as this is lacking at the Centre today.

ICLD might consider whether the reports and working papers produced are relevant for the ICLD's other fields of operation or for the municipalities, and therefore of relevance to achieving the objectives of the organisation.

Another question Kontigo would like to raise is whether the ICLD as an organisation could benefit from research on municipalities and regions in a Swedish context, to complement the one-sided research on international development work?

Recommendations concerning the Municipal Partnership Program

Decisions on partnership-project could be completed by the ICLD. The main reason for this is to simplify and speed up the decision process. It would also be in the interest of Sida, in the matter of accountability in the relations between the NGO and the Swedish government.

As one of the main reasons for the MPP is to promote local democracy, the ICDL might demand follow-up information in the results reporting from the projects that concerns the aspect of local democracy.

Sida and ICLD might consider discussing the question of long-term relationships in the strategy work that initiates the application for support for the coming years.

Strong measures must be taken in order to reduce the staff turnover, which has had a suffering effect on the development of partnerships. As mentioned in the organisation chapter, this includes management, recruitment policies and staff development activities. One such activity can include enhancing the knowledge and understanding of Swedish local government and their terms.

To facilitate the recruitment of new partnerships, ICLD could have a long-term plan for communication and marketing.

The ICLD might form a strategy as to how, and to what extent, the training and support given to local municipalities should be designed to create a balance between the requirements by the municipalities and the resources of the organisation.

Recommendations concerning the International Training Programme

Outline a formal strategy for quality assurance as planned, as this would greatly help to assure quality in the activities.

Outline a plan for monitoring and evaluation of the overall ITP. Preferably this could be done in a similar way as those executed by Sida and other NGOs.

The ICLD might consider increasing their efforts in promoting the ICLD and the training programmes for future application rounds, possibly with the help of the municipal partnerships.

Make sure to communicate lessons learned between the programmes already up and running, those programmes now being planned for and, furthermore, lessons on how synergies between the programmes can be achieved. This is an important question for the future work.

Recommendations concerning synergies between the three functions of ICLD

Create working conditions that benefit the creation of synergies between the ICLD activities.

Aim to create an interface between practical experiences/requirements and the knowledge development within research.

Recommendations concerning the external relations

Focus the ICLD activities more directly on the MPP and the relations with Swedish municipalities and local partners in cooperation countries, rather than on creating international recognition in the scientific community.

The role and purpose of the Advisory Group need to be discussed and raised in the coming strategy for ICDL, as well as in the forthcoming application to Sida.

One challenge for ICLD is to create a more international imprint. Use of the English language in communication will be necessary. To ensure the knowledge of international cooperation within the ICLD, professional training of the staff and the development of relations in the international community are also important.

A key factor in ICLD reaching the Swedish municipalities, is to increase the level of knowledge about Swedish local government and their terms. Without Swedish local governments, there are no possibilities for municipal partnerships to promote local democracy: and this is crucial. The combat against poverty alone is not the purpose of ICLD.

Appendix I. Interviews

ICLD staff

Birgitta Svensk, Secretary General

Ove Johansson, Administrative Manager

Maria Larsson, Communications Manager

Anki Dellnäs, Manager, Centre of Knowledge

Gabriel Werner, Officer, Centre of Knowledge

Marie Wiktorsson, Acting Programme Manager, Municipal Partnership Programme

Anja Brunberg, Programme Officer, Municipal Partnership Programme

Anna Hedlund, Programme Officer, Municipal Partnership Programme

Adiam Tedros, Programme Manager, International Training Programme

Björn Möller, Programme Officer, International Training Programme

Board of Directors

Åsa Ehing-Berling, SALAR, Chairperson

Ulla Pettersson, Region Gotland/Gotlands kommun

Håkan Magnusson, Lunds Universitet

Partners and target groups

Susana Freund Widman, Projektledare, Botkyrka kommun

Pernilla Hellman, Chef, Botkyrka kommun

Catharina Marklund, Projektsamordnare, Katrineholms kommun

Nanna Tulinius, Internationell- och näringslivssekreterare, Borås stad

Jan Martinsson, Projektsamordnare och Projektledare, Kalmar kommun

Bosse Troedsson, Projektledare, Vetlanda kommun

Katrin Högborn, Kultursekreterare, Projektmedarbetare, Ulricehamns kommun

Helena Torsell, Projektsamordnare och Projektledare, Vara kommun

Joakim Nordkvist, Projektsamordnare och Projektledare, Malmö stad

Jan Erik Jansson, förtroendevald, Nacka Kommun

Daniel Stendahl, Titels Sipu International

Ulf Källstig, Section Director, Department of Global Cooperation, Sida

Kamala Chandrakirana, Independent Expert, Indonesia, Advisory Group

Iftekhar Zaman, Executive Director, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Bangladesh, ITP

George Cheriyan, Director, Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART), India, ITP

Kadmiel Wekwete, Director, UNCDF, Local Development Practice Area, New York, Advisory Group

Appendix II. References

Internal guidelines and other documentation from the ICLD

Internal guidelines for travel orders, procurement, introduction of new recruits, representation, HR,

Case management and archives

Code of conduct

Guidelines for Municipality Partnership

Application form – inception phase

Application form – management and coordination phase

Application form – project

Budget template

Instructions and templates for reports (2007-07-01) (2009-01-01)

Framework documents, projects proposals and reports, assessment templates

Guiding principles for ICLD research funding

Plan of operations 2009

Annual report 2009

Plan of operations 2010

Annual report 2010

Strategy for 2009-2011

Statutes for ICLD 2008-04-25

Working rules for the board of ICLD 2008-04-25

Review of labour organisation (Aug 2010)

Evaluation ITP Sweden phase (Sept 2010), Cambodia (May 2011)

Working papers, Research reports and Policy Briefs.

Reviews and evaluations

Municipal Partnership Programmes – Evaluation 2010 Gränsorganisationer AB

Rewiew of the internal control system of ICLD – March – April 2010 (ÖPwC)

Policy Documents

Act for certain municipal services (2009:47)

Actors Collaboration (Aktörssamverkan för global utveckling (UD2007/46452/UP))

Policy for Global Development (Globala utmaningar – vårt ansvar SKR 2007/08:89)

General conditions for grants from the Swedish development assistance grants to Swedish NGOs, April 1, 2003

Agreement between Sida and ICLD on support to operations during 2008-2012 (15 Sept 2008)

Agreement between Sida and ICLD on support to operations during 2008-2012 (27 Aug 2010)

ICLD:s request for the establishment and funding of the ICLD 26 May 2008